

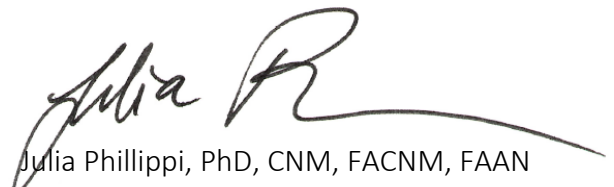
Welcome to the Vanderbilt nurse-midwifery program! The faculty is excited to work with you to assist you in gaining the knowledge, skills, and abilities you need to become a confident, competent and safe entry-level midwife. It is my hope that this program will be transformative for you as we midwife you into your new professional role. This introduction has been hard to write as each time I have attempted to compress my wishes for you and my thoughts on midwifery, the words seem paltry in comparison to my feelings about the profession and my heartfelt desire to welcome you in.

Midwifery has shaped who I am in so many ways, so much of my life has been affected by my being a midwife. I have worked much of my life around call and midwifery responsibilities, balancing my all-hours work with my growing family. It has been an amazing journey. So many great things, small and large, have come to me as the result of my work. I have seen the sunrise over the mountains while coming home from a birth. I have helped individuals control their fertility so they could feed their families, graduate from college, or live their dreams. I have placed sweet, crying babies into the arms of their loving families, whether it be their birth parents or their adoptive family who heard their first cries from outside the door. I have mentored others into the profession, feeling the moment when they have the confidence and ability for me to take my hands away and let them fully own the midwifery role.

I am continually honored to be a part of the most amazing and the most heart-breaking moments of others' lives. I have grown as a human being through my time being present with women, individuals, families, and students. Being in those moments keeps me centered on what matters most in my own life. I hope your midwifery career offers you the same opportunities to make lasting change while working in a personally engaging job.

While deeply fulfilling, the life of a midwife is not always easy. To be fully present for so many raw emotions, to work in complex health systems, and to leave your needs outside the door while you attend others is hard. Luckily, we have each other. Just as we strive to be present for women/individuals we should be present for each other. You will be part of a cohort of other students working toward similar midwifery goals as you move through this program. Hopefully, these individuals will become some of your closest friends and most treasured colleagues.

What a journey we have ahead together.



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