



MCU IN REVIEW

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WELCOME!

Sandi Blankenship, CPM
House Mother

Courtney Everson, Ph.D.
Graduate Dean

Lindsay Kinman, CPM
House Mother

Audra Post, CPM
Faculty

Jana Studelska, CPM,
Faculty Director

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Are You On A Path of Professionalism?

Kristi Ridd-Young—President

You've likely read MCU's mission statement many times and maybe the words technical expertise, professional excellence and personal greatness roll off your tongue. Let's explore the second tenet of our mission—professional excellence. Obviously it's very rewarding to have people think highly of you because of your professional reputation. Beyond that, what does professional excellence really mean? What does it take to be a professional? How can you be professional in your day-to-day role as a student or as a midwife? Does your professionalism affect the midwifery community as a whole? How does the midwifery profession impact the well-being of mothers and babies? Together, let's explore these questions in the next few issues of MCU in Review.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines professionalism as "the skill, good judgment, and polite behavior that is expected from a person who is trained to do a job well"; and it defines a profession as "a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation." These definitions



imply that a set of skills and characteristics are required to be a midwife of professional excellence who then contributes to the midwifery profession.

James B. Stenson, an Educational Consultant brings Webster's definition to life. "Professionalism isn't just a set of appearances -- neatness, good grooming, 'shop talk' and the like. Nor is it just technical skill; many technically skilled people are not really professional. Professionalism is, rather, a set of internalized character strengths and values directed toward high quality service to others through one's work. In their daily work, whatever it may be, real professionals show these inner strengths and attitudes -- sound judgment, know-how, business savvy, mature responsibility, problem-solving perseverance and ingenuity, along with what people call 'class.' This is as true for hair-dressers, carpenters, machinists, police officers, and barbers as it is

Continued...

President's Message (cont.)

for lawyers, physicians, [midwives], and engineers” (Stenson, n.d., para 1).

What are the character strengths and values that can lead to your own professionalism and a higher quality of service to our MCU community and eventually your clients? There are articles and lists galore describing professionalism. My favorite list comes from www.mindtools.com which is a website dedicated to teaching “essential skills needed to have an excellent career”—in other words, the skills needed to be a Midwife of Excellence®.

- 1) Specialized knowledge
- 2) Competency
- 3) Honesty and integrity
- 4) Respect
- 5) Accountability
- 6) Self-regulation
- 7) Image

Specialized Knowledge

First and foremost, professionals are known for their specialized knowledge. They've made a deep personal commitment to develop and improve their skills, and, where appropriate, they have the degrees and certifications that serve as the foundation of this knowledge.

Competency

Professionals get the job done. They're reliable, and they keep their promises. If circumstances arise that prevent them from delivering on their promises, they manage expectations up front, and they do their best to make the situation right.

Professionals don't make excuses, but focus on finding solutions.

Honesty and Integrity

Professionals exhibit qualities such as honesty and integrity. They keep their word, and they can be trusted implicitly because of this. They never compromise their values, and will do the right thing, even when it means taking a harder road. More than this, true professionals are humble— if a project or job falls outside their scope of expertise, they're not afraid to admit this. They immediately ask for help when they need it, and they're willing to learn from others.

Accountability

Professionals hold themselves accountable for their thoughts, words, and actions, especially when they've made

a mistake. This personal accountability is closely tied to honesty and integrity, and it's a vital element in professionalism.

Self-Regulation

They also stay professional under pressure. For instance, imagine a customer service employee who's faced with an irate customer. Instead of getting upset or angry in return, the employee exhibits true professionalism by maintaining a calm, business-like demeanor, and by doing everything that she can to make the situation right.

Genuine professionals show respect for the people around them, no matter what their role or situation. They exhibit a high degree of emotional intelligence by considering the emotions and needs of others, and they don't let a bad day impact how they interact with colleagues or clients.

Image

Professionals look the part – they don't show up to [prenatal appointments or a birth] sloppily dressed, with unkempt hair. They're polished, and they dress appropriately for the situation. Because of this, they exude an air of confidence, and they gain respect for this. (MindTools, n.d.)

I hope you will contemplate your own progress in regard to these seven attributes. Is there room for self-improvement as you consider your own path to professionalism? What other character strengths and values could we add to this list?

In the next MCU in Review, we will consider the profession of midwifery. As Margot Wallstrom, Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs said, “The midwifery profession and workforce have the power to save thousands of lives each year. Let us begin by recognizing the midwifery profession as the life-saver and agent of change that it is and can be.”

