

MCU IN REVIEW

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1

SPRING 2017

WELCOME!

Welcome to New Faculty & Staff:

Tamara Taitt, Academic Dean

Kim Blue, Grant Writer

Megan Koontz, Graduate House Mother

GOOD-BYE'S

Nicole Croft, Academic Dean

Raven Haymond, Graduate House Mother

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President's Message What Makes You Come Alive?

Kristi Ridd-Young - MCU President

"Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive.

And then go and do that.

Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

 \sim Attributed to Howard Thurman



l love this quote from Dr. Howard Thurman who was an influential African-American author, philosopher, theologian, educator, and civil rights leader

Think about the innate sense of purpose and passion you had as a young child. Do you

remember that feeling of knowing your heart's desire? Unfortunately, as we grow up, we learn from a combination of observation, advice, and painful experience that wanting is a selfish activity. By the time we're adolescents, we listen to the inner voice that reminds us "why we shouldn't want what we want." We learn not to yearn. As adults, it's possible that we are outwardly successful, but the inability to define our own dreams has blocked our sense of purpose, excitement, and passion. Somewhere along the way, the juiciness of life disappeared. We need to yearn and seek after the desires of our heart. Otherwise, we risk losing a foundation from which to offer generosity and compassion to others.

So.... Close, your eyes. Go to a place of stillness...a place of nothingness. Focus on nothing but your breath. Ask yourself, "What do I want? What do I want? What do I really want?" Begin feeling around in your heart for a sense of your desires. Stay in stillness and pay attention to any feelings coming up for you. Give your desire time to tell its story. What gives you that outright, pulse-pounding, grab-you-by the guts yearning?

Of course, it's possible that as you intentionally reconnect with your true desires, you'll find your passion arrayed in long, loosely connected trails. You might have to get comfortable with the discomfort of discovery. The longing for one specific thing leads to another, then another, then another—and then one day, quite unexpectedly, you'll realize that you are coming out of the woods in a life you love.

As students of midwifery, embrace the opportunity to design a midwifery practice that supports your generous and compassionate nature—a practice that you will love and that sustains you. Be present and committed to the journey. The world needs now, more than ever, midwives who are alive with passion and purpose.

Welcome to MCU!

It brings us great joy to introduce you to the newest members of the MCU family!



Tamara Taitt, Academic Dean

Please join us in welcoming Tamara Taitt as our new Academic Dean. Tamara was born in Barbados, West Indies and grew up in Brooklyn, New York. She completed her Bachelor's degree in Psychology at Princeton University with minors in Women's Studies and African-American Studies and relocated to Miami, FL in 2003 to finish an associate degree in direct entry Midwifery at Miami Dade College. Halfway through Miami Dade's program, driven by an underlying passion for psychology and seeking for a more holistic approach to client care, she completed a Masters in Marriage & Family Therapy at Nova Southeastern University, followed by PhD coursework as a fellow for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Her research interests focus on the impact of sexuality and reproductive health issues on emotional well-being and exploring mental health issues that are pervasive during the childbearing year including post-traumatic stress related to birth, postpartum depression, perinatal bereavement and the residual effects of perinatal health

disparities on maternal mental health.

Tamara has been a faculty member at Aviva Institute as well as at the Florida School of Traditional Midwifery. Over the last decade her commitment to the sustainability of the midwifery profession has led her to serve on the boards of the Midwives Alliance of North America, the Foundation for the Advancement of Midwifery, Florida School of Traditional Midwifery and Florida Friends of Midwives.

In 2011, with her partner, she founded The Gathering Place, Miami's only pregnancy, childbirth and parenting resource center. She is co-owner and founder of Magnolia Birth House a community funded birthing center in North Miami Beach, FL. Tamara has had a long-standing interest in women's reproductive health, birth politics and activism and deeply believes that health disparities in infant mortality are the battleground on which midwifery will be proven to be the gold standard of maternity care.

When not binge watching British dramas on Netflix, Tamara enjoys reading, traveling on the West Coast, and trying out recipes from her 300+ volume cookbook collection.



Kim Blue, Grant Writer

Please join us in welcoming Kim Blue as MCU's first official Grant Writer. When not gardening, cooking, reading, writing, walking in the woods, or learning about plant medicines, Kim is often thinking about how to best frame a conversation or present an idea. She is pleased to admit she's never met someone who hasn't taught her something - either in the classroom or out.

