Janah Al-Najjar
Advisor: Karen Valcheff, MSN, RN
A Literary Synthesis of How Nurse Residency Curriculums in the United States Address Implicit Bias and How to Recognize It
I pursued a career in nursing when I developed a passion to practice holistically and to provide comprehensive care for my future patients. This passion stemmed from my dedication to providing medically driven philanthropic services to underserved and vulnerable populations. The nursing field fosters different opportunities to grow academically and professionally, providing the ability to excel in areas of innovation, mentorship, and leadership. Through nursing, I hope to act as an advocate for and a pivotal link to the patient within the healthcare team. As a nurse, I aspire to continue to provide philanthropic services to critically ill children in refugee camps.

Melody Alexander*
Advisor: Marianne Cookcroft, PhD, RN
Sexual Health Education and STD Prevention in Minority Communities in Durham: A Descriptive Cross-Sectional Survey Design Studying a Sexual Health Program
Nursing is a unique profession which is embedded with caring, and a commitment to serving others. We impact people’s lives and see them in their most vulnerable state. The duality of being emotionally present, while applying the intellect and skill necessary appealed to me. Nursing requires problem solving, critical thinking, and the attention to detail. Nurses are educators and have the ability to promote health in individuals and in communities. I chose nursing in hopes of embodying these qualities and continuing to grow. I am passionate about improving health disparities, sexual and reproductive health, public health, and minority health.

Madison Andrews
Advisor: Sonja Oppewal, PhD, RN
A Scoping Review of Adolescent Prenatal Care Research
I chose to go into nursing because this profession allows me to make a direct impact in people’s lives daily. I’ve watched family members excel in countless types of careers, but of those, the most passionate and rewarding stories came from my mother who is a nurse. Nursing is more than administering a medication or performing a clinical skill—it is the opportunity to listen, to connect, and to make a difference. Nursing allows me to fulfill a purpose and calling in life where I can serve others, advocate for others, and learn something new every single day.

Princess Avery
Advisor: Jessica Ziegler-Hemsey, PhD, RN
Differences in Presenting Symptoms of Acute Coronary Syndrome Among Various Race and Ethnic Groups: A Literature Review
My passion for becoming a nurse stemmed from a trip I took to Liberia with my family when my grandfather fell ill. This trip instilled my desire to alleviate human suffering; and from then on, I was determined to become a health care provider. Nursing aligns with my professional goals and interests because it will allow me to directly impact the lives of my patients and their families as they are going through the healing process. As a nurse, I aspire to provide holistic care and empower my patients.

Faith Bittinger*
Advisor: Elizabeth M. Walters DNP, CPNP, RN
A Quality Improvement Initiative to Increase Adolescent Depression Screening in Primary Care
I became interested in nursing because of my interactions with my pal in the CPALS (Carolina Pediatric Attention, Love, and Support) program during my initial undergraduate degree. Watching the nurses work with my pal and her parents made me realize that I wanted to have that kind of impact on people’s lives, helping them to lead their best life, no matter their diagnosis. I miss my pal every single day, but I cannot thank her or her family enough for all that they did in caring for me and fostering my development before nursing ever crossed my mind.

Katelyn Blanchard
Advisor: Sheila Judge Santacroce, PhD, RN, APRN, CPNP, FAAN
The Pediatric Oncology Nurse’s Role in Financial Distress Screening
I decided to go into nursing because of my interactions with my pal in the CPALS (Carolina Pediatric Attention, Love, and Support) program during my initial undergraduate degree. Watching the nurses work with my pal and her parents made me realize that I wanted to have that kind of impact on people’s lives, helping them to lead their best life, no matter their diagnosis. I miss my pal every single day, but I cannot thank her or her family enough for all that they did in caring for me and fostering my development before nursing ever crossed my mind.

Rachel Church
Advisor: Julie Jacobson-Vann PhD, MS, RN
Integrative Literature Review Focused on Pediatric Immunizations and Effective Communication Strategies Found to be Associated With Uptake of Immunizations
Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest accomplishment or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.” This quote is one that I have held close to my heart since I was a little girl. It is my goal in life to be that smiling face, to say that kind word, to be that listening ear for the patients in my care. Nursing allows me to continue learning each day while supporting others in their most vulnerable state.

