

THE PULSE

Shoreline Community College
Association of Nursing Students
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From the Co-Presidents:

IT HAS COME TO our attention that stress levels of our fellow nursing students has been running dangerously high this quarter. Someone down at *The Pulse* suggested that it might be a good idea to take a moment to address the issue, before things get out of control and we end up with an epidemic on our hands. We agreed. As Co-Presidents, we felt that it is our responsibility to pass on this meaningful message to the masses, in hopes that you all will sleep better tonight and in nights to come.

Being in nursing school certainly feels stressful at times – with all the reading and writing requirements, learning outcomes, exams, check off sheets and clinical hours, it is easy to lose sight of what is truly important: sanity. Balancing these program requirements alongside work, in addition to personal relationships and other interests can be like juggling balls of glass. Thinking back on the advice fellow SCCANS members gave to us a year ago during the Welcome Breakfast, one piece of infor-

mation stands out. “Give up your need to be perfect and you will adjust more easily,” this individual said.

This one piece of advice sounded so wrong at the time. They may as well have drug their fingernails across the chalk board rather than making an outlandish statement like that. It was painful to listen to. Because this statement could easily be interpreted to mean that one should accept mediocrity. However, the past four quarters have indeed taught us that not being perfect does not equate to being mediocre. The intended message was that it is important to hold on to your sanity with a death grip, and to not be so hard on oneself that you lose the necessary motivation to complete the task at hand.

If we have learned nothing else in Nursing school, we have learned that test scores don’t necessarily reflect how much we know... that practicing something once or twice in the lab does not make one fully competent at a particular skill... that good reference tools and knowing how to use

them complements memorization... that relying on our peers, asking for help and offering it, feels good because in doing so, we act as a team... that we can only do our best each day, and even that will vary due to a multitude of factors, most of which will be beyond our control... that taking an entire day off from studying and schoolwork may not cause us to fall

behind, because in fact it may make us more productive – we feel more balanced and in touch with ourselves and the people who are important to us so it is easier to stay focused.

A few additional nuggets of advice that we have found to be useful are to take care

of yourself by getting enough rest, regular exercise, and eating well. These include some of the most basic of human needs. In fact, these are needs that we assist our patients to meet every day; and when applied to our own lives, meeting these needs really makes a difference.

- Eric Blankenship &

- Michelle Reesh

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Meeting the Challenges of Nursing School

by Lori Nelson

I AM A SINGLE MOTHER of five. The four who live at home are all boys, ages 22, 20, 17 and 15. My 17-year-old son Levi has Down Syndrome. The youngest is Jordan, who has Pallister-Killian 12 P Syndrome. Sweet Jordan has the cognitive function of a 6-month-old and the body of a teenage boy. Challenging? Of course. I mention my circumstances because most of us have our own chal-

lenges and are just trying to get through school in the best way we can. With focus and hard work, we can meet those challenges and find success. I know because I am now in my 5th quarter of nursing school. It’s a dream I never thought I would ever be able to follow.

I always wanted to become a nurse. At a young age, I was helped by the nursing staff in a local hospital and it made a huge impact on my life. My nurses were kind, compassionate and caring. From

that time, I knew I wanted to be like those nurses and care for others, emulating their kindness, compassion and caring. It has taken a while, but I never gave up the idea. As an adult, I know the work involved in being a nurse is of great import.

As a 5th quarter student, I have had time to reflect on my student career thus far; the challenges to scheduling, maintaining focus in my studies, and the ultimate goal of becoming an RN. At the outset, I knew it would be difficult, but I

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thought I had things pretty well organized. What I didn't completely appreciate was the challenge of juggling family life and academic demands on a daily basis.

Scheduling is of the utmost importance. As I have progressed throughout the quarters, I have met many challenges, which include spending clinical time at various sites, writing nursing process papers, participating in study groups, and fulfilling family responsibilities. Using a good day planner has been especially helpful in keeping me on track. This requires scheduling my activities on an hourly basis.

