## MCUINREVIEW: ALOOK BACK AT SUMMER 2025

Official Newsletter for the Midwives College of Utah Community



EST. 1980

## MIDWIVES COLLEGE OF UTAH MIDWIFING MIDWIVES

PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 2025

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Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff,

These past four months have been full of moments that remind me why our work as a community is so meaningful.

One of the brightest highlights was our Virtual Commencement. What a joy it was to see so many of our students step into the world as midwives, ready to bring their skills, compassion, and strength to the families they will serve. Sitting in that room, surrounded by graduates, families, staff, and faculty, I felt such pride in what we accomplish together. Graduation is never only about the significant achievements of the students—it is also about the countless hours of teaching, mentoring, and support that make those moments possible.

This season also brought sadness as we said goodbye to Dr. Michel Odent, whose passing is a great loss to the midwifery world. His work changed the way so many think about birth, and his vision continues to ripple through our practices today. While his absence is deeply felt, I take comfort in knowing his ideas live on in the midwives who carry his wisdom forward—including our students and graduates.

And, as always, with every ending comes a beginning. This fall, we welcomed a new cohort of students who have already filled our school with enthusiasm, curiosity, and determination. Their energy is contagious, and watching them take their first steps on this journey is a powerful reminder of why our mission matters so much.

In celebrating our graduates, mourning a great leader, and welcoming new students, I've been reminded of the cycle of beginnings and endings that midwifery so beautifully reflects. I am grateful to be part of this community as we honor the past, embrace the present, and look toward the future together.

As we head into the final term of 2025, I look forward to interacting with you all.

Warm regards,
Megan Koontz
President

## UPCOMING EVENTS

10.05-10.11 10.13 11.11 11.28-11.29 12.02	National Midwifery Week  Indigenous People's Day College Closed  Veteran's Day - College Closed  Thanksgiving Break - College Closed  Giving Tuesday	
12.02 12.15	Giving Tuesday  Winter Assessments	

## Midwives of Excelence

Declaring a vision for "Midwives of Excellence" is just the beginning—transforming that vision into a thriving community of excellence is our mission in action. What you'll discover in the pages ahead is only a glimpse of what's possible. Our dedicated community is actively transforming the landscape of childbirth, championing change, and saving lives, one birth at a time.

## ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

Stefanie Podlog, Midwifery Department Chair

This summer, the General Education Department Chair launched the Faculty Scholarship Initiative—an effort to recognize, support, and celebrate the diverse ways MCU faculty contribute to the advancement, integration, transformation, and application of knowledge. The initiative has already uncovered promising scholarly activities across the college, reflecting the creativity and commitment of our faculty. If you would like to review, contribute ideas for, help plan, or support the dissemination of scholarship activities, please check out this link.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/17r\_zuiZ7XmSef wTVgB1Vk7zyy8ln1FVFk45KqSjW5e0/edit?usp=sharing

We look forward to sharing some of these exciting projects and early results in the Fall edition of this newsletter.

## FINANCIAL AUDITS & UPCOMING MEAC TRAINING UPDATES

Darliegh Webb, VP of Finance & Operations

The Finance Department is happy to share that MCU has successfully completed both the annual financial audit and the Title IV Compliance audit for 2024. We're especially pleased to report no findings on the Title IV audit—an important reflection of our team's accuracy, diligence, and commitment to compliance. A big thank you to Christina Hrenko and Emily Wilds for their exceptional efforts!

The Compliance Department is overseeing the process of updating the required MEAC (Midwifery Education Accreditation Council) trainings for all MCU faculty, staff and preceptors. These updates are being made to ensure our training materials remain aligned with evolving accreditation standards and best practices. Subject matter experts are finalizing their trainings and once that is complete, updated training instructions will be shared with all employees & preceptors.

Questions? Contact our VP of Finance, Darliegh Webb <u>finance@midwifery.edu</u>.

## Welcoming MCU's New Graduate Dean

It is with great pleasure that we announce the appointment of Stefanie Podlog as the incoming Graduate Dean. Stefanie has been a part of the MCU community since 2023, initially as a faculty member and for the past couple of years as the General Education Department Chair. Stefanie has served in the graduate department on several occasions, including as a committee member for graduate students and as a faculty member in multiple classes. In addition to her doctoral degree, Stefanie is a published author, her most recent scholarly contribution is a workshop on the ethical use of GenAI for DONA trainers to be held at the Annual DONA Summit in Seattle, and there is an additional article accepted publication with the Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health. Please join me in welcoming her to this role.

