

## Danielle Laraque-Arena to Lead Upstate Medical University

The SUNY Board of Trustees appointed Danielle Laraque-Arena, MD, FAAP, currently chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Maimonides Medical Center and vice president of Maimonides Infants and Children's Hospital of Brooklyn, as president of Upstate Medical University. Laraque-Arena also currently is professor of pediatrics at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Yeshiva University. Laraque-Arena, who will be the first woman to lead the university, begins her appointment January 14, 2016.

"Dr. Danielle Laraque-Arena is an accomplished professional with precisely the right balance of academic, medical, and community engagement experience needed to lead our esteemed SUNY Upstate Medical University," said SUNY Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher.

"This is an exciting time for Upstate, a special time of awareness and anticipation, as we contemplate the arrival of our new president," said Interim University President Gregory L. Eastwood, MD. "I want to welcome Dr. Laraque-Arena and her family – husband Luigi Arena, MD, PhD, and children, Marc and Julia – on behalf of everyone at Upstate."

Read more about Dr. Laraque-Arena at: <http://tinyurl.com/oyw6f6>



Danielle Laraque-Arena, MD, FAAP

## Convocation Features Informatics Expert as First Whitney Lecturer

The College of Nursing's Convocation in September, an annual event launching the new academic year and welcoming new students, was especially memorable this year. The college welcomed Diane Skiba, PhD, professor at the University of Colorado College of Nursing and an internationally-recognized expert on nursing informatics, as the first speaker in **The Whitney Lectureship**. The lectureship was created through a generous gift from Fay and Roy Whitney, matched by alumni and friends of the college.



Diane Skiba, PhD

Over 30 years ago, Fay Whitney, PhD, RN, FAAN, then head of Upstate's Nurse Practitioner program, brought Dr. Skiba to campus for a healthcare technology

presentation, beginning a long professional connection. Returning to lecture on connected care and the future of nursing, Skiba commented, "I'm delighted to be the first speaker in honor of Fay Whitney."

Skiba was recently appointed to the US National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice.

Skiba, herself a recent cancer patient, challenged nursing students to look at what is required of them in today's world. "As nursing students you live in a connected world with your smartphone, tablets and smart watches, to keep you connected with people, resources and ideas. You will be practicing in a connected care team that includes the 21st century blockbuster drug – patient engagement."

Recognizing the patient as a member of the healthcare team is key to connectivity, Skiba asserted. "Point of care is not just within the walls of the healthcare system but also throughout the wireless connection" she said. "It has been within the past five years, with the tremendous growth in all things digital, that we've reached a critical mass."

In the US alone, 87 percent of the population has an internet connection. Further, patients with chronic health conditions are more likely to use technology and track health-related sites, she continued.

"Mobile apps are growing by leaps and bounds and patient portals are finally reaching critical mass as patients look at their test results," Skiba said. Healthcare delivery now includes online "virtual visits" of patients with practitioners. "In this, the VA has become a leader with over 690,000 patients out of two million having two-way video visits and home monitoring," she noted.

The health care system is "an informatics infrastructure" in which all data, or clinical documentation, must be guarded and managed properly. "The days of writing 'the patient had a good night,' are over," Skiba observed. "We have to be more particular in how we document if we are going to show the efficacy of nursing care."

By using research and guidelines, she added, evidence-based best practices can be achieved – or as the Institute of Medicine calls for – "better care, better health and lower cost."

The Upstate Medical University Nursing Alumni Association publishes *Nursing In Touch* quarterly. Distribution is free to alumni, faculty, staff, students and friends.

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Mary Knepper

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## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

### FNP Student Brings Positivity to Practice

While **Marissa Vartak, RN**, believes she could easily make it as a standup comedian, she instead chose nursing: "I chose to be a nurse because I knew I had a deep passion to help and put a smile on a person's face. What better way to incorporate my jokes than at the bedside of a patient who needs a laugh?"

Now a student in the FNP Class of 2017, Marissa holds a BS in pre-med/biology from Gannon University and a BSN from Binghamton University. After working in the ICU at Cortland Regional Medical Center, Marissa began work this September in Upstate's Medical ICU. "I'm excited to begin my new role and be 100 percent Upstate," she commented.