Kime earned her BA in English from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and her MS in Women's Studies at Minnesota State University, Mankato. As a lifelong learner, she also loves teaching. At Madison Area Technical College Kim enjoyed teaching composition and writing skills as an adjunct faculty member; as State Grants Coordinator, she enjoyed guiding grants staff through the grant writing and development process, especially the differences between measurable outcomes and activities, and creating a budget.

Prior to her work with MCU, Kim worked with Morning Star Women's Health and Birth Center, which was not only a great way to be surrounded by the day-to-day business of birth, but also the joy, passion and incredible dedication of midwives and the families they serve. She is deeply moved to be in her current role at MCU, and looks forward to collaboratively developing diverse and resilient sources of funding for the college.

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MCU Around Town...

Whether presenting in professional venues, running for local office, or publishing articles, the staff, faculty, students, and alumni of MCU are often doing great work to continue to improve the quality of midwifery care and the reach of the midwifery community.

Dr. Courtney Everson, Graduate Dean, presented an online webinar for the National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (NACPM) titled "Evidence-Informed Practice: Research Literacy & Shared Decision-Making." An overview of her presentation, as well as links to more information, can be found at http://nacpm.org/are-you-finding-the-best-available-research-to-inform-your-practice/.

Dr. Everson also just became the new 1st Vice President for the Association of Midwifery Educators (AME). AME is a non-profit organization committed to strengthening midwifery educators, schools, and administrators through connection, collaboration and coordination. All midwifery educators – preceptors, academic faculty, and school administrators – are welcome as members.

Emily Rainey, Financial Aide Coordinator, was recently published in Birth Journal. She led a team of five authors to complete "Utah obstetricians' opinions of planned home birth and conflicting NICE/ACOG guidelines: A qualitative study." The full article can be found at http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/wol1/doi/10.1111/birt.12276/full.

-Congratulations

New MCU Graduates!!

Earning their Associate of Science in Midwifery degrees, we would like to congratulate...

Tiffani Hoffman, Gabriella Price, & Rita Willis

Earning a Bachelor of Science in Midwifery please help us congratulate...

Megan Nowland, Jennifer Bertagnole, & Jennifer Brakeman

MCU Speaker Series

Professional Development Coordinator Jana Studelska has initiated a Speaker Series at MCU!

So far we have had the opportunity to hear from Master Herbalist Betzy Bancroft, Anishanabe Traditional Midwife Dorene Waubanewquay Day, and Mary Lawlor, Executive Director of NACPM & Advisor to MAMA Campaign. Jana's efforts are bringing outside experts right to our community; we get to learn from them and they have an opportunity to become part of us.

Save The Date

The Process of Integrating Evidence (PIE) for CIH Educators Annual Conference is being held at Northwestern University of Health and Sciences July 13-15, 2017. This 3-day program is designed to provide CIH educators training in the principles, practice and teaching of Evidence-Informed Practice (EIP). For more information visit: www.ciheducatorsforeip.org

MCU's application deadline for the Winter Semester 2018 is July 10, 2017. Visit <u>www.midwifery.edu</u> for more information, or go to <u>www.midwifery.edu/apply-now</u> to apply!

Student Conferences & Integrated Assessments will be held April 24-29 and August 21-26, 2017. Please reach out to the Conference Director with any questions at <u>conference@midwifery.edu</u>. <u>www.midwifery.edu/student-conferences</u>

The MANA 2017 Midwives Conference - in collaboration with the California Association of Midwives - will be held in Long Beach, CA November 2-5. Many MCU students, faculty, and alumni will be there! Join us!! <u>mana.org/events/mana-cam-2017-conference</u>



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 academicdean@midwifery.edu

Student Conferences

If you haven't attended a student conference yet, or if it has been a few semesters, we highly recommend that you register and attend the upcoming MCU Student Conference. If you have attended recently - be sure to bring someone new with you! In addition to expanding your skills and having the opportunity to work on your next semesters' classes, conference is an opportunity to meet your classmates in person, make new friends, and encircle yourself with the opportunity to fully engage with the Midwives College of Utah community. Perfecting skills and learning from experienced professionals, conference is a resource of incomparable value. Students, midwives, teachers, and MCU staff all are welcome to come and share in the camaraderie found here. We hope you will take the opportunity to further prepare yourself for the future, both as a student and as a midwife.

For more information, to view the Conference schedule: <u>https://www.midwifery.edu/student-conferences/</u>

2017 Conference Dates: April 24-29 & August 21-26

MCU Student Conference attendees have the opportunity to learn and practice clinical skills in a safe learning environment. In addition, the opportunity to socialize with other MCU students, instructors, midwives, and MCU staff is an invaluable experience. This connection opens the door to expanded relationships with peers and mentors. Come and recognize your unique place in the larger MCU community.