The handover for this role will take place incrementally during the Fall term.

## Cynthia Dortch Shines in Registrar Role

We're excited to recognize Cynthia Dortch for her outstanding work stepping into the Registrar position. From day one, Cynthia hit the ground running-bringing clarity, organization, and a steady hand to a complex role. quick grasp of systems and processes, combined with her calm leadership, has made an immediate and positive impact across departments. Thank you, Cynthia, for your exceptional work!



## **Gynzone Discount**

We're happy to move forward with the discount code model for MCU students. MCU now offers a discount code to Gynzone. This code provides 25% off a yearly subscription and is valid for all students at MCU.

This offer is a fantastic opportunity for students to access valuable resources that can enhance their academic and professional development. Whether you're looking to deepen your understanding of specific topics or need supplementary materials for your coursework, this discount makes it more affordable to tap into a wealth of knowledge. Be sure to take advantage of this offer and make the most of your educational journey at MCU!

Further information on how to redeem this code is available in Populi.

### Reminder of New Tuition Schedule in 2026

The Midwives College of Utah (MCU) is implementing <u>a new tiered tuition structure</u>, effective January 1, 2026, to create a more equitable financial model for all undergraduate students. This change reflects MCU's ongoing commitment to making midwifery education accessible, affordable, and adaptable to students' unique needs, balancing academic progress with clinical training and personal responsibilities.

Recognizing that students have varying capacities to enroll in credits each term, the new tuition structure ensures fairness while keeping overall program costs predictable.

- Flat Rate Tuition (6 to 10.5 credits): Flat rate of \$2,720 per term, ensuring affordability for students taking a standard course load.
- Part-Time Tuition (fewer than 6 credits): \$475 per credit hour, allowing students who need a lighter schedule to pay proportionately.
- Accelerated Tuition (more than 10.5 credits): Flat rate of \$2,720 + \$300 per additional credit hour over 10.5 credits, ensuring that students who choose to take on more coursework are contributing proportionately as well.

Regardless of enrollment pace, the total cost of the program will continue to be capped at \$48,960, ensuring students do not pay more for extended enrollment. If students have any questions or concerns about how this will impact the cost of their education they can email studentfinances@midwifery.edu or financialaid@midwifery.edu.

### Donor's Gift Opens National Midwifery Access to Students

anonymous donor's One secured investment has National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (NACPM) membership for every degree-seeking MCU student enrolled between May 20, 2025 and May 19, 2026. The NACPM serves as the most powerful collective voice for Certified Professional Midwives (CPM), actively influencing birth health policy and supporting excellence in the profession. This partnership ensures that every regardless student, of financial circumstance, has equal access to these career-defining resources. This benefit is currently funded for just one yearbut with your support, it doesn't have to stop there. To support this initiative or learn more about how you can fund high-impact student programs read the article posted on our website.



### Typhon Will Go "Live" Fall 2025 Semester

MCU is excited to add Typhon to our technology "tool belt" this Fall term! Typhon is an electronic logging system that will enable students to track their clinical experiences and hours in a digital format. This will make logging clinical work much more efficient, so students can focus on their experiences, and will enable MCU to better track data around student learning numbers. As with any new technology, we anticipate a learning curve as we transition, but we are excited to modernize our clinical tracking systems. If you have any questions about accessing Typhon, you can send them to <a href="mailto:clinicaladministrator@midwifery.edu">clinicaladministrator@midwifery.edu</a>.

### **Virtual Yoga**

On Monday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, Campus Life hosted a rejuvenating session of "Yoga with Melady", led by faculty member Melady Elifritz. This session was a wonderful way for the community to kick off the month and morning with intention and peace. Continue to watch your emails for more opportunities like this to connect and grow with members of the MCU community.

This will be a recurring monthly event, which will give students, staff, and faculty a moment to intentionally reset their focus on their bodies and minds as they move into a new month. Check your email for information on how to attend.





### **Community Story Bank**

We need your stories! Whether you're a current student, graduate, faculty member, or someone whose life has been touched by a midwife from our program, we want to hear from you! Your experiences can inspire others to support our mission to cultivate midwives of excellence. Share your memorable moments, challenges, and triumphs, and help us build a rich tapestry of narratives that celebrate the impact of midwifery care. Submit your story to be included in our Community Story Bank, where it can serve as a beacon of inspiration and a testament to the incredible work and dedication within our community. Stories can be submitted via email at marketing@midwifery.edu or through <u>our Google Form</u>. Thank you for helping us share the powerful impact of midwifery education. Your story matters and can inspire others to support the education of future midwives!