Marissa's positive attitude has won her recognition on patient surveys for excellence in quality patient care. "It inspires me to continue to provide the best patient care I can," she said.

Commuting from Whitney Point to Syracuse, "I come home every night to a

wonderful family and support system, including a beautiful girl named Gabriella, now 18 months and full of energy!"

Marissa's love for children and working with families landed her a second part-time job as a consultant for Family Enrichment Network. "I fulfill that role as an RN in charge of about 30 daycare centers in Broome County, educating families and providers and designing health care plans individualized for each center."

Now juggling nursing school with work and parenting, "I still plan on getting in some fun," she insists. "The great thing is, I enjoy it all anyway!"



Marissa Vartak, RN

## FACULTY UPDATE

### College Welcomes Three New Faculty

#### Helen Clancy, DNP, MBA,

LNHA, joins the College of

Nursing as assistant

professor. With more than

45 years of experience in

nursing practice and

nursing administration in

acute care hospitals in

Central New York, she has

consulted nationally and

internationally on quality

improvement in health care. Most recently,

she was administrator of Menorah Park, a

Syracuse continuity of care community.

Clancy taught nursing at Keuka College,

Onondaga Community College, and Le Moyne

College, as well as in the MBA program at

Syracuse University's Whitman School of

Management. Her research

includes geriatrics and

pay-for-performance

initiatives in long-term

care. Her doctorate is from

Aurora College, and her BS

and MS in nursing are from

the University of Baltimore.

**Karen J. Klingman,**

PhD, RN, joins as associate

professor. She graduated

from SUNY Buffalo in May



Helen Clancy, DNP



Karen J. Klingman,  
PhD, RN

with her PhD in nursing. Her research interests are screening for sleep disorders and the interactions between disordered/disrupted sleep and management of health, especially in the primary care arena. Nursing is her second career; she also holds a PhD in chemical engineering. She teaches research and DNP courses.

**Shuhong Luo, EdD, RN**, arrives as assistant professor from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) with expertise in educational technology and informatics – her education doctorate from UNL focuses on instructional technology. She teaches courses in nurse as educator and information, quality and safety.

A native of China, she earned her BS in nursing at Peking University.

"Nursing education must prepare nurses to achieve excellence when entering a workforce with technologies that are challenging, complex, and constantly evolving," she commented.



Shuhong Luo, EdD, RN

**Have you presented, been promoted or published?  
Send your news to: hickeyl@upstate.edu**

## Excitement Grows as New Building Takes Shape

“What a momentous year this promises to be – we will be moving into our new building in the spring,” said **Dean Joyce Griffin-Sobel, PhD, RN, FAAN**. Construction is progressing well and furniture for classrooms and offices has been selected, she reported.

“The College of Nursing will have the entire first floor and, after 20 years in rented space, that is an exciting event! I will be calling on you—alumni, faculty and students—to help us with planning a big celebration. I also know we are all looking forward to being a vital part of the campus, interacting with students and faculty from the colleges of medicine, health professions and graduate studies,” the dean continued. “I welcome alumni to contact me (griffinj@upstate.edu) to be included in the celebrations.”

With technology-rich classrooms that will enhance the learning environment, the building will also feature a café and a lecture space with the largest capacity on campus and will house programs in physical therapy and physician assistant studies.

Alumni and friends of the College of Nursing are invited to promote excellence in professional education for Nursing students with a gift to:

**The Campaign to Empower Learning • Enhance Healing.** Gifts of \$250 and up will be recognized on the Donor Wall of Distinction. Contributions may be spread over two or three

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[www.UpstateFoundation.org/NursingNewHome](http://www.UpstateFoundation.org/NursingNewHome) or call (315) 464-4416.

years, or classmates can join for a Class donation. Naming opportunities for classrooms and other spaces are also available.

To read more about the College’s new home and learn how you can help “empower learning,” visit



*The new home of the College of Nursing will be completed in 2016.*

## ALUMNI PROFILE

### NP Finds Reward in Serving Veterans

The on-the-job rewards for **Donna Gallagher, FNP-BC, CUNP**, are deep and heartfelt.



*Donna Gallagher, FNP, RN*

“It’s rewarding that I’m able to care for veterans on a daily basis,” the 15-year veteran of the Syracuse VA Medical Center commented. “The VA hospital is an outstanding facility for which I’ve been so fortunate to work.

