

# MCU IN REVIEW

Official Newsletter for the Midwives College of Utah Community



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## President's Message

*Invite Mara to Tea*

Kristi Ridd-Young, MCU President

Matt Trainer, the head of Facebook Partnerships Program Management by day and a writer by night, opened a recent article with the bold statement that the one attitude you can't succeed without is receptivity to feedback. He references several psychological studies demonstrating that "people who are defensive, or bad at receiving feedback, are more likely to damage their careers, sabotage their relationships, and generally suffer from lower levels of happiness" (2018, para. 1).

Highly successful people remain curious, admit they have much to learn, and open themselves to feedback from others. As a midwifery student, feedback is an inherent part of the student/preceptor relationship. "All definitions suggest that feedback is an interactive process which aims to provide learners with insight into their performance" (Clynes & Rafferty, 2008). Assuming that the preceptor has mastered the art of giving timely, effective feedback and does not abuse the obvious

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power differential, this inclusive definition implies there are two “essential elements of feedback: It should be interactive, meaning that students should be invited to participate in the process (through self-reflection, self-evaluation, and discussion), and its goal should be to encourage learners to think critically about their practice” (Clynes & Rafferty, 2008).

It can be difficult to receive feedback without becoming defensive. It’s important to separate your self-worth from the feedback and remember that feedback is simply asking us to improve a behavior or a skill. When you slip into a defensive mode, you have likely slipped into a fight-or-flight frame of mind. That is not a place where you can hear or accomplish anything constructive. Some red flags of defensiveness are:

- The voice in my head runs through a list of reasons why negative feedback isn’t true.
- I start talking quickly and run through a series of points without taking a breath.
- I stop listening to what my teammates are saying.
- I find justifications for my work that have nothing to do with my capability or the effort I put in (“You didn’t give me enough time,” “Bob didn’t send me his stuff”).
- My heart starts to race when I get feedback, especially if it’s in a group setting.
- I begin my response to feedback with the word but.
- I respond to a criticism about my work with a criticism about someone else’s work (“Juan’s presentation was worse than mine!”).
- I use sarcasm to deflect the feedback or to get a laugh at my teammate’s expense.
- I cross my arms and close my body off to the person providing feedback.
- I smile and nod in hopes that the person will stop (Davey, 2014).