### Briana Blackwelder Scholarship Fund

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.

Briana Blackwelder is an MCU graduate and friend of MCU who left this earth at the tender age of 28. In honor of Briana's wisdom and personal philosophy, MCU offers two scholarships that provide tuition relief for up to four years worth of tuition. Watch the video above to learn more.

Scholarship Recipients since 2020

Full Award Scholarships

Single Term Scholarships

Currently practicing midwives

Continue
Briana's legacy
and make your
gift today at:
midwifery.edu/
donate

\$239,510 Awarded Since 2020

## New Clinical Department Co-Chair Announced

It is with great pleasure that we announce the appointment of Gina Gerboth as the incoming Clinical Department Co-Chair. As the Chair of the Midwifery Department, Gina will be able to continue the work ensuring alignment between the didactic and clinical parts of the MCU program. Gina has been a midwife for over 15 years and a preceptor for more than 10. She brings vast experience to this role and brings invaluable input.

Gina will have oversight of the classroom spaces, including faculty, syllabus, and structure, and Kaylee is retaining responsibility for ensuring student clinical numbers, NARM interactions, and accreditation alignment. If you are unsure who to contact, you can reach out to either, and they will make sure your communication reaches the appropriate person.

## 2025 VIRTUAL COMMENCEMENT

GAVIN BROWN, CAMPUS LIFE

The 2025 Virtual Commencement Ceremony was held on July 12th. It was a heartfelt and inspiring tribute to MCU's graduating class of April 2024 – June 2025. The ceremony was designed to be more than just a typical online event; the commencement focused on honoring the unique journeys and deep sense of purpose that led each graduate to the field of midwifery.

Highlights of the event included the sharing of personal "why" stories from graduates as they related to the theme "This is my Why." Moving reflections from family and friends were captured in the end. A symbolic stole ceremony added a meaningful visual element, signifying the transition from student to midwife and the responsibility that comes with it. The event also recognized the unwavering service of the graduates, and a few outstanding faculty and staff members were recognized for their resilience, commitment, and dedication to MCU as well.

Overall, the ceremony provided a powerful, personal, and community-driven celebration of achievement, purpose, and service. We thank everyone who made this event possible.





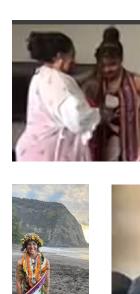
























## STAFF & FACULTY

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 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

## CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR THE MOST RECENT INFO



ORG CHART



STAFF & FACULTY LISTING

## Warmest Welcomes to...



anushka Aqil Adjucnt Faculty, HLTH 1030 & STAT 2050

anushka Aqil brings over a decade of experience in public health education, behavioral health communication, and equity-centered curriculum development, making her exceptionally well-suited to teach at MCU. With a PhD focused on integrating anti-oppressive principles into public health pedagogy, she demonstrates a deep understanding of both content expertise and student-centered teaching. We are excited to welcome her to MCU!



Wendi Cleckner Adjunct Faculty, BUS 3010

Wendi Cleckner brings a unique and highly relevant skill set to BUS 3010, combining over two decades of midwifery experience with formal training in law and extensive business ownership. Her leadership roles in national midwifery organizations and her work in policy and advocacy further strengthen her ability to guide students in both the practical and regulatory aspects of running a midwifery business. Welcome to MCU Wendi!



Brittany Watson
House Mentor

Brittany Watson is a dedicated social work and public health professional with over nine years of experience in maternal and infant health, community engagement, and health education. She has bachelors degrees in Community Health and Psychology; along with a Masters in Clinical Social Work. As a trained doula and perinatal mental health specialist, we know she is well equipped to support the next generation of midwives in their personal and professional growth.

## Fondest Farewells to...



Sandra Blankenship
Adjunct Faculty



Frankie Leigh
Adjunct Faculty



Julianne Robinson Adjunct Faculty



Angela Franklin
Dean of Retention and Belonging



Jodie Palmer

House Mentor/ Adjunct Faculty

Each of these people has left a mark on the culture and spirit of MCU that will be felt for years to come. Thank you for working to develop the next generation of Midwives of Excellence. Hank you!

