## MCUINREVIEW: A LOOK BACK AT SUMMER 2024

Official Newsletter for the Midwives College of Utah Community



EST. 1980

## MIDWIVES COLLEGE OF UTAH MIDWIFING MIDWIVES

SUMMER 2024

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Dear students,

As we wrap up the year 2024, I want to share with you a reflection from my journey as an MCU alum and practicing midwife over the past decade: You are receiving an excellent education. When you graduate, you'll be fully prepared to serve families outside of the hospital in a holistic, evidence-based, and complete manner.

I graduated from MCU too, and while I've wrestled with imposter syndrome—sometimes I still do—I know this: I can stop a postpartum hemorrhage, safely deliver a sticky placenta, or help a baby breathe. Sometimes all at once. That confidence comes from the comprehensive, hands-on and academic training you're receiving right now.

You're being trained to handle the full spectrum of situations—normal and emergent—without the option of pushing a button to summon a team or handing off care to someone else. You're learning to support the entire physiological process, from pregnancy to birth to those precious first breaths and beyond.

Midwifery is not for the faint of heart. It will test your boundaries and present challenges that will demand growth. But each challenge is an opportunity to realign with your values and deepen your commitment to this transformative work.

You are on the best path. You are receiving an education that equips you not just with skills but with the resilience and insight to truly serve families. Trust the process, lean into the learning, and know that you're being prepared for a role that changes lives—including your own.

Keep going. The best is yet to come.

Warmly,
Cheryl Furer
MCU Board President
Interim Director of Student Success & Advising | Adjunct Faculty

## Midwives of Excelence

Saying you want to develop Midwives of Excellence is one thing. Actually creating a community of excellence is something else entirely. These next few pages are just the tip of the iceberg. Our community is working in so many ways to shift the history of birth and save lives, one birth at a time.

### Tips for Student Success

Angela Franklin, Division Dean / BIPOC Success & Intercultural Engagement

Student success begins the first day of class. Here are some best strategies for success:

- Understand that online courses are as demanding and rigorous as traditional on-campus courses
- Take time to review MCU academic policies and procedures and ask questions about any issues you don't fully understand.
- Attend class regularly
- From the beginning make every effort to fully understand assignments including the rubric in place to determine grades.
- Participate in online discussions and submit assignments on time
- Take advantage of all campus resources and advisors and develop a good relationship with your House Mentor
- With children, parents, work and other life responsibilities organize a schedule for your classes and then lose this time wisely.
- Identify a quiet, well-lit, comfortable study space.
- Take care of your mind and body. Get sleep, focus on eating well and build exercise into your weekly schedule.
- Embrace opportunities to work in study groups or discussion groups. Learning with people who are in the same class, and working on the same project is a great support system
- Understand the first few weeks may be challenging, but MCU faculty and staff are here to support you. Ask questions when you don't know something or understand.
- Understand your rights as a student

We are here to help you become Midwives of Excellence. Utilize us as the resource that we are. Your success is our primary goal.

### **Life Lesson Sessions**

In August, MCU hosted another lecture in our "Life Lesson" series. This session, titled "Building a Community: To help you build your future" was a wonderful opportunity for students to begin envisioning a plan for their future.

Students were invited to join Jocqueline Pressley to reflect on how she works to build an independent practice, how her initial vision to serve people of color has translated to her daily work, what to do and what not to do when trying to build a community, the benefits gained from working with preceptors, and how she had to

adapt what was learned from her preceptors to best support the community she serves.

BIPOC Success & Intercultural Engagement
Life Lesson
BUILDING A COMUNITY

To Help You Build Your Future



Be watching your email and our social media channels for information on future "Life Lesson" sessions.





### **Scholarship Open House**

In August the scholarship committee hosted an open house session via Zoom. This session was open to the public and reviewed application requirements, submission deadlines, and the types of scholarships available. The meeting, which lasted a little under an hour, will be available for viewing on the website soon.

Some key points from the open house meeting include:

- 2+ full scholarships offered each year
- Applications accepted September 1st November 1st
- Applicants will be notified of the decision made (either awarded or not) no later than 45 days of app deadline
- MCU employees or Board Members and their family members are not eligible for a scholarship

Visit <u>our website</u> for more information on scholarships.