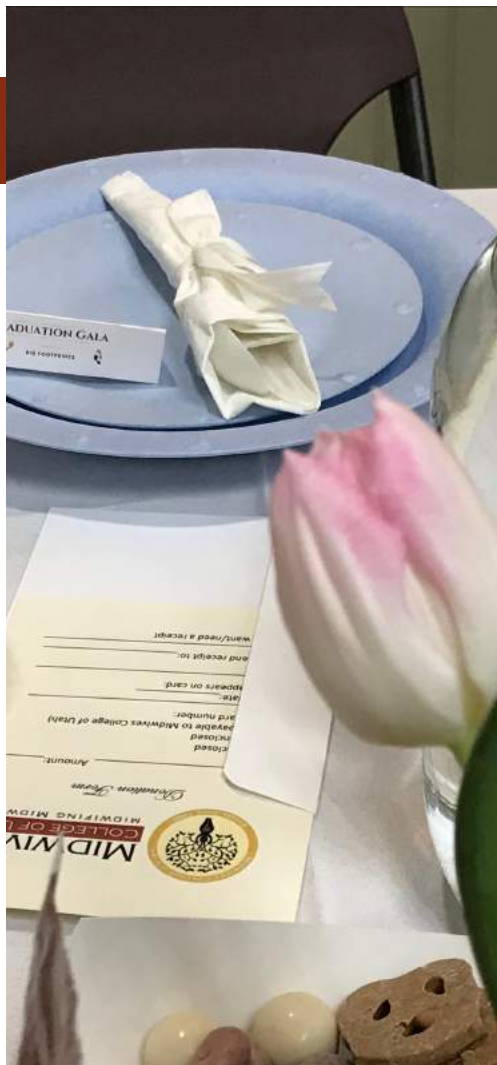


So, what do you do if you receive a feedback opportunity but find yourself slipping into defensiveness? Take a deep breath, center on your self-worth, and listen with gratitude. This person (a preceptor perhaps) cares enough to take the time to share something they believe will lead to improvement. Consider empathy toward the giver, too. It is often just as hard to give the feedback as it is to receive. After sincerely thanking the person for the feedback, step away and curiously try to understand what alterations are needed. Change is hard but making a commitment to accept the feedback and adjust your behavior is exactly what is needed to achieve. Remember that as a student you want your preceptors and other faculty members to do their job by giving you the feedback that will help you develop the knowledge, skills, and behaviors to become a Midwife of Excellence.

Rather than fearfully resisting feedback, simply say,

“**Thank you for helping me see myself more clearly**”

and follow Rumi’s advice by opening our hearts and willingly inviting Mara to tea.



# Inviting Mara to Tea

*Rumi*

This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!...

The dark thought, the shame, the  
malice,  
meet them at the door laughing,  
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.



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Clynes, M. P., & Raftery, S. E. C. (2008). Feedback: An essential element of student learning in clinical practice. *Nurse education in practice*, 8(6), 405-411. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2008.02.003>  
Davey, L. (2014). Are you being defensive? *Psychology Today*, Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/making-your-team-work/201403/are-you-being-defensive>  
Trainer, M. (2018). How improving receptivity to feedback can supercharge your career. Retrieved from <https://betterhumans.coach.me/the-one-attitude-you-cant-succeed-without-5e7090ca8db1>



## Skill Suites 2019 Recap

“ There's so many great things to learn, people to meet, and unique opportunities that come with being at conference - I think everyone should attend as regularly as possible.” -Attendee

April 22nd - 27th, 2019

With 27 workshops over the course of six days, MCU students and the midwifery and birth community at large had many opportunities to learn and practice maternal and neonatal health skills. In addition to professional midwifery development, Skill Suites is an opportunity to connect with fellow students, midwives and MCU faculty and staff.

Beginning this year, MCU's conferences are only held one time annually in April. Our next conference will be April 2020. This past April MCU added many new first-time workshops including Anatomy and Physiology with Cadavers covering the childbearing reproductive systems.

It was a stimulating week of workshops, assessments, laughter, conversation, debate, food, and companionship with friends both new and old. Each year we strive to improve your conference experience. We hope that this year we did just that, and we look forward to seeing you next year!

# Graduation Gala

Graduates, family members and guests flooded the Gale Center in Sandy, UT on Tuesday, April 23rd, at 7pm. With a packed house, MCU celebrated the large graduating class with speeches, a musical sketch, a dance and more. Ten of our graduates attended live while many more watched from home.

The theme of this year's Gala was Small Steps, Big Footprints and MCU is confident that each of the graduates honored at the 2019 Gala are creating large impacts in their local communities.

A recording of the event will be available to view and shared with the MCU community.

To view the Graduates video, visit:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuC92yQVjmQ>

## Awards:

**Student of Excellence**  
Amanda Cagle

**Student of Excellence**  
Ashley Jones

**Faculty Member of Excellence**  
Jodie Palmer

**Staff Member of Excellence**  
Megan Koontz

**Midwifing Midwives Award**  
Kristin Effland





# GRADUATES

2018-2019

## ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE IN MIDWIFERY

Amanda Osborne	Diana Miller	Katy Miller
Amy Keillor	Eliza Spears	Krista Miracle
Angela Leon	Gloria Moore	Lori Francescutti
Arden Kindred	Haley Law	McKenzie McQueen
Brittany "Tru" Kellman	Hayley Swedelius	Rachel Brunacini
Bethany McKinnon	Irena Freystaetter	Rebeccah Hazel
Chris Arrowsmith	Jacqueline Natasha Boyd	Susan Fisk
Christine Larson	Jennifer Rabins	Tiffany Marie Wilson
Crystal Hanner	Kari Riley	

## BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MIDWIFERY

Anna Ivanyi	Jessica Vining
Britton Doolittle	Jill Welch
Christina Bordeau	Michelle Gilley
Janelle Weishaar	Rachel Dolph
Jennifer Fardink	Susan Bender
Jennifer Jester	

*Small Steps*



**BIG FOOTPRINTS**





# MSM GRAD

## Meet Ramona Denk Webb, MSM Graduate

WRITTEN BY MASHA MESYEF

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MCU is proud to announce the graduation of Ramona Denk Webb from MCU's Masters of Science in Midwifery Program. Ramona has been passionate about midwifery and maternal and newborn health for many years. From working with individual birthing centers in the Philippines and providing Maternal Health education in Sudan, and in-service education for nurses in Iraq, Ramona has been counteracting birth inequality through empowering people through education. Currently in Papua New Guinea and getting ready to travel to four countries, Ramona spoke to our Marketing Director about her experiences and her goals. "That's why I did a Masters, I wanted to address broad issues,"

she said. "I wanted a piece of paper to validate my knowledge and I wanted to be more employable. I expected to be strengthened and enriched in things I already knew, but because of the structure I learned a whole lot more." She continued that the MCU MSM program has helped her become more prepared and allowed her to focus on newborn care, resuscitation and global health which "really fed into what I was going for." Ramona described herself as a recovering perfectionist and identified patience and support from significant others as key to her success in the MSM program. MCU is proud of Ramona for her accomplishment and looks forward to following her journey.

MCU Student Romy Sharieff completed an internship at Shiphrah Birthing Home in the Philippines. To view a video featuring her time at the placement visit: <https://youtu.be/iAL2CBadMO0>. Romy designed a campaign for Donate Life Virginia in memory of her friend Andrew Luna who passed away unexpectedly ([www.facebook.com/AndrewLunaChallenge](http://www.facebook.com/AndrewLunaChallenge)). To promote the campaign, an international website published a video, Romy had a featured article in a national faith-based magazine, and the campaign was featured throughout social media. Romy shares, "My education at MCU through all the various classes gave me the skills to design, market, and promote the campaign! I'm so grateful for the amazing instructors that gave me the skills to honor my friend Andrew who became an organ donor a year ago. The skills I've learnt at MCU are not just about midwifery, it's changed the way I think and approach life - it's given me the critical skills to ask the tough questions, gain confidence in many aspects of my life, and realize I can be someone that creates positive change."

**HEALTH**

## Islamic Perspectives on End-of-Life Organ Donations

Becoming an organ donor requires heart and thought

BY ROMY SHARIEFF

**A**NDREW LUNA, 36, A HARD-WORKING, respected scientist honored by the Virginia General Assembly, was a devoted son and friend who lived his values. On Dec. 16, 2017, he became an organ, eye and tissue donor. His generosity and compassion raised my curiosity about Islam's perspective on organ donation. Given

**Q.** What verses support organ donation?  
**A.** Verse 5:32, which equates the saving of one life with the saving all of humanity, is frequently referenced to encourage the practice. The many verses on charity, one of Islam's five pillars, also bolster the argument for organ donation.

**Q.** Which principles support the decision to become an organ donor?

**WE OFTEN GROW THE MOST SPIRITUALLY IN THOSE PLACES THAT ARE THE MOST UNCOMFORTABLE. OUR TRUE PURPOSE IN LIFE IS TO PLEASE GOD, AND FIGURING OUT HOW TO MANIFEST THIS IN A MEANINGFUL WAY IS THE JOURNEY.**

or bone marrow are acceptable and unlimited donation is not acceptable. Arguments against organ donation include:

In 2018, MCU Student, Clarissa Baxter attended over 40 births as a midwife assistant and spent over 1,000 hours getting to know women and families in the community to provide superior health, prenatal and postpartum care. She also visited the home and grave of her 4th great grandmother who was a midwife in Arizona. To view her eportfolio, visit: [natureandnurturebirth.weebly.com](http://natureandnurturebirth.weebly.com) On her experiences, Clarissa shares: "Everyday I can't believe how lucky I am to be doing such honored work. I feel blessed beyond measure and give thanks to my God for leading me to this great work."