## **Transitions Within MCU**



Gina Gerboth
Clinical Department Co-Chair



Stefanie Podlog Graduate Dean



Kristi Ridd-Young
Adjunct Faculty,
New - COMM 1010



Sadie Sigford
Adjunct Faculty,
New - MDWF 2080



Dr Sonia Ochoa New - PHYT 2030 Cont. - MDWF 1040

2025 has been a year filled with transitions and adjustments within MCU, not all of which have been reflected in these pages. Our faculty and staff have made adjustments to their budgets, reduced their working hours, and altered the structure of their departments while continuing to provide our students with a phenomenal education and above-average institutional support. These sacrifices and the additional work so many of you have shouldered this year have not gone unnoticed. Your work is making a difference in the health outcomes of birthing people throughout the US. We are grateful for you!

# 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.

MCU alumna Marivette Torres had the opportunity this summer to join other CPMs and LMs in her area in meeting with the CNMs of a local hospital. During the meeting they had critical conversations regarding transfers and how to come together to build a safe and appropriate home birth and birth center to hospital transfer.

This level of cooperation and collaboration is essential to the advancement of midwifery and the safety and autonomy of birthing people. We are excited to see what more grows from this meeting.



Carmen Mojica, adjunct faculty, has been teaching Postpartum Care at the Midwives College of Utah for the past four years and has immersed herself in research to provide her students with the most current information. She has also taught doulas advanced postpartum care, driven by her passion to equip as many individuals as possible with the knowledge to support postpartum parents.

Recently, she pursued training as a Certified Postpartum Nutrition Specialist (CPPNS) to address a gap in her understanding of the gastrointestinal system's physiology after childbirth. Her goal was to not only teach but also assist community members in improving their gut health. Carmen is in the process of integrating the new information into her courses and her broader career.

Thank you for this commitment to excellence and willingness to share your expertise.



Often when we discuss moments of technical expertise in this publication, we focus on the trainings and certifications that our faculty and alumni complete after their certification as midwives. There are, however, so many incredible moments of technical excellence that occur along the journey of a student midwife.

For example, incoming student Mariah Wright trained as a postpartum doula and became a certified lactation specialist this summer. Maddison Eberts finished her first year at MCU and managed to complete 10 credits in the Summer term while also attending her 10 Observe Births. Meanwhile, on the other end of the student midwife journey, Michaela Bell completed her final clinical numbers and received her NARM letter so that she can move forward with graduation and certification.

These moments matter; they lay the foundation for a lifetime of excellence. We are immensely impressed with the many ways all of our students are moving towards becoming Midwives of Technical Excellence each and every day. Keep it up!







## 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.

## Staff Member of Excellence



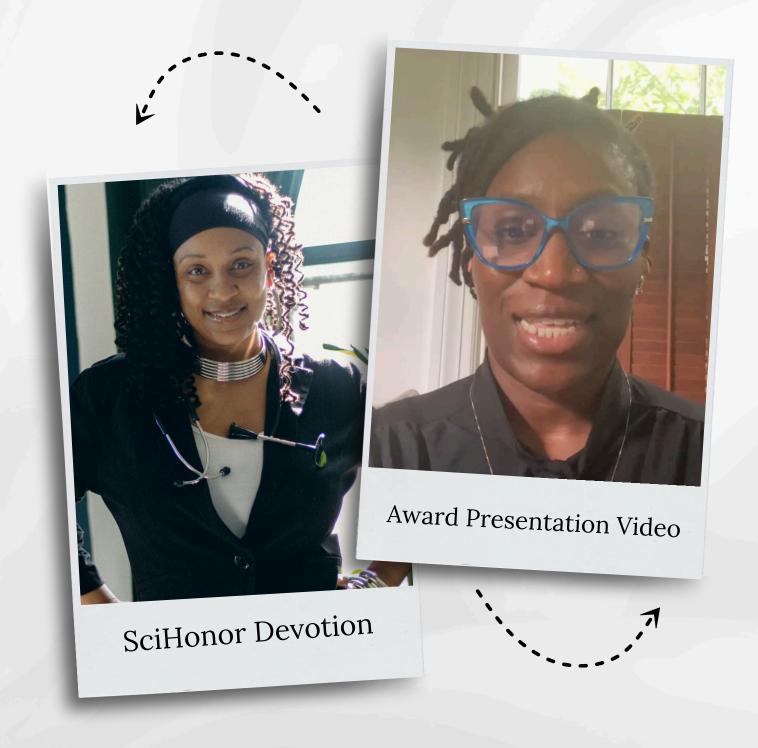
Digital Strategist & Student Finances Administrator

## Faculty Member of Excellence



Herbology, Intro to Midwifery & Graduate House Mentor

## Student of Excellence



BSM Graduate Class of 2025

## Kristi Ridd-Young Leadership for Impact Award



**Executive Director of NACPM** 

"Arrest the Midwife" pulls back the curtain on what far too many midwives and families already know: that laws criminalizing midwifery do real harm and disproportionately impact rural, religious, and marginalized communities.