References:

MindTools. (n.d.). Professionalism--Career Development from Mind Tools. Retrieved from <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/professionalism.htm>

Stenson, J. B. (n.d.). Professionalism and Workplace Savvy. Retrieved from <http://www.parentleadership.com/worksavvy.html>

The Student Council

The student council has some new members to introduce and some exciting projects on the horizon!

Welcome to new members: Ashley Weekes-Kelsey, Amy Patel, Joscelyn Spivey, and Susan Fisk. Our continuing members are Aisha Al Hajjar and Tara Stephen. We are all excited to be working together on the council.

You may be wondering what the Student Council does, so here's a quick review of our purpose:

- To serve as liaison between MCU students and administration in order to facilitate cooperation, communication and relationship
- To provide a channel for student involvement in the development of school policies and regulations
- To enable students to bring up concerns to student council leadership in a safe and anonymous (if desired) way and know that student council members will address the issue with administration
- To promote effective student/faculty/administration/board relationships
- To represent student feelings, opinions and interests

The student council will be contributing to each of the MCU in Review publications, so keep your eyes open for future information. There are some very exciting things in the works!

MCU faculty and students meeting at the Colorado Midwives Association Conference



Tara Stephen, Tricia Carlisle, Demetra Seriki, Cheryl Furer, Rachel Snow, Brianna Heim

Cheryl Furer, House Mother Coordinator
Courtney Everson, Graduate Dean
Tara Stephen, Graduate Student