Jamesanna Clapp
Advisor: Mauritine J. Baker, PhD, RN, CNL, CHSE
The Impact of Nurse Residency Programs on New Graduate Retention and Satisfaction
I chose nursing because I wanted to go into a profession where I knew I was making a difference each day. I knew medicine was the avenue I wanted to take to helping others, but after working as a nursing assistant at the bedside, I fell in love with nursing. The relationships you make with patients, assisting them alongside their most vulnerable moments, are unlike any other. This profession provides challenges in thinking critically about the pathophysiology and pharmacology, along with compassionate holistic care of the whole person.

*Denotes Highest Honors
Mykenzie Cochrane
Advisor: Erin Stanley, MSN, RN, CEN, SANE, CCLS
Dancing is for All: The Impact of Dance Movement Therapy on Pediatric Populations with Neuromuscular Disruptions
I have always known from a young age that I wanted to help people. I came to Carolina as a psychology major but soon realized that I wanted to care for people in a holistic way. I ended up choosing nursing for its endless possibilities. Being a nurse entails more than just having the required knowledge, but also being an advocate and friend to those in need. I strive to make a positive, lasting impact on all people I care and will care for, and I've found the opportunity to do so in nursing.

Erin Coogan
Advisor: Leigh Mulven, MSN, RN, FNP-C
The Qualities of Healthcare Providers that Influence Patient Satisfaction
I value being able to help and provide comfort to people in some of their most vulnerable times. In my personal life, I have had family members very close to me experience terminal illnesses. Hearing and seeing how the nurses helped my family during those times was incredibly inspirational. I wanted to be able to help other people in the way that they helped us.

Rebecca Davidson
Advisor: John Stanford, DNP, RN, APRN-BC
Educational Needs for the Nurse Caring for the Dying Pediatric Patient
I chose nursing because I enjoy having a positive impact on others, even on their hardest days. A career in nursing allows me to combine my love for science with my love for teaching, problem-solving, and caring for those in need. Now, with additional experiences tutoring and working with children, I know that pediatric nursing is where I want to be. I feel called to comfort young patients who are scared or nervous in unfamiliar environments like the hospital. I enjoy making them feel safe and cared for when they need it most.

Emily Grace Davis*
Advisor: Elizabeth L. Stone, PhD, RN, FAEN
Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID), More Than Just Picky Eating: A Case Discussion and Literature Review
I was inspired to become a nurse after observing how my mother, who is a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, treats others. I always knew that I was interested in working in the medical field, but it was my mother’s empathetic nature and passion for nursing that inspired me to also choose nursing. I was enamored by the trusting, caring relationship nurses are able to foster with their patients both inside and outside of the clinical setting. I feel beyond blessed that I am able to be a part of the nursing community that I grew up admiring.

Samuel C. Demers
Advisor: Jennie Wagner, EdD, RN, MSN, CNE
Perspectives of Nurses and Physicians on At-home Postpartum Blood Pressure Monitoring
I come from a family of nurses, so you could say nursing is in my blood. I chose a career in nursing because it combines a deep compassion for humanity with an uncompromising demand for evidence-based care. Nurses have the privilege of caring for others in their most vulnerable moments. I take that responsibility very seriously and consider the nurse-client relationship to be sacred. I am so pleased to be starting a career in which I will be able to continually develop profound insight into humanity while also using science as a tool to improve health outcomes for all.

Julia S. Duncan
Advisor: Amanda B. Lorek, DNP, RN, CPNP
Standardized Practice, Individualized Care: Exploring Best Practices for Effective Delivery of Education to Families of Newly Diagnosed Pediatric Cancer Patients
I chose nursing because I admired the selfless and multifaceted approach it requires—counselor, teacher, researcher, advocate, and friend. I have gravitated towards pediatrics because of their unwavering resiliency and a nurse’s opportunity to change their entire outlook after their hospitalization, as well as caring for an entire family in their most vulnerable moments. Nursing allows me to combine my love for science with my passion for servanthood, and provides a career where learning and advancing is never ending. I look forward to all the challenging, but rewarding and humbling opportunities I will experience daily.