### **Student Council**

The Department of Campus Life is excited to announce the rebranding of our student council. We will start the recruitment process for our next student council this upcoming term.

The student council is designed to empower our students and foster a stronger sense of community within our institution. This is a unique opportunity for current students to step up as leaders and make a lasting impact on the school community. The Student Council plays a pivotal role in representing the voice of students, organizing school-wide events, and promoting an inclusive and vibrant campus culture.

Being part of the Student Council is an incredible opportunity to develop leadership skills, collaborate with peers, and contribute to the overall well-being of the school community. Students interested in applying are encouraged to show their dedication, creativity, and ability to work well with others. If you are interested in being a part of the student council, please email <a href="mailto:campuslife@midwifery.edu">campuslife@midwifery.edu</a>.

### Conference & Skill Suites

As we look forward to 2025, we are thrilled to share some important updates about our event plans. MCU has decided to reschedule 2025 Conference and Skill Suites for greater impact at a future date. This decision allows us to focus our resources on something extraordinary: capacity building for an even bigger and better event experience in the future as we incorporate feedback from our community survey.

This thoughtful approach reflects our commitment to providing you with meaningful, enriching opportunities that align with our mission of providing professional midwifery development and education.

We are already working behind the scenes on innovative ways to strengthen our programs, expand our online community, and create virtual engagements that keep us connected and inspired. Stay tuned for updates on how you can get involved and what to look forward to in the months ahead!

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey. Together, we're shaping the future of midwifery education—one step, and one milestone, at a time.

### 2023 Tuition Dollars Spent

As part of our 5-year strategic plan, we committed to providing even greater financial transparency for MCU stakeholders. Find an overview of how 2023 tuition dollars were allocated at <a href="https://www.midwifery.edu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/2023-Tuition-breakdown.pdf">www.midwifery.edu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/2023-Tuition-breakdown.pdf</a>.

MCU allocates a significant portion of its annual funds towards personnel costs. This strategic investment is aimed at providing you with dedicated support and guidance throughout your academic journey. By prioritizing our employees, we ensure the delivery of high-quality education and support services.

This report is a high-level overview of how tuition dollars were allocated in 2023. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Vice President of Finance, Darliegh Webb. by emailing finance@midwifery.edu.



### July Lunch & Learn

In July, faculty and staff had the opportunity to attend a session led by Midwife Star August Ali, CPM. Often known as "Sister Star", Star August Ali, has been involved in birth work and advocacy for over 15 years. She is the Executive Director of Black Midwifery Collective, Director of Holistic Birth Collective, first Black President of the Illinois Council of Certified Professional Midwives, and the first Black CPM in the State of Illinois eligible for licensure.

## 2025 TUITION & FEE INCREASES

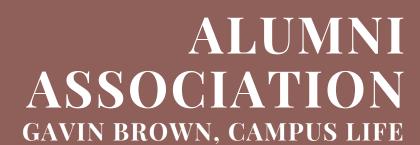
Darliegh Webb, VP of Finance

We understand the investment of time, effort, and financial resources required to pursue an education at MCU, and we remain committed to ensuring that our student's investment yields long-term benefits. The incremental increases that are occurring in 2025 are necessary to sustain and enhance the educational experience we provide, including access to exceptional faculty, comprehensive curriculum, and student supports that are essential for producing Midwives of Excellence.

### The 2025 Cost of Program and fee increases are as follows:

- Cost of program (tuition) will increase by \$100 to \$2720 per trimester
- Continuing education courses will increase by \$15 to \$365 per credit
- Life experience and challenge exam fee per credit will increase by \$5 to \$140 per credit
- Annual student fee will increase by \$15 to \$415 per student
- Acceptance Processing Fee will increase by \$10 to \$285
- Graduation Fee will increase by \$10 to \$100
- Technology fee will increase by \$4 to \$36 in Fall 2024 (to align with Populi announced price increases. There have been no further notices from Populi about future price increases at this time.)
- Transcript Fee will increase by \$5 to \$20
- Virtual Assessment fees
  - o Phase 1 and Phase 3 will increase by \$10 to \$160
  - o Phase 2 will increase by \$15 to \$215

These increases will be implemented beginning with Winter 2025 Trimester unless otherwise noted.



