

PRACTICES EXCHANGE

NEWSLETTER

NOV./DEC. 2019

<https://yeswemustcoalition.org>

Issue 26

YWMC MEMBER SHOWCASE: Union College, Kentucky

Union College in Barbourville is Kentucky's first college in the mountains. Since 1879, the college has educated students from across southeastern Kentucky and from around the world. The four pillars that support Union's values and mission are service to others and the community, Appalachian culture and heritage, a core affiliation with Methodism, and the liberal arts academic experience. With over 900 FTE students in 34 undergraduate pre-professional and liberal arts programs and nearly 200 students in 17 graduate programs, Union is an opportunity center for the region, where most of its students come from. Sixty percent of Union's undergraduates are Pell-eligible, more than 30% are first generation, and nearly 65% are student athletes in our NAIA conferences.



The Union Distinction is the College's commitment to student success in the classroom, on the playing field, in college activities, and throughout life. The Union Distinction assures that students have ample opportunities for service and experience that will enhance their education, smooth a path to their chosen career, and establish them as the best adults they can be as they find success in the world. Students can take advantage of intern-

ships, educational travel, and faculty-led research. In support of the Union Distinction, the College has been awarded Title III grant funds that will facilitate the revision of high-DFW courses at every level. These revisions will also coincide with a faculty professional development program, data analytics, and enhanced advising to maximize student success across the curriculum.

Union is celebrating the 140th anniversary of its founding in Barbourville. Even the College's name is indicative of the College's origins as members of the civic, church, political, and educational communities united to provide higher education to the mountain residents. That coming together still resonates, as Union partners with its Knox County neighbors on a host of initiatives, and Union students, faculty, and staff — themselves members of that very

community — provide for and work with the people of southeastern Kentucky through Promise Neighborhoods, club and athletic service, service learning, community partnerships, two college-sponsored Boys and Girls Clubs (one in Knox County and one in Harlan County) and other activities. On average, Union students, faculty, and staff have contributed over 15,000 hours a year in service to the community.

Also in partnership with the community, each fall Union inducts its freshman class during the C.I.R.C.L.E.S. ceremony. C.I.R.C.L.E.S. is an expression of Union's values of Celebration, Integrity, Responsibility, Civility, Lifelong Learning, Engagement, and Spirituality. At the end of the ceremony, Union faculty and staff join with Barbourville community members and present each new student with a C.I.R.C.L.E.S. medallion. The students keep this medallion until graduation when, at a final ceremony, each student presents their medallion to the individual who most influenced them during their college career. This person can be an employee, a family member, a friend, or a member of the community. It is a point of pride to receive a student medallion, but more importantly it is a symbol of the commitment each member of the Union community has to each student's success.

In the past year, the college has forged several partnerships with graduate and professional programs so that Union students will have a clear path to pursue their academic and career goals. In the same spirit, UGrad is Union's unique guarantee that undergraduates who meet certain goals for service, academic success, degree progress, and participation in clubs or sports will have from 50% to 100% of their unmet need forgiven in their final semester of college. Such programs are how Union makes college more affordable while encouraging student engagement and success.

Institutional Resources/Practices

With initial funding from the Golden Cross Foundation in 2018, the Jeanette M. Travis School of Nursing at **Martin Methodist College** (TN) has launched an initiative through which MMC nursing faculty and students provide health screenings and wellness information in various rural and more remote communities in MMC's 18-county service area. The objectives of the program are to develop healthier communities and improve residents' health literacy. At the same time, MMC nursing students witness firsthand the impact that lack of health care can have on communities as well as gain invaluable knowledge and insight about helping serve an underserved population. Since the program began funds have grown with gifts from the Travis Foundation and AT&T.

All nursing students participate in multiple health screenings throughout their junior and senior years, traveling into the surrounding communities by van with faculty and supplies. During a typical health screening, participants move through five stations, each of which provides a basic service. Information is recorded at each station and completed screening forms are given to participants to share with their doctors. Participants may also receive various health-related material created by MMC nursing students during their nursing course work as well as information on local health resources such as primary care offices, food banks, and mental health providers.

Since the program began in January 2018 nursing students and faculty have completed over 2400 health screenings at churches, United Methodist laity meetings, senior centers, county fairs/events, and public schools, almost all in rural, underserved areas around middle Tennessee. "We've encountered all age ranges from seniors over 90 to students ranging from Pre-K through high school," said Dr. Patricia Catlin, DNP, FNP, assistant professor, Jeanette

Travis School of Nursing. “As word spreads, we are finding more open doors and are reaching out further for greater impact.”

Nursing students say this initiative has changed their lives: “These ‘van trips’ have made me aware of the impact I can make as an RN in my own hometown,” said one student. Another added, “I thought I wanted to work in a big hospital but now I am considering the health department or some type of community nursing.” In fact, from the graduating seniors in 2018 and 2019, 80% have taken nursing positions in rural or small town areas in Tennessee.

Likewise, health screening hosts and participants are touched by MMC’s presence. “Many are skeptical when I first contact them to set up a screening event,” said Dr. Catlin. “They may not understand what our goal is but when they learn we are coming free of charge to educate and reach out to people, they are intrigued. Each event ends with an outpouring of love and gratitude from those we have the opportunity to serve. It also brings several generations together.” MMC President Dr. Mark La Branche added, “The health of our institution, now in its 150th year, is dependent on the health of our communities. Making a social impact is not only a part of our Methodist DNA, but it is also critical to the sustainability of our institution and region.”

For further information, contact Judy Cheatham, Provost and VPAA, jcheatham@martinmethodist.edu.

YWMC Webinar Series

There’s still time to register in advance for the next YWMC Webinar, which will focus on *Post-Secondary Education and Incarcerated Students* and is scheduled for **Monday, December 9, at 1pm ET**. To register for this event, go to: <https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WNLzH6StuQwG8VdSEcxNsg>.

Recordings and accompanying slides of past webinars are available on the YWMC Website (<https://yeswemustcoalition.org/publications-webinars#webinars>).

Submissions for Future Issues

YWMC members are encouraged to submit examples of policies, practices and/or resources that you have found to be effective in promoting student success and that you would like to share with your YWMC colleagues. Send brief descriptions to Nia Lane Chester, YWMC Program Manager. niachester@gmail.com.