This past Winter, MCU was honored to support Brittany "Tru" Campbell's fundraising Gala for her nonprofit, Jamaa Village. MCU is one of the contributors to the funds raised to support St. Louis' only non-profit equal access midwifery clinic. To learn more about Tru's wonderful achievements and the work of Jamaa Village, visit <https://www.jamaasnewhome.org/Tru> (pictured above on the right) said, "I appreciate MCU! It feels great to have the support of my school."

# Student Features



## Warmest Welcomes to:



*Allyson Juneau-Butler*  
Admissions Director



*Demetra "Mimi" Seriki*  
Adjunct Faculty



*Jennifer Bertagnole*  
Office Manager



*Lynette Elizalde Robinson*  
Clinical Faculty



*Sharon Bernecki DeJoy*  
Adjunct Faculty



## Fond Farewells to



*April Kline*

April has been a faculty member at MCU for approximately nine years.



*Courtney Everson*

Courtney has taken a position with Colorado State University



*Maria Cranford*

Our former Clinical Director left MCU to focus on her family.

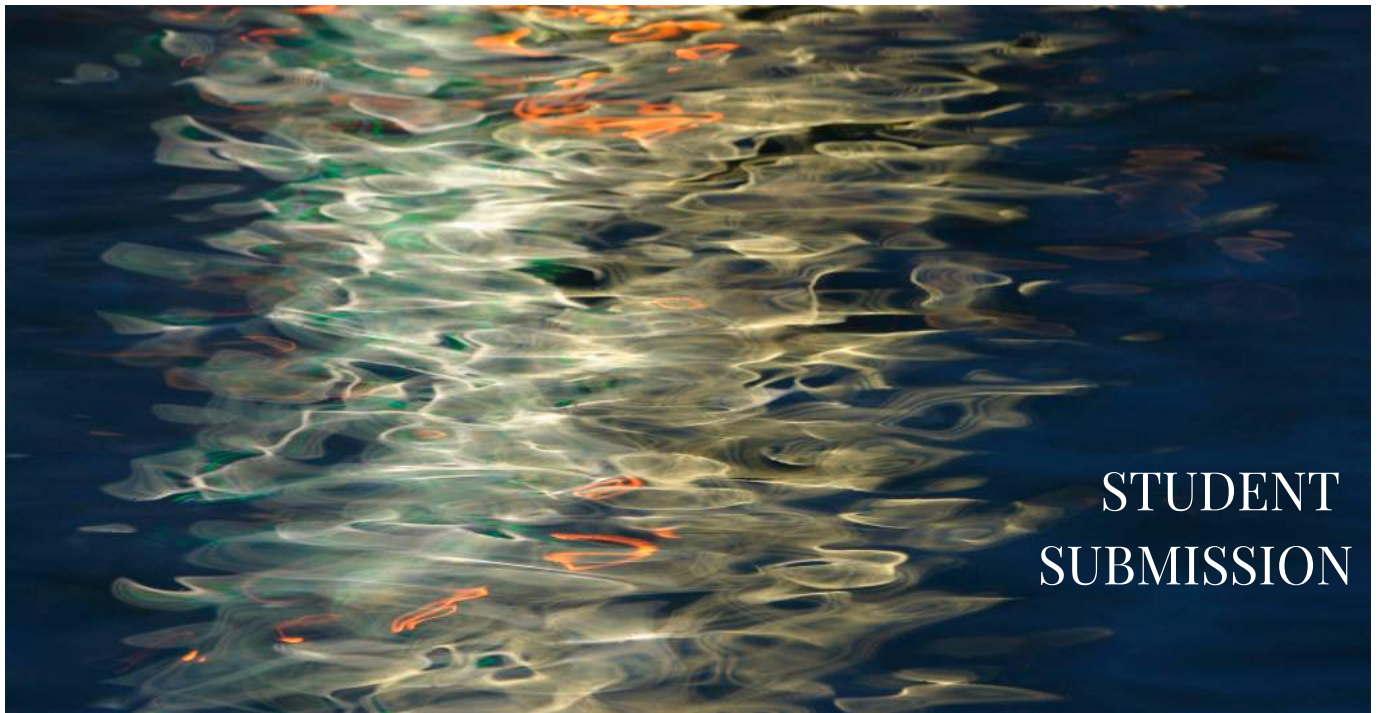


*Melissa Smith-Tourville*

Former Admissions Director will remain at MCU in her Core Faculty capacity

On behalf of the MCU Board of Directors, Administration, students, faculty, and staff, thank you for your years of service to Midwives College of Utah and all you have done to inspire and support midwives of technical expertise, professional excellence, and personal greatness.

*thank you!*



## STUDENT SUBMISSION

### Reflection on Observed Experiences

*Cynthia Bean*, MCU Student

I remember well that very first night I got The Call as a brand-new apprentice midwife. I had attended several visits with the client, and I participated with her prenatal care. Hers was the first pregnant belly that I had ever touched besides my own. I remember placing my hands on her and feeling nothing but belly. I remember attempting to take her blood pressure, fumbling with the equipment and getting it wrong. I felt clumsy and awkward with everything, but my mentor didn't expect as much from me as I had expected from myself. She only wanted to give me the chance to start trying out the skills. She knew that the work towards proficiency would be a process.