The Department of Campus Life has been working to develop an exciting new chapter in the school's history, we are thrilled to announce the development of a new Alumni Association! The creation of the Alumni Association marks a significant milestone for our school. For years, our alumni have been an integral part of the institution's story, and now, we are taking steps to formalize their connection to the school.

The new Alumni Association will serve as a bridge, linking past and present students, faculty, and staff in a meaningful way. Former students will have a platform to reconnect, share experiences, and explore professional or academic opportunities. This is a chance for alumni to support one another while also offering mentorship to current students. Alumni are often in the best position to offer advice, internships, and job opportunities. Through the Alumni Association, our current students will benefit from invaluable guidance as they navigate their academic and professional paths.

If you will be an MCU graduate this upcoming quarter and are interested in being a part of the Alumni Association, please send an email to <a href="mailto:campuslife@midwifery.edu">campuslife@midwifery.edu</a>.

## STAFF & FACULTY

CHANGES AND UPDATES



As MCU continues to grow and evolve, so too does our Staff and Faculty. We are excited to share the latest updates on our team members and the significant transitions happening within our organization. The following page provides a glimpse into the dynamic shifts and new additions to our workforce that occurred between May 1st and August 31st, 2024.

### CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR THE MOST RECENT INFO



**ORG CHART** 



STAFF & FACULTY LISTING

### Fondest Farewells to...



Nikki Helms
Adjunct Faculty



Marijke van Roojen
Director of Student Services

On behalf of the MCU Board of Directors, administration, students, faculty, and staff, thank you for your service to Midwives College of Utah and all you have done to inspire and support Midwives of Excellence.

\*\*House you!\*\*



Cheryl Furer
Director of Student Services (Interim)

At the end of June 2024, Marijke van Roojen officially retired and left her position as Director of Student Services. To assist in the process of searching for a new Director, and to cover the responsibilities in the interim, Cheryl Furer has graciously agreed to return to the position as the Interim Director. We are so grateful for Cheryl's dedication to midwifery and are excited to welcome her back to MCU!

## DEPARTMENT FEATURE

Midwives College of Utah prides ourself on our ability to foster community even in a remote learning environment. One group that many students may feel less connected to, however, is our staff members. Our staff members are the backbone of MCU. They work tirelessly in the background to ensure that our students are able to focus on the important task of learning.

In each issue of MCU in Review, we will introduce a new department and highlight some of the important work the team does for the college. We hope you take a moment to learn about what makes the staff of Midwives College of Utah so special.

### Department Feature

### Marketing & Strategic Communications

Our department is committed to promoting the accessibility of our programs, fostering Midwives of Excellence, and maintaining the highest standards of midwifery training. We root our approach in the real experiences of our students and graduates and the tangible benefits of choosing MCU. We promise to champion the cause of Midwifery education as a whole and ensure our students feel informed, inspired, and confident in their knowledge, skills, and ability as a Midwife of Excellence.



### **Members**





MCU provides an educational structure and an integrated learning environment for individuals to become midwives of technical expertise, professional excellence, and personal greatness—namely Midwives of Excellence

## Kristi Ridd-Young

Director of Public Affairs & Strategic Communications

Kristi Ridd-Young, a trailblazer in midwifery education, dedicated 17 years as president of the Midwives College of Utah (MCU). After retiring in 2023, she was recruited as Senior VP of Maternal Care at Azova Health to develop an innovative employee benefit program. With a profound commitment to improving the abysmal state of care for birthing families in the United States, Kristi spent many years as a Midwifery Education Accreditation Council member and is currently the Vice-President of the MCU Board of Directors and Director of Public Affairs & Strategic Communication for MCU. Kristi has trained over 1700 birth doulas and created lasting support networks for doulas and childbirth educators. Kristi attributes her profound insights to amazing mentors and the real-life lessons gleaned from raising six children, embracing seven stepchildren, and relishing the joy of 19 grandchildren with three more coming in the new year. Kristi enjoys travel, reading, yoga, and annual thousand-mile Harley adventures with her husband.



Fun Fact: I made all of my prom and homecoming dresses in high school and still have a couple of them in my closet— even my least favorite because it required a lot of hand embroidery. Maybe I'll make a tablecloth out of it because 40 years of taking up closet space is a little much.