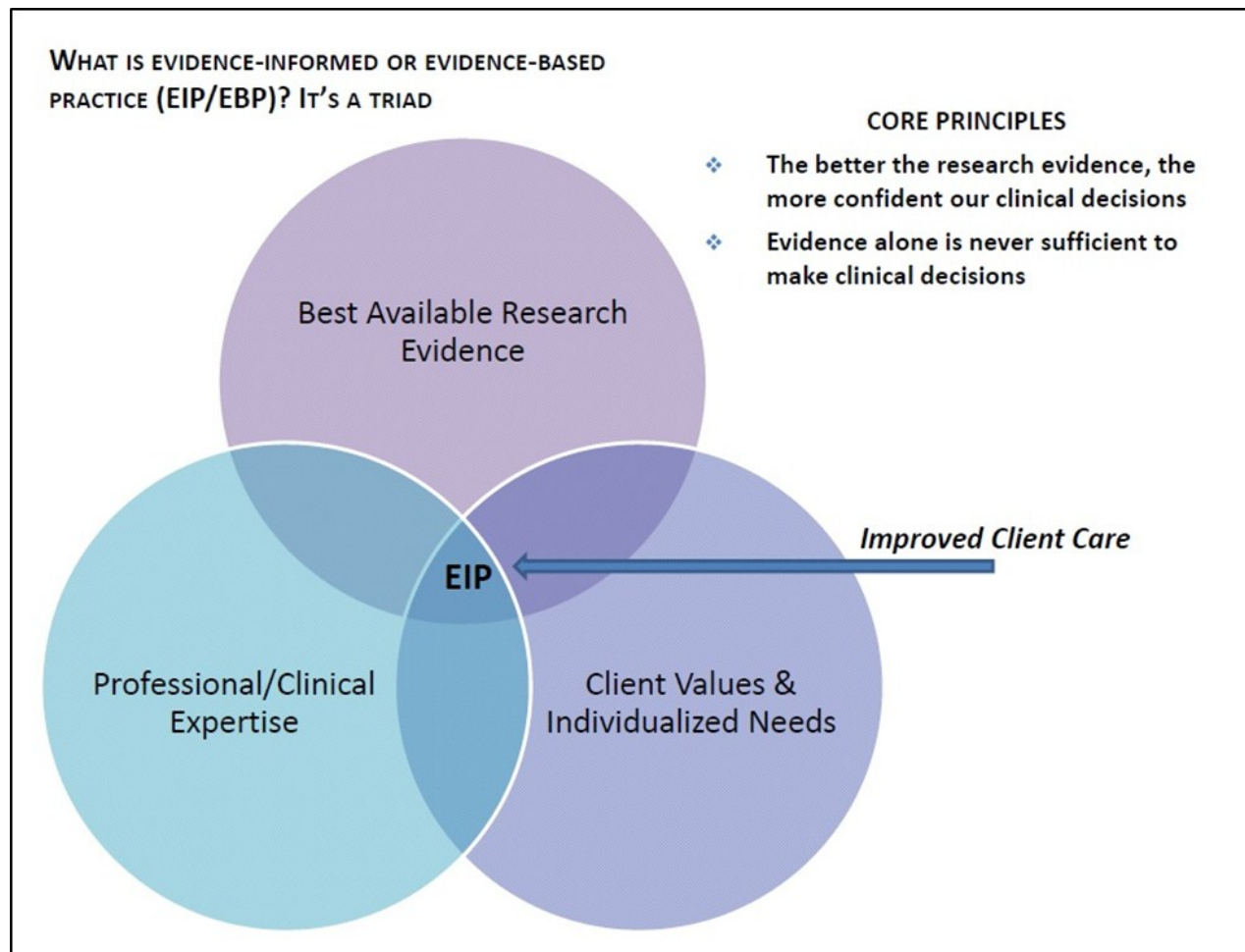


Implementing Evidence-Informed Practice During Midwifery Care

Courtney L. Everson, Ph.D., Graduate Dean, graduatedean@midwifery.edu

~ This piece is written as part of MCU's ongoing commitment to insuring our students, faculty, and alumni enact evidence-informed practice during care provision ~

We hear the terms “evidence-based practice” (EBP) or “evidence-informed practice” (EIP) used often in the healthcare world, being cited as an expected and central component of high-quality care delivery. But what do these terms really mean? There is a misconception that in EBP/EIP approaches, “research evidence” automatically equates to “what I should do in practice”. This, however, is simply not true. EBP/EIP rests in the triad intersection between the best available research with your professional expertise as the practitioner alongside the client's individual values, needs, and context. Figure 1 (below) visually represents what we are striving for when we say EBP or EIP, in ultimate commitment to improved client care, informed choice, and shared decision-making models.



Continued...

Implementing Evidence-Informed Practice During Midwifery Care (cont.)

You may be thinking: okay, I definitely have expertise as a midwife, and I feel I have a good understanding of my client's unique needs, but how do I integrate research into practice? A great place to start is with a series of modules on the Principles of Evidence Informed Practice from the University of Minnesota. These modules are self-paced, free of charge, geared towards busy practitioners, and thus intended to be short and sweet, ranging from just a mere 15 minutes to 30 minutes of your time. The series includes: Section I - Overview of Evidence Informed Practice; Section II – Types of Research; Section III – Using Evidence in Practice; and Section IV – Understanding Research & Statistics; plus resources and guiding sheets to help you implement evidence-informed practice during client care. Advance your professional self and check out these modules, here: www.csh.umn.edu/evidenceinformedpracticemodules

Finally, you may be wondering, “how do I find research to integrate?” There are many peer-reviewed journals and scholarly databases to help you in your search. A few core ones to consider (many of which are open access!) include:

- ✓ Google Scholar – www.scholar.google.com
- ✓ PubMed – www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed
- ✓ BioMed Central – www.biomedcentral.com
- ✓ BMC Pregnancy & Childbirth <http://biomedcentral.com/bmcpregnancychildbirth>
- ✓ Cochrane Reviews – www.cochranelibrary.com
- ✓ Directory of Open Access Journals – www.doaj.org/
- ✓ PLOS One -- <http://www.plosone.org/>
- ✓ North American Journal of Medical Sciences – www.najms.org
- ✓ HighWire -- <http://highwire.stanford.edu/lists/freeart.dtl>
- ✓ ERIC: Institute for Educational Sciences (collection: midwifery): <http://eric.ed.gov/?q=midwifery>
- ✓ Pre-appraised literature options:
 - DynaMed: www.dynamed.com
 - EvidenceUpdates: <https://plus.mcmaster.ca/evidenceupdates/>
 - ClinicalEvidence: <http://clinicalevidence.bmj.com/x/index.html>
 - UpToDate: www.uptodate.com
- ✓ MCU STUDENTS – Also remember to utilize the expansive research resources you have available via your student status, especially the OVID SP research database!

Quick Tip: for those users of handheld devices, check out the free app, PubMed for Handheld (search in the app store for “PubMed4HH”)

MCU in Review Is For You

Alumni, let us know what you are up to! Field Faculty, announce clinical opportunities! Current students, share your stories with us. Letters to the editor are always welcome.

Submit your articles to studentlife@midwifery.edu

Congratulations to Students On Track

A great big congratulations to Mary Burgess, Rebecca Burkett, Rachael Cook, Amy Ihrig, Ashley Jones, Christine Mehl, Krista Miracle, Karrie Nesbit, Savanna Ommaha-Howland Lauren Strain and Tiffany Wilson for staying on their Major Map in the 2014-15 school year and earning a 6% tuition discount!