Conference works to:

- Enhance clinical skills through hands-on practice and receive objective feedback from experts.
- Gain inspiration and motivation for next semester's courses by participating in face-to-face, facilitated activities that serve as companion experiences for your academic coursework.
- Create professional connections and form lifelong relationships that will enrich your experience and career.

Conference attendees may take any workshop that aligns with their current major map and/or clinical placement. Enrollment in conference courses that correspond with the student's schedule for the following semester may allow the student to complete some assignments for that course while at conference. MCU students must be enrolled in the clinical program in order to have skills assessed and signed off at conference.

2017 Conference & Gala Theme

The 2017 Conference theme of "Transform" is representative of the transformation we all make as we work our way through school, training, preceptorships, and, finally, earning our degree in Midwifery. The person we will be when we pass the NARM is often a very different person than the one who first applied to MCU. That transformation is a beautiful one; from hope to success: from student to midwife.

at Conference

Maybe the journey isn't so much about becoming anything. Maybe it's about un-becoming everything that isn't really you so you can be who you were meant to be in the first place. \sim Paul Coelho

It's time to transform... Your wing s are n

Courtney L. Everson, Ph.D., Academic Faculty & Dean of Graduate Studies, graduatedean@midwifery.edu

~ The MCU MSM program is research-based and is intended to nurture the next generation of midwifery leaders, educators, and advocates~

Are you looking to advance your skills as a midwife? Perhaps you are interested in becoming a midwifery educator? Want to apply your creativity and love for midwifery on a larger scale? Do you want to advance social justice and health equity? If you answered "yes!" to any of these questions, the Master of Science in Midwifery (MSM) program at MCU may be just what you are looking for!

The MCU graduate program is designed especially for midwives looking to obtain advanced skills in one or more of our four areas of program distinction: midwifery research, midwifery outreach, midwifery policy, and midwifery education. Graduates of our program are equipped with the foundational skills necessary to be leaders in the maternity care landscape, contributing to the development of best practice models, social justice and equity, advocacy initiatives, community engagement, and evidence-informed care.

Here are the fast facts!

Degree: Master of Science in Midwifery (MSM)

<u>Institution</u>: Midwives College of Utah (MCU), the largest MEAC-accredited school in the United States. Students are eligible for federal financial aid too!

<u>Campus</u>: Anywhere you are! We are a distance-learning program, which means you can continue to live and work where you are currently located while earning your degree through an interactive, online platform. We bring graduate education to you!

<u>Program Length</u>: 2 years on average. 32 credits total. Full-time status is 4 – 6 credits per trimester. Part-time options are available.

Admission Requirements:

To be eligible for admission, a prospective student must:

- Hold a Bachelor's degree in any field;
- Complete SOSC 1010 (Equity & Anti-Oppression in Midwifery Care: Understanding Difference, Power & Privilege), SOSC 2050 (Ethics & the Law) and STAT 2010 (Principles of Evidence-Informed Practice), or demonstrate course equivalency. These three courses can be completed as part of your graduate program; and
- Must be or have been recognized as a midwife by regional, national or international certification or licensure. Traditional or community midwives without past or current proof of certification/licensure may choose to prepare a portfolio demonstrating the experiences and training they engaged to become a midwife.

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPTIONS: not quite ready to jump into a full master's program? Or maybe you just want to advance your skills in a few key areas? We have you covered! Check out MCU's continuing education options: <u>https://www.midwifery.edu/continuing-education-and-ceus/</u>

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Master of Science in Midwifery (cont.)

Some graduate courses you might be interested in include: PROD 527/5027: Community Maternal & Child Health PROD 529/5029: Field Instructor Preparation PROD 530/5030: Global Maternal & Child Health PROD 532/5032: Midwifery Education

Whether a degree-seeking student or a continuing education student, your graduate studies will be individualized and substantive with plenty of support by graduate faculty and the MCU graduate student community. Contact Dr. Courtney Everson, Ph.D., Dean of Graduate Studies, at graduatedean@midwifery.edu or 866-680-2756, ext. 806 to discuss your future!

Ready to apply! Go for it! <u>https://www.midwifery.edu/application-process/</u>



Thank you!

On behalf of all of MCU, we'd like to offer our deep gratitude to **Nicole Croft, Academic Dean** for her more than nine years of service the MCU. All of us have directly benefited from the fruits of her labors with everything from stimulating, robust curriculum to the years she spent as our first "house mother" in Student Life and Leadership. Her contributions to our community are extensive, and she will be sorely missed.