That first birth took place on a chilly winter morning in 2009. I reveled in the crisp air as I walked out my door at 2am, started my car, and turned up the radio. The two-hour drive seemed to fly by and very quickly I was at the client's cottage. The client was on the couch in the main room of her home. The midwives

showed me how to set up the birth supplies near the kitchen. It felt like there was so much to remember. At one point the client started moaning loudly with contractions. One of the midwives showed her how to direct her energy and to work with her body. As dawn broke, the new baby boy arrived sweetly and with little fanfare. The work of the midwives seemed like magic to me. How could I ever learn to be like them?

I remember the feeling of accomplishment when my preceptor started taking my blood pressure numbers instead of rechecking. Then I remember the day she dropped her bag at my feet, handed me the chart, and informed me that I would be conducting that prenatal visit. I was nervous, fumbling, and sweating. **I wasn't ready.** I didn't know yet that I would have to get used to feeling "Not Ready."

I remember my 8th birth when my preceptor put me right at the perineum while the baby

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was coming. The membranes bulged, then released with a gush. The midwife placed my hands on the baby's head and I marveled. I was the first one ever to touch her. Even though I didn't catch this baby, I was in awe.

My first catch was birth #13, a sweet baby girl who came swiftly. I froze when I saw her coming. "I'm catching a baby! I'm catching a baby!" I almost forgot to catch the baby. She unfolded, wet and wiggly in my hands and she opened her eyes. I watched her become aware. I watched her take her first breath, and I watched the pink come into her face. She was about the most beautiful creature I had ever seen.

I'd caught a baby. Did this mean I was a Midwife?