So, how did they do it? Some of the most successful MCU students shared their approach to staying on track;



I put as much as I can into an audible format so I can move through it more quickly. I use text-to-speech on all of my devices regularly and I have a PDF reader on my iPhone that reads my articles much faster than I can. I follow along visually as I listen, so I can get the most out of my reading. That is the only way I can keep up with all of my classes. // The reader Amy uses on her phone can be found at: http://www.vbookz.com/V1/vBookz_Voice_Readers.html

~Amy Ihrig



Don't sweat the small stuff. Focusing on a grade that's less than 100% or attempting to argue about a few points off of an assignment really takes from your experience and energy. As a famous Disney character once said "Let it go". Do your best, know it is your best and you don't have anything to worry about.

Take it one day at a time. I typically take at least 5-7 classes. So, I assign each day a class (i.e. Monday: MDWF 342, Tues: HLTH 336, etc) I then ONLY work on that weeks suggested schedule for each class on the day it is assigned to. I also do the BB that day (unless a live session is scheduled for a different day) and I do my best not to work ahead unless I have loads of time that day to do so.

Midwife your family before you midwife anyone else. I have 6 children (2 under 10 and the rest over 17). I learned early on that I needed to be there for them and pay attention to their needs above all else or I would beat myself up so badly that I couldn't finish school work. Take time out, schedule a family day if you have to. But ensure you have balance or you will quickly find that you will burn out from fatigue and guilt.

Above all else don't rush. Let your journey be your own. Don't compare yourself to others and enjoy your time discovering the very best way you can help women become healthy mothers.

~Krista Miracle



Don't bite off more than you can chew per semester.

Be realistic, some things in your life are going to have to go to make room for school.

There is no magic sauce, stay on the timeline the teacher gives you or make your own and **STICK TO IT!**

~ Karrie Nesbit



-I print the syllabus, participations, introduction letter, etc. all out for each course and keep it in a binder. I am able to keep myself better organized, and reference the courses much more smoothly.

-Communicate with your partner on a weekly basis when you plan to work on coursework.

-If you have children, have two dedicated study locations. One for daily work and participations, and another location for in-depth work (PG's, papers, etc...). I focus my in-depth work when my husband is off, in a room that I can lock myself away from the children and the noise.

-Look at your week ahead, and plan your work accordingly. (Obviously births can change this plan.)

-Keep an Excel spreadsheet for participations/live classes. On the top, list your courses, on the left side list the weeks, then list participations and live classes in the corresponding boxes below each course. Cross-off as the days/weeks go by. I keep instructions for participations for each course on this document, as well. (ie.: MDWF 439-respond on BB by Wed with 1 additional response due Sun.)

~Christine Mehl

Brittany Campbell

Recipient of the Brianna Blackwelder Equal Access Scholarship



Receiving the Brianna Blackwelder Equal Access Scholarship award has been the most exciting and fulfilling moment of my life. I've never won anything, let alone a \$21,000 award towards my education to improve my community. I remember reading the award email and thinking, is this really true, did they see the great need for black midwives in the Ferguson and St. Louis area as I did? Once I confirmed that it was true, all of my emotions of gratitude, excitement, and achievement rose up inside and couldn't be contained! Instinctively, my feet literally leaped from the pavement and I took off towards the skies, and for a moment I believed gravity wouldn't bring me down; yet my feet joyfully landed as my excitement met with my goals of now being able to offer midwifery to my African American community. I said to myself, "I did it, we did it, this is for our mothers, fathers and babies."

Equal access to midwives is incredibly important in our nation but sadly is not a reality. The city of St. Louis is 51% African-American, whereas my town of Ferguson which is a suburb within St. Louis, is majority African-American at 67.4%. Currently there are 20+ Caucasian CPM's in the St. Louis metro area to serve the population of expectant mothers who wish to birth at home or at birthing centers; while there are zero African-American or Women of color CPM's in the St. Louis metro area to provide quality care for expecting women of color. Having compassionate professional care by a woman who looks like you and shares similar cultural experiences is very important to many women. It allows the mother to feel more comfortable, at ease, and to be guided by someone who she feels will not judge her situation or lack thereof, and instead be supportive of her.