Morgan S. Fitz*
Advisor: Theresa Raphael-Green, PhD, PMHCNS-BC
The Ethicality of Patient-Targeted Googling
I have always known from a young age that I wanted to help people. I came to Carolina as a psychology major but soon realized that I wanted to care for people in a holistic way. I ended up choosing nursing for its endless possibilities. Being a nurse entails more than just having the required knowledge, but also being an advocate and friend to those in need. I strive to make a positive, lasting impact on all people I care and will care for, and I've found the opportunity to do so in nursing.

Rebekah Friday*
Advisor: Ashley Leaky Bryant, PhD, RN, OCN
Effects of Exercise-Based Interventions on Chemotherapy Induced Peripheral Neuropathy: A Systematic Review
I was inspired to enter a career in nursing because nursing allows me to combine my love of science with my love of people. I grew up in a medical family, as my mom and her sisters are nurses. I grew up hearing their stories about advocating, encouraging, and relating with patients. They, like most nurses, find joy and satisfaction in their work because they value caring for others. They make a difference, and I want to be like them.

*Denotes Highest Honors
Erin Gaidis  
Advisor: Carol F. Durham, EdD, RN, ANEF, FSSH, FAAN  
Nursing Student and Clinical Faculty Perceptions of the Three Safety Checks Viewed with Medication Administration Technology

After an unfulfilling start in another field, I knew that I wanted to go into healthcare. I’ve always been interested in pathophysiology and I wanted a career where I could make a difference. My decision was made after an experience shadowing a nurse. The medical and scientific aspects of nursing appealed to me, but I also loved being able to form a relationship with a patient and help them through their most difficult times. My experiences in nursing school have only solidified my decision. I’m thrilled to be joining such an interesting profession full of compassionate, intelligent, caring people.

Despina Kaitlyn Giotis  
Advisor: Erin Stanley, MSN, RN, CEN, SANE, CCCLS  
It’s the Little Things: A Literature Review of Non-Pharmacological Pain Interventions for Preterm and Full-Term Infants

I chose nursing because it gives me the opportunity to provide holistic care to pediatric populations. As a Greek American and coming from a close family myself, I have an innate appreciation and understanding of cultural diversity, as well as a passion for family-centered care. UNC’s School of Nursing and Medical Anthropology Department taught me the importance of making healthcare decisions that are tailored to individuals, their families, and their cultures. I hope to combine this knowledge with empathy in order to educate, advocate, and care for all my patients and their families.

Soo Jung Ha  
Advisor: Mary Lynn, PhD  
Literature Review of the Working Environment of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists’ and its Relationship with Patient Safety, Quality of Care, and Job Satisfaction.

I discovered my passion for nursing when I volunteered at Duke Regional Hospital throughout high school. During this experience, I worked with nurses from various units and observed their ability to provide patient-centered care during patient’s most vulnerable times. I learned how challenging yet rewarding a career in nursing can be, and decided to pursue a career in nursing. There has never been a day where I regretted my career choice, and I am more than excited to start my career as a nurse soon after graduation!

Hannah Hauck  
Advisor: Anna Song Beeber, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Developing an Educational Curriculum for Nurses and Nursing Assistants on Nonpharmacological Pain Protocol Implementation in Long-Term Care

Nursing simultaneously intrigues my inner science geek while fulfilling my passion for helping others. This profession has endless possibilities spanning a multitude of roles and persisting in almost all settings to work towards better healthcare for everyone. I am so excited and proud to be joining such a wonderful profession and look forward to where my nursing journey will take me.