From Nicole: "It is a bittersweet departure; I look forward to new challenges, growth and the opportunity to serve another cause I am so deeply passionate about. I will miss the MCU community and will cherish the wonderful lifelong relationships that have been forged over these last nine years. I am a better advocate, professional and woman for having MCU in my life, and profoundly humbled and grateful for the opportunity to serve and learn from each member of this unique and special community."

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Briana Blackwelder MCU Equal Access Scholarship

MCU believes that all individuals who seek midwifery education should be able to access it. Unfortunately, too often, this is not a reality, and midwifery education, along with the midwifery profession at-large, suffers without diverse communities and representation. We want to continue to be the change we wish to see in the midwifery community; therefore, we have created an initiative to advance social justice, anti-racism, anti-oppression and equity efforts within our college and the midwifery profession at large.

In honor of the wisdom and personal philosophy of Briana Blackwelder, an MCU graduate and friend of MCU who left this earth at the tender age of 28, MCU offers two scholarships that provide complete tuition relief: 1) Social Justice and Health Equity Scholarship; and 2) Equal Access Scholarship. With these scholarships, MCU strives to advance our goals by ensuring inclusive representation and support of diverse social identities and locations in midwifery education, including racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic, and religious backgrounds.

Eligibility Criteria for the Equal Access Scholarship

To be eligible for this award, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Identify as a student of color and/or member of another underrepresented community in midwifery (e.g., LGBTQ).
- 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);
- Plan to become a Certified Professional Midwife or otherwise engage the midwifery profession;
- Demonstrate financial need; and
- 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.

Eligibility Criteria for the Social Justice and Health Equity Scholarship

To be eligible for this award, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- 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;
- Demonstrate experience in advancing social justice and health equity within midwifery and maternal health;
- Articulate a vision for how they are going to help advance health equity and social justice in midwifery upon graduation; and
- 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.
- Students of color are especially encouraged to apply for this fund.

For further details about these scholarships and to apply, please visit <u>https://www.midwifery.edu/diversity-scholarship-fund/</u>

Application deadline is July 1st, 2017.

To access Midwives College of Utah's Equity and Social Justice Position Statement, please visit our webpage <u>www.midwifery.edu/equity-and-social-justice/</u>

Evidence-informed Practice NACPM Webinar – get your CEUs!

Courtney L. Everson, Ph.D., Academic Faculty & Dean of Graduate Studies, 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"

How do you find the best available clinical guidance? How do you engage clients effectively in shared decisionmaking? On February 16, 2017, Dr. Courtney L. Everson answered these questions and more as part of an invited national webinar entitled, "Evidence-Informed Practice: Research Literacy & Shared Decision-Making". This webinar was hosted by the National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (NACPM) as part of their webinar series on CPM practice. The webinar introduced midwives to the basics of research literacy, critical appraisal of the literature, and applying research to midwifery care. Evidence-informed practice (EIP) resides at the intersection of the best available research, the midwife's professional expertise, and the client's individual values, needs, and context. This webinar taught participants how to integrate research effectively into midwifery practice using the EIP framework!

The webinar was highly attended and very well received. Did you miss it? No worries! Recordings of the NACPM webinars are always available on the NACPM website: http://nacpm.org/cpm-practice-and-association-news-webinar-series/

Want CEUs? Just login to Digital Chalk—the continuing education platform of the Association of Midwifery Educators (AME)—and purchase the CEU packet for this webinar! http://www.associationofmidwiferyeducators.org/continuing-education-for-midwives-and-midwifery-educators/

This webinar also qualifies for the NARM Category 3 Bridge Certificate: http://narm.org/bridge-certificate/category-3/

Want a teaser introduction? Read the NACPM newsletter article on the subject! http://nacpm.org/are-you-finding-the -best-available-research-to-inform-your-practice/

Onward, EIP midwives!

Graduate House Mother

We must say farewell to **Raven Haymond**. Sadly for us, but happily for her, Raven has accepted admissions to a PhD program. The Graduate Program faculty and students would like to sincerely thank Raven for her tireless service as House Mother. Raven was the first ever Graduate House Mother at MCU, and she helped form this new initiative to be a robust program with deep impact. Thank you, Raven! You will be truly missed.

We are, however, thrilled to announce that **Megan Koontz** has been selected as the new Graduate House Mother. In this position, Megan will be working with MCU graduate students and faculty to facilitate community-building and professional development. The Graduate Studies Unit is excited to have Megan's experience and passion integrated into unit goals and offerings. Welcome Megan!