I believe that veterans deserve the best care that can be delivered and, at this VA, this is what we do.”

Looking back, Donna said, “I grew up when the Vietnam War was ending and I wish that I had enlisted—but it was a time of uncertainty. So now I feel that I

am able to give back by caring for the great men and women that currently serve and have served our country.”

Donna was 32 when she decided to enter nursing.

“I had four young children and a BS in accounting. I was thinking of getting my master’s in education, but teachers were being laid off then. Reading the Sunday paper, I saw an ad to become a nurse. Although I realized accounting and nursing are very different careers, together my husband and I faced the challenges of balancing a family with career responsibilities while I earned my RN (Crouse School of Nursing, 1994), then my BS (1998), my MS/FNP (2000), and CNS post-grad in nursing education (2002), all from Upstate.” Donna noted that at Upstate she learned lessons from the faculty “about the importance of holistic patient care and caring for

one another.”

As a newly graduated NP, Donna accepted a position at the VA hospital and now works in outpatient hospital-based clinics specializing in urology as a family and urology-certified NP. Donna was also a clinical and classroom instructor at Syracuse University in maternal-child nursing and, for Pomeroy College, she taught medical-surgical clinicals at the VA. Recently, she left teaching to find time to get back to playing guitar, painting, gardening, and traveling.

“The VA has allowed me to grow professionally and personally,” Donna said. She serves as chair of its annual PA/NP teaching day and president of the VA’s NP group. A past president of the Nurse Practitioner Association’s local chapter, Gallagher is also a member of the American Urology Association and Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates.



## Nursing Alumni Association News

SUNY Upstate Medical University  
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Syracuse, New York 13210

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### Looking for a new opportunity?

Check the latest job postings at  
[www.upstatefoundation.org/nursingalumni/](http://www.upstatefoundation.org/nursingalumni/)

Nursing Alumni  
Association  
President **Barbara  
Kane, BS '98/MS**

**'99**, presents new  
FNP student Aisha  
Lubega with a gift.

Convocation was  
sponsored by

KeyBank, the  
Upstate Foundation

and the Nursing Alumni Association. Each incoming  
student was given an external battery pack for use with cell  
phones and tablets from the alumni association.



## Alums Awarded for University Excellence

Two alumni of the College of Nursing received accolades at the University's Faculty Convocation Ceremony held in September.

**Susan Fiore Shaw, MSN, PNP '79, ANP '09**, was selected for the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service. Since 2011, she has been clinical coordinator for the Palliative Care



*Susan Fiore Shaw, NP*

Service at Upstate University Hospital. Shaw is recognized for her exceptional service and expertise during nearly 40 years as a clinician and humanitarian. A graduate of the earliest Upstate NP program, as well as the post-master's ANP, she serves as an adjunct instructor for students. She first joined Upstate as a pediatric NP in the Pediatric Hematology and Oncology clinic and became an expert practitioner for survivors of pediatric cancer, co-authoring, "Late Effects of Treatment for Brain Tumors." She went on to create the survivor clinic, called KNOT

(Kids Now Off Therapy), which helps patients optimize their health and current care. She also volunteers in the community at the Francis House, Amaus Clinic and the Refugee Intake Clinic and has taught in her church for 20 years.

**Todd Olrich, BSN '04, CNS '06, RN** earned the President's Award for Outstanding Faculty Service and is a clinical nurse specialist in the Medical-Surgical Unit of Crouse Hospital. He is known as a leader, consultant and mentor and a change agent in advancing the practice of nursing among fellow nurses. As a member of the faculty, Olrich presents each semester in the CNS program, where students appreciate his extensive knowledge and engaging teaching methods and



*Todd Olrich, CNS*

give him excellent evaluations. With clinical material, Olrich gives real-life examples to help students apply the information, and encourages them in their scholarly work. He is always willing to act as a preceptor for graduate students. Olrich has authored papers and presented regularly at national conferences and is active in professional organizations.



### There's Still Time!

Still considering your year-end giving? It's not too late for your donation to a scholarship endowment to be **doubled\*** through the Matching Gift Program!

Give today at:  
[www.upstatefoundation.org/nursingalumni](http://www.upstatefoundation.org/nursingalumni)

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