Caroline-Grace Hawes  
Advisor: Megan Ross, MSN, RN, C-MNN  
The Role of Social Isolation as a Predetermining factor for Postpartum Depression Development: A Literature Review

My personal life philosophy is “to love is to serve.” I chose to go into nursing, because of the focus placed on serving others and the ability to make a direct difference in patients’ lives. I find it inspiring and extremely satisfying to help others during their most vulnerable moments. Additionally, nursing is an exciting, fast-paced profession that offers one-of-a-kind flexibility and a wide variety of learning opportunities.

Tori Ann Hinde*  
Advisor: Rhonda K. Lanning, DNP, CNM, LCCE, IBCLC, RN  
Utilizing Doulas to Improve Nursing Student Preparation and Self-Confidence in Providing Labor and Birth Support

After giving birth to my two daughters, supporting families in the transition of birth became my calling. I worked and volunteered as a birth doula before pursuing my nursing degree. I believe that the calm, competent, and confident care provided by nurses can make all the difference in a patient’s experience. As a nurse, I will seek to educate families and empower them to feel in control of their experiences in the hospital and beyond.

Sarah Marie Hunt  
Advisor: Anita Tesh, PhD, CNE, ANEF, RN  
The Challenges of Transitioning from Pediatric to Adult Healthcare for People Living with Cerebral Palsy: A Systematic Qualitative Review

I’ve had many experiences that led me to choose a career in nursing. After my family was told I would never walk due to a diagnosis of cerebral palsy, it was a nurse, my mom, who taught me to walk and advocated for me every step of the way. I hope to be a compassionate nurse and advocate for my patients, just like my mom.

Celina Jimenez*  
Advisor: Deborah K. Mayer, PhD, RN, AOCN, FAAN  
Psychosocial Support for Healthy Siblings of Pediatric Oncology Patients

Authentic, cyclic, floribund, and cancer have made the hospital too familiar a place: a place where my loved ones fight their battles, days on end, and await the hour when they are well enough to return home. Over the years, I’ve witnessed the power of a compassionate nurse, with the ability to transform a hospital room from a prison cell to a home. A longing to share this compassion is the reason I chose a future in nursing. To me, making a difference isn’t curing cancer or winning a Nobel Prize, it’s a pair of scrubs and a kind heart.

*Denotes Highest Honors
BSN CLASS OF 2020
HONORS IN NURSING

Chrisha Enid Jones
Advisor: Karen Valchett, MSN, RN
Executing Nurse-Driven Protocols to Facilitate Early Extubation After Cardiac Surgery: A Qualitative Descriptive Study
I always knew that I wanted to pursue a career in a mission-driven field. After obtaining my first degree, I desired a more fulfilling and rewarding career. I knew that I wanted to work in a challenging environment that required me to fully invest myself in the health and well-being of others. My passion for helping others and scientific inquiry lead me to nursing. I chose a career in nursing because of the many opportunities for career advancement through innovation, mentorship, and leadership. I look forward to being a pillar of the community and inspiring others to give back through service.

Haley Jones
Advisor: Victoria Sohn-Jarrett, PhD, PMHCNS-AN-BC, FAANP
Implementation of Community Naloxone Training and Distribution Programs in a Way That Reduces Opioid Overdose Mortality: A Systematic Review of the Literature
I chose nursing because it is the most rewarding, fulfilling career in existence. The relationship between a nurse and a patient is this unique, almost indescribable human connection that I look forward to experiencing every time I walk into a hospital. Becoming a nurse, to me, means devoting the rest of my life to loving others. Praying with others. Laughing, crying, and experiencing raw emotion with others. My patients challenge me to be the best version of myself, and that’s why I’ve chosen to dedicate a lifetime to this profession.

Brooke Langevin
Advisor: Maureen J. Baker, PhD, RN, CNL, CHSE
Starving for Surgery; An Integrative Review
No matter what floor you’re on, what kind of nursing work you do, or how many patient’s you see, it all makes a difference. I can’t name another career where you are able to be a friend, confidant, healer, protector, and advocate all at once.