Helping my family to understand that they would play a role in the achievement of my goals as a nursing student was also key. Many of the daily tasks have been taken over by my older children, Benjamin and Jacob. Their efforts have been welcomed and at times surprising in their self-sufficiency.

With the cooperation of my children, I have been able to participate in study groups with my fellow classmates. These study groups have helped me to maintain my grades. Some of these groups have been especially useful in preparing me for tests, which have always been a challenge for me. Developing friendships has been a bonus as well, as these students have proven to be an added resource and support in my educational endeavors.

To continue meeting the challenges of nursing school, taking time to relax has also been important. This time is well spent, in that it helps me reenergize in order to maintain my focus and keep on track. This may be as simple

as taking a luxurious bath, a long walk, or working out to relieve stress of the day. It does not matter what it is, just so it is something that is not focused on nursing school. Planning this time will make you a more effective and less stressed student and parent.

Getting this far as a nursing student has taken discipline on my part and the ability to say, "No, I can't see you or go out because I need to catch up on my studies." It requires focus and commitment to earning my degree. I have had to keep reminding myself that each quarter I complete gets me that much closer my degree. Yes, it's a sacrifice but, but one I know will pay off in the end.

Take Note:

Nurse's Day: May 9th

SCCANS Meetings:

Spring: Apr 4 & 18, May 23, Jun 6

Valuable Research Website:

<http://success.shoreline.edu/sccansweb/research.htm> — by SCCANS, for you!

NCLEX-RN Resources: review books are now on reserve at the library. Already graduated? No prob. Just get a community library card from SCC.

Come Celebrate Graduation:

In the SCC Theater, @ 1600

Winter: March 17th

Spring: June 9th



How do YOU handle Nursing School Stress?

WE ASKED SEVERAL of you, our classmates, for your own strategies in handling Nursing School Stress Not Otherwise Specified (NSS NOS). Watch for the recommendations from the experts in the field—students who have taken their NSS NOS beyond the lab—throughout this edition.

"My school stress is usually a result of disorganization, time constraints and feeling uninformed. To deal with disorganization, I allocate time (10-20 minutes) each night and on Sunday to go through my calendar, reading/assignment lists, etc., and get organized. Time constraints are not reconcilable, there simply isn't enough time; so I deliberately schedule leisure time for myself and do not discuss or think about school - these time periods are short but valuable. Feeling uninformed is an easy one — ask questions! These steps have helped me become minimally stressed. Giving-up is not an option!" ~ Sunshine, 1st qtr



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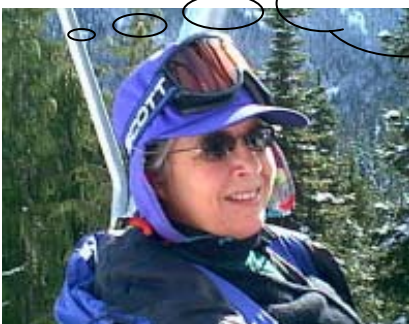
Anne Morrison

**SCCANS is currently looking
for volunteers to fill the
following positions:**

Co-Treasurer,
Secretary and Co-Secretary,
Brown Bag Coordinator,
Graduation Coordinator,
& Website Maintenance



There are three key things that help me: 1) Schedule everything on a calendar - classes, homework (when is the most opportune time to study?), grocery shopping, etc. 2) Do homework AHEAD of time - that way I never have to play the "panic catch-up" game and I get the most out of the lectures. 3) Take time for myself (put this on the calendar) - I go see a movie, have a nice lunch or dinner at a restaurant, visit with friends, or go skiing - doesn't matter what I do only that I do something just for myself that is outside of school & homework.



~ Robin, 2nd qtr

"Xanax."
~ Elisa, 4th qtr.