Women of color who don't have the educational opportunities to learn more about birthing in an out-of-hospital setting, and who'd rather have a doctor of color instead of a Caucasian midwife or feel they're safer birthing in a hospital setting, are experiencing higher rates of infant and maternal mortality due to systematic racism and mistreatment. Women of color are 3-4 times more likely to be harmed or die during childbirth than their Caucasian counterparts. Having more midwives of color to provide quality care right in our community will help to educate, empower, and assist our mothers in having safer pregnancies and births; thus lowering the rates of mortality that could've been prevented.

Ferguson, the city of St. Louis, and towns all over our nation deserve to have a midwife of color in each community to serve its population of expectant mothers. As a doula I offered sliding scale fee services to low-income families despite the fact that my household was also low-income. I knew the importance of a mother having someone to assist and support her was essential in preventing stress, depression and health complications in pregnancy and post-partum. Without the financial barrier of paying my way through school, I can now focus solely on improving the care our mothers of color receive in my city and state. Receiving the Brianna Blackwelder Equal Access scholarship award afforded me the opportunity to release the financial pressure of school tuition costs, gain a quality education and taking the first steps to diversifying the midwifery profession in St. Louis. Being a recipient of this great award has given me the confidence that the time is now to create progress through a change in healthcare options for women of color.

Marivette Torres

Recipient of the Brianna Blackwelder Equal Access Scholarship



As a recipient of the 2015 Brianna Blackwelder Equal Access Scholarship, I have been provided with an amazing opportunity to commence my journey in the fulfillment of becoming a Latina, Spanish-speaking midwife of color.

For nearly two decades I have worked with women as a doula providing labor support both in-home and in-hospital. For years, when I worked as a doula with a midwife, I did not want to be a midwife. My mindset was that I was not intelligent or experienced enough, and that no one would want to hire someone

like me, a Latina, as a midwife. However, the realization finally came to me that the language barrier was depriving women of receiving the Midwives Model of Care in my area. My heart melted as I realized I needed to do something to make a change in my community for women who are not able to have the option of a Spanish speaking midwife. I saw that no one else was stepping up to the task, and that thousands of Spanish-only speaking women were not being provided with midwifery care. I concluded that I indeed was qualified to take the next step in becoming a certified professional midwife (CPM). I received and accepted the midwifery call without hesitation.

There are few midwives of color serving women from their own culture and the tremendous lack of diversity in midwifery is prevalent. Maternal health disparity is experienced by women of color and the disparity can be lowered, and possibly even eliminated, by midwifery schools who graduate midwives of color. Because there is familiarity with culture, language, and even foods eaten, women of color can be provided with culturally sensitive midwifery care by highly qualified midwives from their own culture. However, roadblocks exist to procuring midwives of color. One evident roadblock is economic barriers to midwifery college, but a tide of change is happening!

Awareness plus opportunity is the answer to rectifying the lack of diversity in the midwifery field. The Brianna Blackwelder Equal Access Scholarship is the stepping stone which is allowing me to launch out as a Spanish-speaking midwife to eventually bring the safety of homebirth and the Midwives Model of Care to underrepresented women in my community. My community, and the country at large, is aching to birth midwives of color who will fill the abyss of under-representation and serve scores of marginalized women. The Brianna Blackwelder Equal Access Scholarship is closing the immense cultural gap and eliminating barriers to women of color by providing this tuition relief to a diverse population, thus increasing the diversity in the world of certified professional midwives.

I cannot express enough the gratitude I have to Midwives College of Utah for making this possible. Their willingness to grant the Brianna Blackwelder Equal Access Scholarship shows their dedication to opening the doors to a wider population of women. Changes in midwifery accessibility to marginalized women are happening, and MCU is part of that change.

Briana Blackwelder Equal Access Scholarship

Midwives College of Utah believes that all women should have access to an education in midwifery. Unfortunately, this is not always a reality. We want to be the change we wish to see in the midwifery community; therefore, we have created an initiative to rapidly broaden the cultural landscape of our college.

MCU is committed to the vision that *every* woman deserves a midwife. The MCU curriculum is firmly grounded in the unique and profound power of the Midwives Model of Care™ as a primary pathway for improving outcomes and eliminating disparities for women and babies during the childbearing year.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for this award, applicants need to:

- Identify as an underrepresented minority
- Intend to practice midwifery as a Certified Professional Midwife serving diverse and underrepresented communities
- Be actively involved in the birth community prior to admission to MCU and/or during tenure at MCU (for example, as a lactation consultant, birth or postpartum doula, childbirth educator, midwife assistant or another role as an advocate for women and children)
- Demonstrate financial need
- Be accepted and intend to enroll or be currently enrolled in either the ASM or BSM degree program at MCU prior to tuition relief. Prospective applicants are encouraged to apply for this scholarship award concurrent with their admissions application. Current students may apply for this scholarship award at any time during their program at MCU.