Kirstin MacLeod*
Advisor: Megan P. Williams, EdD, MSN, RN, FNP
PICU Nurses’ Self-Perceived Competency in End-of-Life Care
My interest in nursing began in elementary school, when I was hospitalized following a surgery. I was inspired by the expertise and compassion of my nurses, who used countless support measures to ease my pain and anxiety. As I grew older, I realized that I wanted my career to be both challenging and rewarding. I decided to pursue nursing to comfort and advocate for individuals at their most vulnerable time.

Erin Mares
Advisor: Lisa Woodyley, PhD, MSN, RN, CNE, CHPN
The Experience of Pediatric Sibling Bone Marrow Transplant Donors: A Literature Review
I was passionate to find a career that would allow me to work closely with people and impact lives in a positive manner. I believe that a career in nursing would satisfy my needs because nurses are at the forefront of healthcare, providing direct patient care and working to enhance patient satisfaction. An essential piece of nursing is to create powerful relationships with patients, fostering a happier, healthier, and trusting hospital environment. I desire to create those relationships, bringing hope and positivity to patients and their families in situations that may only appear bleak.

Lydia McBride
Advisor: Rebecca R. Klammer, PhD, MPH, RN, BC
Protecting Youth Confidentiality and Privacy: Medication Administration Practices in Camp Settings
I chose to go into nursing out of a love for people. The field of healthcare, and especially nursing, offers up such a beautiful opportunity to make an impact in the lives of patients, and I feel so fortunate that I will have the chance to do just that every day.

Emily Morgan
Advisor: Amy Alspaugh, PhD, CNM
Knowledge Gaps Regarding Birth Control and Emergency Contraceptives Among College Educated Women: An Educational Intervention
Nursing grants us the opportunity to be part of people’s lives at their most vulnerable. It allows us to offer support and grant our patients’, and their families the tools they need to heal. I cherish these experiences everyday as they have connected me to humanity in a way no other profession does.

Hayley Anne Nusser
Advisor: Ashley Leek Bryant, PhD, RN, DCN
Does EOL and palliative care training increase clinicians’ self-perceived knowledge and/or confidence with EOL care and communication? Findings from a Systematic Review
I chose to pursue nursing in order to have the opportunity to care for patients and families at often their most difficult and vulnerable moments. From being a family member at the bedside, I know how influential nurses can be in the overall hospital experience. Nursing empowers me to be compassionate and supportive for patients and families at these times, while also allowing me to be a part of a profession that is filled with influential colleagues who are constantly working to improve healthcare, and learning opportunities for a lifetime.

*Denotes Highest Honors
BSN CLASS OF 2020
HONORS IN NURSING

Tyler M. Osborne
Advisor: Theresa Raphael-Gimph PhD, PMHCNS-BC
Mitigating Burn Pain through Nursing Care: Are we doing our part?
I chose to enter the nursing profession because my life’s calling is to be a public servant. Nursing provides incredible opportunities to practice both as an art and a science, solely directed towards helping others. Through nursing, I can have a stimulating and satisfying career where I will be learning, growing and serving every day.

Monique Adrienne Pardo-Montez
Advisor: Eric Hodges, PhD, FNP-BC, FAAN
Assessing the Awareness of the Microbiome’s Role in Obesity Prevention within Minority Communities: Protocol to Guide Focus Group Research
Nurses have a unique role of being on the forefront of healthcare. In moments of critical need, they are the workforce that mobilizes to provide for their patients and community. Nurses’ self-sacrificing commitment to patient wellbeing has had a large effect on my personal development. I chose to go into nursing to pay forward the kindness they gave me by being a force for meaningful change in patient-care, scientific innovation, and healthcare policy. I look forward to entering a workforce that is entrusted with society’s most valuable asset - people.

Sydney P. Parrish
Advisor: John Santel, DNS, RN, ANP-BC
Organ Donation in Trauma Patients: An Overview of Treating Patients Versus Saving Organs in the Emergency Department
To me, nursing is much more than a job. It is a passion which I have and will dedicate my heart and soul. As I begin my career, I have always been someone who loves to learn and be challenged, and nursing is the epitome of this. The rewarding nature of nursing, combined with the continuous advocacy and teamwork which are intertwined with it, has drawn me to this profession. I look forward to providing and supporting patients and their families in the years to come, while always thinking critically about how I can ensure quality, patient-centered care.