My dedication to midwifery and the mission of MCU fosters a unique combination of science, evidence, empathy, and community support. Through training, advocacy, mentorship, and expanding access to respectful, evidence-based care, midwives profoundly impact birthing families and shape entire communities, I hope my legacy reflects my passion for improving birth experiences and outcomes, fostering compassionate care, and empowering the next generation of midwives.

## Masha Mesyef

Marketing Developer & Events Coordinator

As a multimedia and marketing specialist with expertise in graphic and web design, and video editing, Masha centers storytelling at the heart of her approach to marketing. Drawing from a B.A. in psychology and political science from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a JD from Washington University School of Law in St. Louis, she imbues her varied background with her technical acumen. In her role as the Marketing Developer and Events Coordinator at MCU, she oversees comprehensive marketing campaigns and spearheads initiatives that align with MCU's organizational goals. Masha dabbled in standup and sketch comedy and has an extensive history of activism and social justice, Masha brings passion and creativity to her work that strives to meet and exceed the needs of the communities MCU serves.



Fun Fact: Masha has dabbled in stand up and sketch comedy, performing for both willing and unwilling audiences.

MCU's mission resonates deeply with my commitment to storytelling that creates meaningful change. MCU provides me the opportunity to amplify voices in midwifery and healthcare, ensuring that equity, accessibility and inclusion are at the forefront of my professional, personal and academic contexts. My work allows me to blend technical expertise, creative marketing strategies, and compliance leadership to support students, educators, and midwives to improve outcomes in perinatal care. My goal is to help tell the stories that inspire change, connect communities, and create opportunities for everyone to thrive.

## Jean Hiefner

### Marketing Assistant

Jean's career originally began in B2B sales for a software company. During her nine years with the company she advanced from sales associate to Director of Sales and Marketing, grew sales by over 500% in a three year span, and oversaw the successful launch of several new products. In 2018, Jean began attending Midwives College of Utah and in 2019 she left the corporate world to pursue midwifery full-time. During her time at MCU, Jean began working as the Marketing Fellow at the college. When it became clear that she would need to put a career in midwifery on hold, Jean began working as a part-time employee for the college as the Marketing Assistant. In 2024 she also took on the role of Student Finances and became a HypnoBirthing Certified Educator (HBCE).



Fun Fact: I've visited every major island in the state of Hawaii. I love the dichotomy of hiking in the mountains in the morning and sitting by the beach at night.

What originally attracted me to midwifery was the Midwives Model of Care. This is the model of care that I've always believed should be the default model for all medical care, so it immediately drew me in. As I have learned more about midwifery care and the current state of pregnancy care in the United States, I've remained committed to try to expand access to midwifery care because I know that it is the best way to address so many of the issues we see in our country.

# Midwives of Technical Expertise

Our community is actively engaged in transformative practices that challenge the status quo in pregnancy care. We are committed to enhancing the skills and knowledge of midwives, ensuring they are equipped to provide the highest standard of care. Take a look at some of the ways we are doing this at MCU and for the wider community.

Alumna Sarah Hinton, MSM was published in the March edition of MIDIRS Midwifery Digest.

As stated in the introduction, "[the] article proposes and explores the possibility that uterine hypertrophy during pregnancy is affected by some of the same factors that influence skeletal muscle development generally, and the quality of uterine muscular development affects critical birth outcomes related to uterine contractility". In the article, Hinton explores factors such as dietary protein intake, vitamin D status, blood sugar control, age and obesity as they may relate to uterine muscle tissue development and recommends several areas for further research.

Sarah graduated with both her Bachelor of Science in Midwifery (BSM) and Master of Science in Midwifery (MSM) from Midwives college of Utah. We applaud Sarah for this important area of research and are excited to see what she will do next.













### SUMMER ASSESSMENTS

### A TIME TO BUILD CONFIDENCE & COMMUNITY

Monday, August 19 through Wednesday, August 21st, 29 students gathered in Salt Lake City, Utah to take their assessments and prepare to move into the next phase of their midwifery journey. We had students from all three phases join us for the opportunity to demonstrate the hands-on skills they have been developing. With real-time feedback and encouragement, students left with a boost of confidence and renewed sense of commitment to becoming midwives of technical expertise. We're so grateful to everyone who made the time to join us last month. We are already looking forward to the next term's assessments and get together this December on Monday the 16th through Wednesday the 18th. See you there!