For further details about this scholarship and to apply, please visit <http://www.midwifery.edu/diversity-scholarship-fund/>.

Application deadline is July 1st, 2016.

To access Midwives College of Utah's Position Statement on Cultural Diversity, please visit our webpage <http://www.midwifery.edu/cultural-diversity-position-statement/>.

Congratulations Graduates!

Associate of Science in Midwifery (ASM)

Jennifer Bertagnole
Jodi Cormier
Nicki Solomito Pugh

Bachelor of Science in Midwifery (BSM)

ViviAnne Fischer
Lindsay Kinman

Congratulations to Courtney Everson!



Courtney Everson, PhD, MCU Graduate Dean and a faculty member, was a lead author on a recently published article in the "Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health." Courtney is leading the way in advancing the midwifery profession as a researcher and published author

Abstract - Introduction: No data describing certified professional midwives (CPMs) currently exist in the literature, although CPMs attend the majority of home births in the United States. This study addresses this gap by assessing the demographics, education levels, routes to certification, and practice characteristics of currently practicing CPMs.

MCU faculty and students can see the full article by logging into MCU, click on "OvidSP Research Database" and then click on the "Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health" link.

Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health

Issue: Volume 60(5), September/October 2015, p 534–545

Practitioner and Practice Characteristics of Certified Professional Midwives in the United States: Results of the 2011 North American Registry of Midwives Survey

Cheyney, Melissa PhD, CPM, LDM; Olsen, Christine PhD; Bovbjerg, Marit PhD; Everson, Courtney PhD; Darragh, Ida CPM; Potter, Brynne

In addition, you might be interested in reading the FAQ about the article published by MANA at <http://mana.org/blog/Practitioner-Practice-Characteristics-Certified-Professional-Midwives>

A little about Dr. Everson... Courtney joined the Midwives College of Utah in January 2010. She is the MCU Graduate Dean and the Ethical Review Board Chair, as well as a faculty instructor and thesis advisor in both the graduate and undergraduate programs. She is a medical anthropologist, social justice activist, and higher education leader. Courtney is also the Director of Research Education for the Midwives Alliance (MANA) Division of Research; Co-Founder & current Vice President of the Oregon Doula Association; a birth doula; a homebirth midwife assistant; an Accreditation Review Committee member for the Midwifery Education Accreditation Council (MEAC); and serves on the Board of Directors for the international organization, the Australasian Professional Doula Regulatory Association (APDRA), and a local non-profit, Doulas Supporting Teens.

Speaking of our graduate program...



Congratulations to Paula Hostler, recipient of the Harris-Braun outstanding poster awards for graduate professional research!
Way to go, Paula!

Student Conference

Recap from Fall Conference & Updates for 2016

Every few months we have the opportunity to gather together at conference. We come for learning, but the interaction with instructors, students and staff keep many of us coming back every chance we get. It's a great opportunity for everyone who attends.

This fall's conference included the opportunity for CPR/NRP certification as well as lots of hands-on learning in skills classes and workshops and a wonderful Childbirth Education class.



CPR / NRP

Tuesday night featured an opportunity for everyone to gather for a wonderful discussion about The Briana Project and an intimate screening of "The Mama Sherpas: Midwives Across America."

Every conference seems to have something fun and unexpected happen and this one was no exception as one expecting mama in the Prenatal Care Lab Skills workshop found out she may be having twins!

As usual each person in attendance left with new skills, new friendships, and a renewed energy for what we do.



Dinner & Movie Screening



Possibly finding two heartbeats!

Conferences Classes are beneficial for all. Taught by expert instructors students have the opportunity to gain hands on learning in addition to their regular classes. These intensive courses provide valuable experience as they learn clinical skills and have the opportunity to pass off some of those skills.

Conference is Changing

In working to improve conference experiences, we are changing when conferences will be held. Conference weeks will now be **between** semesters. Moving from the middle of the semester allows student attendees the opportunity to access learning through workshops offered without interruption to classes. It is an opportunity to take a week for yourself to uplift and regenerate, surrounded by amazing individuals. We look forward to seeing you there next year!

Mark Your Calendars Now for 2016:
April 18-23 and August 15-20

Join us at MCU!

Become an MCU student!

Application deadline for Winter 2016 semester is October 30, 2015!

Apply today at <http://www.midwifery.edu/application-process/>



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