Phillip Roma
Advisor: Elizabeth Steen, PhD, RN, FAEN, CPEN, CHSE
Nursing Students’ Experience With, Knowledge, and Perceptions of E-Cigarettes
Maya Angelou’s quote, “At the end of the day people won’t remember what you said or did, they will remember how you made them feel,” speaks to why I chose nursing. Throughout my life I have found that nothing makes me happier than making others laugh, smile, and feel better. At the end of high school, I took a leap of faith and decided to pursue the field of nursing because I wanted a fulfilling and challenging career where I could impact others’ lives every day. I am proud to say that I have found my calling and have never looked back.

Madeline Paige Smith
Advisor: Beth Perry-Black, PhD, RN, FAAN
Transitions in Health and Motherhood: Perspectives of a Woman with an Intracerebral Hemorrhage During Pregnancy
I went into nursing because I wanted to be part of a profession that focuses on life-long giving and healing. My goal in life is to create a lasting impact on the world through helping others, and I found nursing to be the best profession to assist me in accomplishing this goal. I believe empathy and love are the cornerstones for a fruitful society, which also happen to be foundations within nursing. Nursing provides an array of challenges, opportunities for development, and of course learning, all of which I cannot wait to explore in my career.

Shelby Smith*
Advisor: Hudson Santos, PhD, RN
Individual Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale Components and Preterm Birth
Nursing ties together my personal values of compassion, community, and the constant pursuit of solutions that improve the lives of others. I am inspired and humbled by the many nursing heroes that I know, including those in my own family, and I want my job to constantly bring me close to other people. I believe that nurses are at the center of the changes that will improve our healthcare systems for the better, and I want to lead and be a part of that.

Haleigh Rose Somberg
Advisor: Claudia G. Ormby, MSN, RN, CCRC, ACRP-CP
Innovating the Benefits of Music Therapy for Mothers of Babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
I have always had a passion for people, and nursing is a profession that will allow me to pursue that passion and serve others. Through several losses of close friends early in my college career, I was able to see first-hand the immense impact that nurses can have on a patient and their family and was inspired by their impact on us all. I have a genuine desire to make a difference in people’s lives and I am confident that I will be able to accomplish this goal throughout my nursing career.

Meaghan Hammond Sowers
Advisor: Hudson Santos, PhD, RN
DNA Methylation and Neurodevelopmental Outcomes of Children Born Preterm: A Systematic Review
I chose nursing because I love the medical field and bedside care! I admired how nurses advocate for their patients and appreciated the level of involvement they have in their care. Through nursing, I want to change people’s lives and comfort those in need. I’m also so lucky to enter a field where there are so many options in regards to specialties and/or certifications. As a nurse, you are able to learn and acquire new skills all the time whether it’s by training or getting a higher education in nursing. Nursing is a career that is extremely satisfying and rewarding!

*Denotes Highest Honors
Emily Elizabeth Swink*

Advisor: Emily Elizabeth Swink

A Review of Needed Supports and Resources for Adolescent Parents: Clinical Implications for Future Programs

In elementary school I often went with my mom to complete her home health assignments. When I was 7, I accompanied her to a young boy’s home who had a blood disorder. I couldn’t understand why he appeared so “normal” yet needed constant care. She explained to me how he was missing an important part of his blood and how normally a scab is formed like a domino effect. But he was missing one of his dominos and she had to help give it to him through shots. She and her patients sparked my love and passion for health, medicine, and ultimately, nursing. She explained to me how he was missing an important part of his blood and how normally a scab is formed like a domino effect. But he was missing one of his dominos and she had to help give it to him through shots. She and her patients sparked my love and passion for health, medicine, and ultimately, nursing.

Ashlynn Swintek*

Advisor: Vickie M. Lester, MSN, RN, BC, CNE

The Relationship Between Irritable Bowel Syndrome and Gastrointestinal Dysbiosis: A Systematic Integrative Review of Diagnostic and Treatment Approaches.