This documentary centers on the story of Elizabeth Catlin, a Mennonite midwife in New York, and also includes the stories of Melissa Yaw Carman, a graduate from MCU, and Lissa Horning, whose arrests highlight broader threats to community-based midwifery.

Learn more at www.arrestthemidwifefilm.com





Coming Soon

MCU alumna, Leila Wyatt, was busy this summer with multiple endeavors that extend the normal work of a busy midwife. Between hosting a table at an area birth fair and beginning a new community program, Leila made major strides in helping to improve the health outcomes for birthing people and their babies. We applaud these efforts!

Aisha Al-Hajjar was the guest speaker at a heart-centered gathering designed for Muslim mothers, by Muslim mothers. A trailblazing midwife and convert to Islam, Aisha, MCU grad and the founder of AMANI Birth, was the ideal speaker for this community event.





One of our current MCU students, Cali Machen, released the paperback version of her book "Preparing for Birth: Your guide for wellness in birth & beyond". This book was co-written with Mary Margaret Saltiel, LCSW, PMH-C and offers a deeply supportive roadmap for navigating pregnancy, birth, and the transition parenthoodto mentally, emotionally, and physically.

Congratulations on this milestone moment Cali, we can't wait to see what you will do next!



## Global STEM Birthways-Teen Midwifery Lab

## Global STEM Birthways

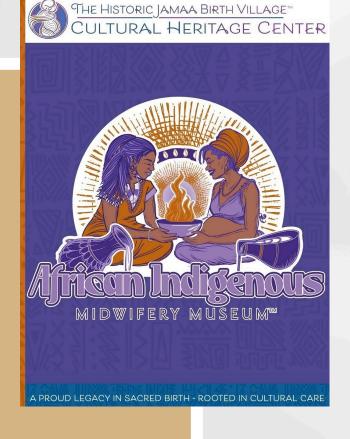
Teen Midwifery Lab - Inspiring the next generation of Reproductive Health Practitioners through science, technology, and global traditions.

MCU Faculty Member, Barbara Verneus, introduced the Global STEM Birthways Teen Midwifery Lab — a pilot program that invites teens to explore the sacred science of birth through a global and culturally rooted STEM lens. From fetal development and reproductive justice to genetics, innovation, and hands-on clinical skills, this program is preparing the next generation of healers, midwives, and STEM leaders.

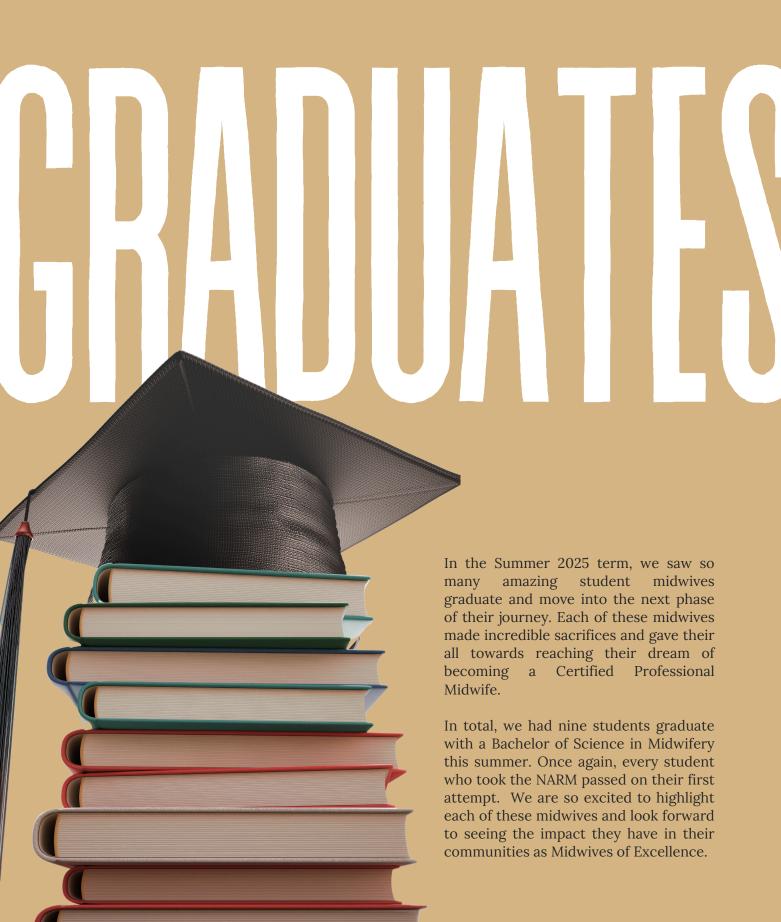
We can't wait to learn more about this program and see the generational impact it will carry with it.