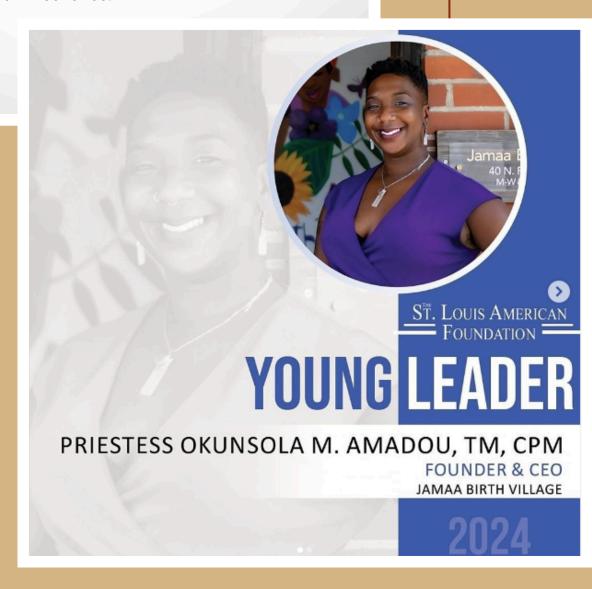
## Midwives of Professional Excelence

The MCU community is a dynamic network of individuals who are passionate about transforming the landscape of pregnancy care. They are innovating practices, advocating for better health policies, and providing compassionate care that places the needs of birthing people and infants at the forefront. They are not just midwives; they are leaders in their field, shaping the future of birth practices and improving outcomes for families. These next pages celebrate the achievements of our community.

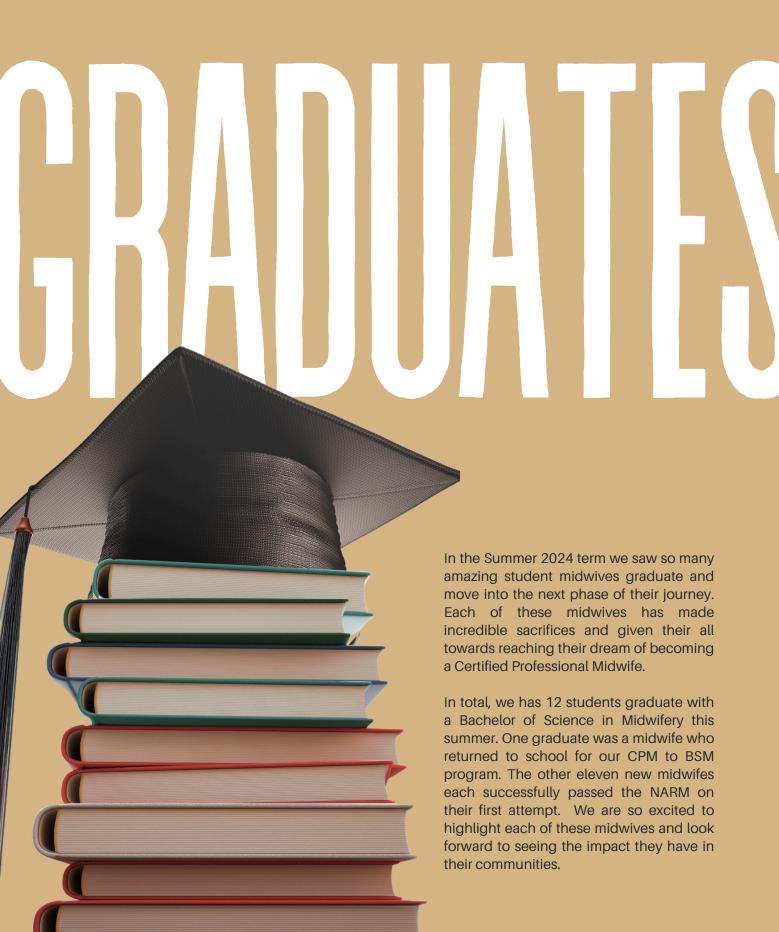
Join us in congratulating MCU Alumna, Priestess Okunsola M. Amadou, TM, CPM the founder and CEO of Jamaa Birth Village on being the recipient of the 13th Annual St. Louis American Foundation "Young Leaders Award" this past August.