The nursing profession is both a science and an art. I chose to pursue a career in nursing because of my desire to serve others by using the biology and medicine I love to care and advocate for patients who are not able to do so for themselves. I am honored and excited to enter a profession that requires such a tremendous amount of altruism, selflessness, confidence, and bravery.

Lauren Ansley Townsend

Advisor: Rhonda K. Lanning, DNP, CNM, LCCE, IBCLC, RN

Voice That is Bold: Doula Training Focused on Care of Birthing Persons Who Are Incarcerated

My heart for nursing began at the bedside. Five years ago, I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. Ever since I was touched by the healing hands of nurses, I felt a calling on my life to speak the same language, a special bond was created with each patient, truly epitomizing that compassion is universal. I was initially compelled to enter the nursing profession because of my love for biology and medicine. I love to care and advocate for patients who are not able to do so for themselves. I am honored and excited to enter a profession that requires such a tremendous amount of altruism, selflessness, confidence, and bravery.

Ismael A. Urbina

Advisor: Louise Fleming, PhD, MSN-Ed, RN

The Lived Experience of Waiting for a Heart Transplant

I have chosen to pursue a career in nursing because I wish to care for patients who are not able to do so for themselves. I am honored and excited to enter a profession that requires such a tremendous amount of altruism, selflessness, confidence, and bravery.

Gabby Valchanova

Advisor: Deborah K. Mayer, PhD, RN, AOCN, FAAN

A Picture is Worth 1,000 Words: Using Narrative and Photographic Storytelling to Understand the Lived Experience of a Young Adult Cancer Survivor

I was initially compelled to enter the nursing profession because of my volunteer experiences in pediatric hematology/oncology at UNC Children’s during my freshman year. In witnessing the nurses treat the patients with quality care and the utmost compassion and advocacy, I realized I wanted to engage in the same opportunity. By becoming a nurse, I will be able to utilize a holistic, patient-centered approach to care to guide patients through their toughest challenges yet their sweetest victories. As my passion for pediatric oncology grows, I hope to make a meaningful difference in the lives of little humans and their families!

Macaya Elizabeth Wall

Advisor: Macaya Elizabeth Wall

An Integrative Review of Moral Distress in Pediatric Intensive Care Unit Nurses

Growing up, I always knew that I belonged in healthcare. The pivotal experience that ignited my passion for nursing was studying abroad in Belize and having the opportunity to deliver medical care to people in need. Even though I was not able to speak the same language, a special bond was created with each patient, truly epitomizing that compassion is universal. As my passion for pediatric oncology grows, I hope to make a meaningful difference in the lives of little humans and their families!

Nicole Mae Ward

Advisor: G. Rumay Alexander, EdD, RN, FAAN

Racially Biased Post-Operative Pain Management: Implications for Achieving Health Equity

My calling towards nursing is both cultural and one of social advocacy. In Filipino culture nurses are pivotal caregivers, advocates, and educators of their communities, and as a Black woman I am extremely familiar with the social disparities that precipitate adverse health outcomes for marginalized identities. My experiences have illuminated my desire to enact change in a clinical and community setting. I am honored to enter this most trusted profession as a champion of social equity and I look forward to dedicating my career to humble servitude, advocacy and empowerment of those in need, the cornerstone of my nursing philosophy.

Tori L. Williams

Advisor: Megan P. Williams, EdD, RN, FAAN

Bereavement Care: The Development of Comprehensive Bereavement Resources for Families Who Experience Neonatal Loss

While completing my MS in Medical Anthropology, I witnessed first-hand just how often patients are treated as things to be fixed rather than human beings. Not only do patients have physical needs but cultural, spiritual, emotional, and social needs as well. Therefore, I chose to go into nursing because it provides the opportunity to care for patients and their families when they are at their most vulnerable times. I love that nursing provides endless opportunities for growth and does not force you to choose between advocacy, research, and direct patient care.

*Denotes Highest Honors