"I typically eat a lot of chocolate - my husband keeps me stocked."
~ Kim, 4th qtr



"You've all heard of compartment syndrome... Well that's me and stress. I tuck it away and then it comes out at an inopportune time, like before the cardiac test! Normally I am able to stay in the present and not worry about tomorrow or next week. That keeps me on task and keeps the stress down. Unfortunately it can explode at the last minute. A brisk walk, especially by water, is the great equalizer for me."
~ Marcia, 3rd qtr



Recruitment Fair

by Rachel Parda

ON JANUARY 24, SCCANS again welcomed several local hospitals and healthcare organizations to the 2nd Annual Shoreline Community College Nursing Recruitment Day. In attendance were representatives from Harborview Medical Center, Virginia Mason, Group Health Cooperative, University of Washington Medical Center, Northwest Hospital, Providence Everett Medical Center, Evergreen Healthcare, and King County Public Health.

At the event, SCC nursing students had the opportunity to collect information regarding what healthcare employers in our area have to offer in terms of new graduate RN residency programs, availability of specialty unit positions for new grads (i.e., telemetry and ICU), as well as benefits. Nursing students from all quarters showed their faces to find out about future employment possibilities,

however, attendees were primarily second-year students, who seem to be ready to jump into the job market following their upcoming graduations.

Throughout the event, the recruiters were happy to share their positive opinions regarding newly graduated RNs from SCC. Among the praises were comments such like that made by Mary Fatica of King County Public Health, who said, "Shoreline grads have the best assessment skills... they must spend a lot of time going over that" (yes, Ms. Fatica, they do). Several other representatives shared the same comment heard repeated throughout the event, which was "We love getting Shoreline grads."

As the first two Annual SCC Nursing Recruitment Days have proven to be successes, it is likely that SCCANS will continue to host this event for years to come.

LET'S TALK ABOUT some easy fitness. There are a few of us in the program who've discovered the zestiness that is bicycle commuting... we get exercise every day just by getting from place to place. And it's fun!

How many of you liked to ride your bikes when you were kids? So that aside, the goal here is to get bodies on bikes. How to convince the great, 'hand-washed' masses that cycling is the way?

Some points: Again, fitness. I know I might look a little soft (heh), but I'm really happy with my cardio-vascular capabilities and my trim figure. You can be too!

Next: cost. So I'm not sure if y'all

were paying attention, but did you notice that gas prices went up recently? They sure did. I know that some of you have sat down and figured out how much a car really costs year-to-year (gas, insurance, tabs, tires and maintenance can get



up over several thousand dollars per year)...scary! Just speaking strictly gas, if you spend twenty dollars a week to commute (and I know that sometimes it's a lot more) that's over a thousand bucks a year going...where again? Turned into poisonous gases? Which brings me to point three: to cycle is to be more in tune with your surroundings, i.e. environmentally friendly. Because it is. Some of you

are aware that the human impact we make on earth is (ahem) substantial. By not driving a car everyday, all by myself I have saved literally tons (as in like metric tons) of hydrocarbon by-products from being released into the atmosphere. Don't kid yourselves folks: cars are arguably the largest point-source of pollution (from greenhouse gases in the air to oil being washed into various and assorted bodies of water) around.

So that's my pitch. Oh, and wear your helmet! I hope this will be a source of contemplation for those who have not discovered the joys and wonder that can be cycling. Ride fast and take chances! Ride it like you stole it! Two wheels good, four wheels bad! Smile at someone today!

SCC Nursing School Participates in HCAP Pilot Project

A COUPLE OF YEARS ago SCC Nursing School was invited to participate in the Health Career Advancement Program (HCAP), an experimental project initiated by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). The goal of the program is to provide an LPN to RN curriculum, allowing working LPNs to attend classes and clinicals at their workplace. On-site studies are supplemented by online learning via Blackboard, and credits are split half-and-half between onsite and online coursework. Pilot projects of HCAP are being tested in several locations around the country. In the Seattle area, SEIU chose to work with Swedish Medical Center (SMC), and SMC chose SCC to design and implement the curriculum. The local program is funded through SEIU, SMC and Washington State Workforce money. Tuition is free for participating LPNs.