In an Instagram post about the award, Amadou recalls, "I still remember award winning photographer Wiley Price coming to my home in 2016, and really being positive about what we were doing, and not making me feel like our midwifery clinic wasn't "real" because it wasn't in a fancy place... it does feel amazingly full circle to have my 20th award come from the first newspaper that believed in me, uplifted my vision and tells community stories of hope from the most beautiful perspective."

We are in perpetual awe of all the good Midwife Okunsola does in this world. She truly embodies what it means to be a Midwife of Professional Excellence.



#### IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE





## Amanda Ayotee

Washington May 2024



## **Emily McGregor**

Washington
June 2024



## Jessica Branch

Arizona June 2024



## Kayla Kronfield

Minnesota Wisconsin June 2024



## Ginger Cullen

Idah
Washington
June 2024



## Ashley Cavender

Kansas June 2024



## Taelor Bueno

Oklahoma June 2024



## Ashley McIntosh

California
June 2024



## Marina Andaluz-Bates

Oklahoma July 2024



## Abiana Patton-Toure

Maryland Virgina D.C. August 2024



## Brittany Berger

Oregon Washington August 2024

## Michaives of Personal Greatness

We are dedicated to midwifing midwives. In the true spirit of midwifery care, we believe this means caring for the whole individual and encouraging growth and development in all areas of life. So while we want to recognize and celebrate professional achievements, we also hold space for moments of personal growth, success, and rest.







## Meet Up

Just one of the many unique aspects of MCU, assessments serve as an opportunity for the MCU community to meet face-to-face. More than one long-term business partnership and countless lifetime friendships have formed as a result of these in-person gatherings. We hope you will join us for the next one this December.













Gina Gerboth (Core Faculty) and Megan Koontz (Dean of Students) traveled to Peru. While there, they made the tough, but rewarding, 4 day/3 night hike on the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu.





At the end of this Summer I took a big step and moved from my lifelong home (UT) to help my sister with her farmstead in NC. Moving so far away from friends/family was bittersweet, but I now get to bookend each workday for MCU milking a cow and hang out with my brand new baby niece - life is beautiful! Sometimes change is hard but only in the challenges can growth begin.

-Kaylee Ridd (Clinical Department Co-Chair)

Melady Elifritz (Faculty & Writing Lab Coordinator) began running this summer. Her goal is to run a half-marathon on her birthday in November.



Jasmine Barnes (Admissions Director) joined a gym and has consistently gone at least 4 times a week. She has also taken up running, and participated in multiple 5k's with a goal of doing one monthly in 2025.

### MOMENTS OF PERSONAL GREATNESS

Faculty & Staff



We milked out goats and added an intact boy to the mix to make babies. I also added a niece to my family and got to be with them over her birth.

Erin Kaspar-Frett (Faculty)





On my drive back to California after the MCU August Integrated Assessment in Utah, I made an impromptu pitstop, extending my already 13-hour road trip by a few more hours. I took a spontaneous detour to Lake Tahoe for a solo adventure, where I enjoyed a picnic and a refreshing swim to recharge before tackling the final leg of the journey.

Sarah Swanson, CPM (House Mentor)

I took an amazing white water rafting trip on the Middle Fork of the Salmon river this summer (in June). It was so lovely to disconnect from technology and commune with Nature for 6 days. It provided a much needed reset for me. This is a picture of Velvet Falls, the first big rapid on the river. It was a Class III - IV when we ran it.

Darliegh Webb (VP of Finance)



### MOMENTS OF PERSONAL GREATNESS

Faculty & Staff

Annual Goal: \$12,000+

Briana
Blackwelder
Equal Access
Scholarship Fund



Providing tuition relief for midwives serving medically underserved communities

**YOU** can play a role in developing Midwives of Excellence.

**YOU** can save lives one birth at a time.

**YOU** can make a difference.

## MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY AT midwifery.edu/donate

## MCUIN REVIEW IS FOR YOU!

Share your stories, your updates, and your ideas with 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? Are you working on a project, internship, or 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 or use this form:

https://forms.gle/mpN1iF3ySes7qmLu9



EST. 1980

### MIDWIVES COLLEGE OF UTAH

MIDWIFING MIDWIVES