**I was in awe of the name**

**"Midwife." The word is powerful. It means something. I spent much of my time as a student wondering when I would earn the right to say, "I am a Midwife."** I asked several people. I had some tell me I had to be a CPM. Then I would be a Midwife. Others pointed to the legacy of wise women who were catching babies long before the credentialing system of the North American Registry of Midwives. Occasionally, **I would look in the mirror and say the word out loud, just to see how it felt for me.** I would quickly decide that I wasn't ready yet. **When would I be ready? When would I be a Midwife?**

I remember the first time I pricked a baby girl's heel for her newborn metabolic screening. She screamed for what seemed like forever while I struggled to saturate four circles of filter paper with her blood as anxious parents watched me. I hated it so much that I told my preceptor, "I quit." She said, "You're tougher than that."

Then I remember the night, about a year after I started apprenticing, when my midwife

friend and I lost a baby boy to a complication. It was surreal; a nightmare. I remember in the moment looking to my mentor and asking, "So, what do we do now? What do we do now?" It had never occurred to me that she might not have the answer; that there might not be an answer.

**She wasn't magic, after all. None of us are.**

After that baby died, I took some time to get my head together. I had conversations with my mentors, and they were very supportive. I told the midwife who attended that birth that even after everything that happened, I still felt passionate about what we do. **She told me that anyone who could come back from something like that was meant to be a midwife.** Was I a Midwife?

In the years to come I would start giving homebirth consults to prospective clients. I had to call myself "Midwife" even though I didn't really believe it. I started attending births as a primary "Midwife" under supervision. I spent three months serving as a volunteer "Midwife" at a charity birth clinic in the Philippines, and when I returned home I began practicing independently. My name is on a business card that says "Midwife."

Sometimes I can point to specific moments where things shifted, and other times the process is less discrete. I can't say specifically when, but I did eventually grow comfortable saying, "I am a Midwife". **The word is powerful. It means something.**



# Recognitions

## CONGRATULATIONS!

MCU Student **Atoosa Benji** published an article in Dona International. called: "Health Disparities: Black Mothers and Low Birth-Weight Babies"

MCU Student **Romy Sharieff** received an NACPM Bigger Table Award!

Core Faculty Member **Susi Delaney** published the following article in Midwifery Matters: A Perfect Union: Bringing together client values and preferences, best available research, and clinical expertise to build an evidence-informed midwifery practice. Midwifery Matters, Spring 2018, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp 20-26.

Additionally, she was a conference presenter at MANA 2018. Susi spoke on the topic of "Special Belly Buttons: Recognition, Implications, and Management of Gastroschisis & Omphalocele in the Out-of-Hospital Practice." She also co-presented a workshop called: "Ears to Hear: Newborn Screening and Parent Education to Help Children Reach their Full Potential" with Carrie Werner, ND.

Adjunct Faculty Member **Kristin Effland** published an article in Midwifery Matters as well. Her article is titled: "BEYOND CULTURAL COMPETENCE: EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN MIDWIFERY EDUCATION"

Effland, K. J., Hays, K. (2019). Beyond cultural competence: Equity and social justice in midwifery education. Midwifery Matters, 5(2):11-17.

MSM Student and TA, **Ashley Jones** presented at MAWS 2019 and as a guest speaker for Bastyr's Prenatal Complications course. Her presentation is titled: Intrahepatic Cholestasis of Pregnancy: A Holistic Protocol for Prevention and Management in a Community Birth Setting.

Ashley also held the third session of her 3-day intensive "Introduction to Midwife Assisting" course in Port Orchard, WA.



## MCU IN REVIEW IS FOR YOU!

Share your stories, your updates and your ideas with [marketing@midwifery.edu](mailto:marketing@midwifery.edu) to include in the next edition of our newsletter. The newsletter is designed to inform and inspire our community. Are you a seasoned student or recent grad with thoughts about your experiences or are you working on a project, internship, speaking engagement we can pat you on the back for? MCU is interested in what's going on with you. Send your updates to [marketing@midwifery.edu](mailto:marketing@midwifery.edu) or use this form:

<https://forms.gle/GmXTrzQjkgJB4Wtg8>



**MIDWIVES**  
COLLEGE OF UTAH  
MIDWIFING MIDWIVES