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Preceptor Spotlight

At the heart and soul of Midwives College of Utah is a talented, diverse and dedicated community. This spotlight feature focuses on the preceptor members of our community, those providing the clinical handson-skills and clinical commitment to MCU students.

For this Preceptor Spotlight we have the opportunity to highlight a partnership of an LM and CNM working together to provide out of hospital care and who have forged a wonderful working relationship and experience for our MCU student.



Cynthia Jaffe, LM

Cynthia Jaffe is a Washington state-licensed Midwife and Erin Miksic is a Certified Nurse Midwife. Together, they care for women and families on Whidbey Island, WA.

Cynthia and Erin were spotlighted for the glowing evaluations submitted by their student Diana. "Cynthia is a continual student. She is a wealth of current, up-to-date information for all her clients," Diana said. "Erin moved here from New York and from a busy hospital practice. She has very quickly adapted to an out-of-hospital practice and learned all the differences between New York and Washington guidelines."

Cynthia: Becoming a preceptor initially I really wanted the companionship and energy that students brought to my solo practice. Later it became a combination of my desire to continue to learn and my desire to teach, share and guide other women journeying to become midwives.

Erin: I have been out of midwifery school for 4 years and I feel it's my duty, having had so many wonderful mentors along my journey as a student not long ago. Also, working with students keeps you current and up to date in

your practice as standards are often changing based on new literature and research.

Cynthia is dedicated to and understands and follows the state guidelines for safe midwifery care. She also talks about and follows the community standard of care. Diana accounts that Cynthia respects the culture of the community to ensure proper OB relationships for back up if needed.

Cynthia: I believe the best skill a midwife can learn is critical thinking on her feet. I like to talk about situations that arise where a midwife, or the student, needed to think five steps ahead. And when I see a student reading the situation and getting things ready if there's a possibility of hemorrhage or a baby that might be slow to start, it's so exciting.

As a midwife, one of my most cherished roles is that of teacher. I enjoy modeling good teaching skills to my students. This was not the case for when I was a student. I felt mostly like unpaid labor, there was not a lot of teaching going on.



Erin Miksic, CNM

(continued...)

Preceptor Spotlight

Cynthia sees being a preceptor as a combination of hands on skills and teaching of the skills.

Erin: I was very fortunate to have preceptors who were extremely warm and loving. They provided lots of feedback but always in encouraging and productive ways.

Erin reflects this experience in her role as a preceptor, as she works to emulate her own mentors and believes in positive reinforcement to promote learning and growth.

Cynthia: My advice to preceptors spans many valuable areas. I learned so much watching the "Midwife as Educator" series that is available through the Association of Midwifery Educators. It taught me so much about teaching and about myself. It was invaluable in furthering my skills. I would recommend it to any preceptor whether they are just starting out as a preceptor or, as in my case, have been one for 20 years.

Erin: Clear communication is extremely important in any partnership. Weekly chart reviews help us tremendously. Thorough notes are helpful too.

Cynthia: The hardest thing as a preceptor is when you recognize that a student actually may not succeed in her chosen goal of becoming a midwife. There have been several women throughout my years as a preceptor who, for one reason or another, I felt were not capable of learning the skills they needed to be a safe practitioner. In those very difficult situations, being open and honest, arranging a time to talk to the student with a representative of their academic program about my concerns, has proven to be the best way of dealing with the situation.

Erin: Since before working with Cynthia I had only worked in the hospital. I came into midwifery wanting to be a home birth/birth center midwife and Cynthia has helped me to find that path. I would say we share a very similar philosophy of care and I'm fortunate for that. I do not notice that many differences between our practice styles. Perhaps I have learned to be a little more gentle.

Cynthia: It has been great having a CNM who can teach me about women's health from the well woman standpoint; that has been so informative. Also, after being in solo practice for 25 years, I realize how much I like having another midwife to bounce situations off on. Also, you can't beat going down to half call! I've gotten to "lay my burdens down" for half of the month!

Diana summed up her evaluation by saying, "I expected things to be great here, but it has exceeded my expectations. I feel like a part of the team. I have many opportunities to practice new skills. I am respected and treated well."

Thank you Cynthia and Erin for your dedication and support and for midwifing our midwives and each other and modeling positive working relationships for our students to experience and in which they can fully participate!



If you have a preceptor who you feel would be an excellent candidate for a Preceptor Spotlight, please reach out to our Preceptor Liaison, Jenny Schultz, at preceptors@midwifery.edu.





Join us at MCU!

Become an MCU student!

Application deadline for Winter Semester 2018 is July 10, 2017!

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





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