This Summer contained many milestone for the future moments Indigenous Midwifery Museum" (AIMM) being founded and currated by MCU Okunsola M. Amadou. From alum attending the annual conference for the Association of African American Museums to acquiring the African Indigenous Midwifery Museum's first precolonial African midwifery artifact.

Thank you Okunsola M. Amadou for your commitment to honoring, preserving, and uplifting African Indigenous Midwifery.



### IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE





## Audra Nelson

Arizona May 2025



## Rebekah Teel

Alabama May 2025



## Madison Marshall

California May 2025



## Erin Chambers

Tennessee May 2025



## Andrea Peckinpaugh

Michigan
June 2025



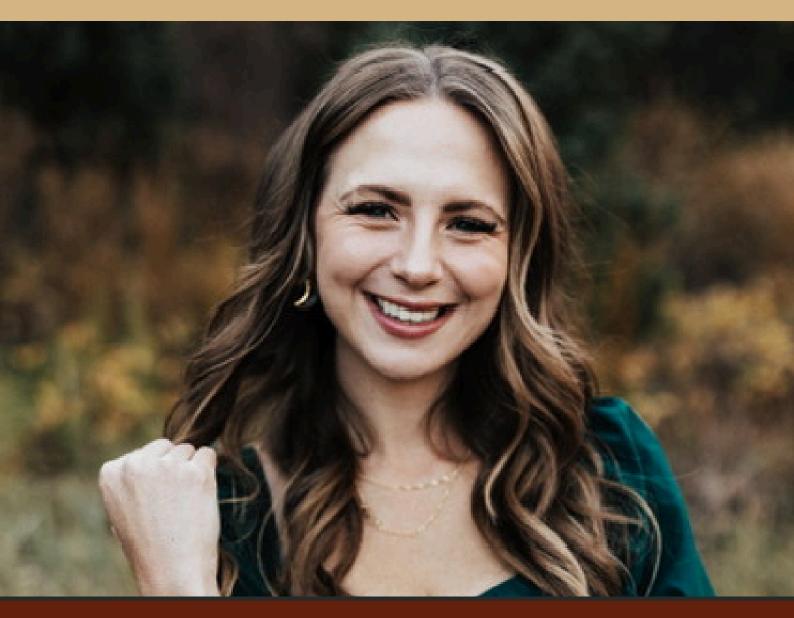
## Cynthia Bean

**CT**, **MA**, **RI**July 2025



## Andrea Hahn

Michigan
June 2025



## Bonnie Cox

Utah June 2025



## Tamara Fowler

Washington
August 2025

## 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.

MCU alumna, Alysse Powell, and staff member, Jean Hiefner, has an unexpected reunion this Summer when Alysse's flight was delayed overnight in Jean's hometown. The two became acquainted with each other years ago when Jean was attending MCU as a student and, despite having never met in person, have developed a deep and enduring friendship. They are looking forward to future chances to see each other in person, hopefully without navigating multi-day flight delays.





We are thrilled to share a delightful update about two of our recent graduates, Yvonne Gray and Jessica Branch. This summer, they had the wonderful opportunity to meet up and reconnect, strengthening the bonds they formed during their time at MCU. Their reunion is a testament to the lasting friendships and networks built at Midwives College of Utah.

In August I had the great honor of attending a class hosted by Gangteng Tulku Rinpoche. He is a Buddhist monk. This wasn't a planned trip but one brought spontaneously on by the universe. Grateful to be in the right place and the right time!

**Cheryl Furer** 

(Faculty, House Mentor, Board Member)



## MOMENTS OF PERSONAL GREATNESS

Faculty, Staff & Alumni

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/gc8KjF293rnkrMt89



EST. 1980

## MIDWIVES COLLEGE OF UTAH

MIDWIFING MIDWIVES