Shoreline instructors began developing the curriculum about a year and a half ago under the leadership of Janice Ellis, who continues to work as coordinator. The first course has been taught by Sharon Stewart, Chris Berntsen, and Barbara VanDroof, and several other teachers are in-

involved in course development. One of the major aspects of curriculum development has been to identify which content the LPNs have learned in previous studies, and what more needs to be taught, to avoid duplication. A major focus is role transition, including communication skills, assessment, management, care plans and discharge planning. Courses also include psychology, obstetrics and medical-surgical nursing.

The first class of HCAP began in January, 2005, and has nine students based at SMC First Hill campus. The program is divided into seven sections lasting five weeks each. Students complete two sections per academic quarter Winter, Spring and Summer, and one section in the Fall. The first section includes three hours of class lecture, two hours communication lab, two hours skills lab and three hours of online theory content. Subsequent sections include one eight-hour day with an SCC instructor, four hours a week of experiential clinical where outcomes are met in their workplace during work hours, and three hours of online content. Altogether the program takes ten months, and the first

class is expected to graduate in October, 2005. During their final section they will meet the Fall SCC 6th quarter students at SMC, and are invited to participate in graduation ceremonies with them.

Despite many positive aspects of HCAP, its future is unclear and it will probably not be continued "as-is". There are no current plans to start a second class of students. The pilot project has turned out to be very expensive for its financiers, and more work than expected for SCC staff. Even so, the HCAP project appears to be a worthwhile experiment. According to Bette Perman, the SCC nursing program has always looked for ways to grow and develop, a process that often involves more work than return. The work of designing and implementing HCAP has provided a framework for an in-depth review of nursing curriculum, especially the LPN to RN program. It has provided an opportunity to reflect on the ongoing question that keeps SCC on the cutting edge of nurse education: "How can we do our work better?"

- written by Anne Morrison, based on an interview with Bette Perman.



"1. Exercise...ride your bike to school. Remember your health is far more important than your GPA.
2. Sex 3. Take one whole day off completely from school a week.
~ JJ, 4th qtr

"I bake! Cookies, pies, breads, scones, ... you name it—I've probably baked it. And the more I'm stressed the more I bake. It takes my mind completely off school and allows me a productive excuse to procrastinate." ~ Kristin, 5th qtr



Legislation Day 2005

By Lisa Tufts

NURSE LEGISLATIVE DAY is a chance to talk to policy makers, both state senators and representatives about proposed legislation that affects nursing and healthcare. On Monday February 7th, Shoreline nursing students and several instructors went to Olympia, Washington for the 23rd annual Nurse Legislative Day. This year several proposed bills stand out:

HB 1353 & SB 5599 propose that funding from part of the nursing licensing fee would be used to support a central nursing resource center.

HB 1371 & SB 5368 close loop holes in the mandatory overtime legislation to protect nurses who work in jails, state hospitals, and state veteran's homes.

HB 1372 would require hospitals to report the ratio of nursing staff to patients.

For more information on the current proposed legislation go to www.wsna.org. There is a link on the WSNA website called

CapWiz that allows you to look at the proposed legislation and e-mail or print off a hard copy letter to send directly to your representative or senator. It is a quick and easy way for your voice to be heard and to make a difference.

Throughout the day speakers presented PowerPoint presentations and described the key issues. After the morning welcome and presentation there were three breakout sessions to choose from depending on interest. The grassroots political action described the basics of legislative advocacy. The prescriptive authority and other nurse practitioner issues sessions focused on HB 1479 & SB 5516 that would remove the need for a joint practice agreement between medical doctors and nurse practitioners. Another session focused on mental health parity and public health funding.

In the afternoon, a luncheon was held in the rotunda. Speakers from WSNA addressed those gathered in the rotunda and encouraged them to lobby for current proposed legislation. After the luncheon people made their way to senators' and representatives' offices. You can learn more about the progress of proposed legislation by going to the WSNA website.