



LIFELINE

NEWSLETTER

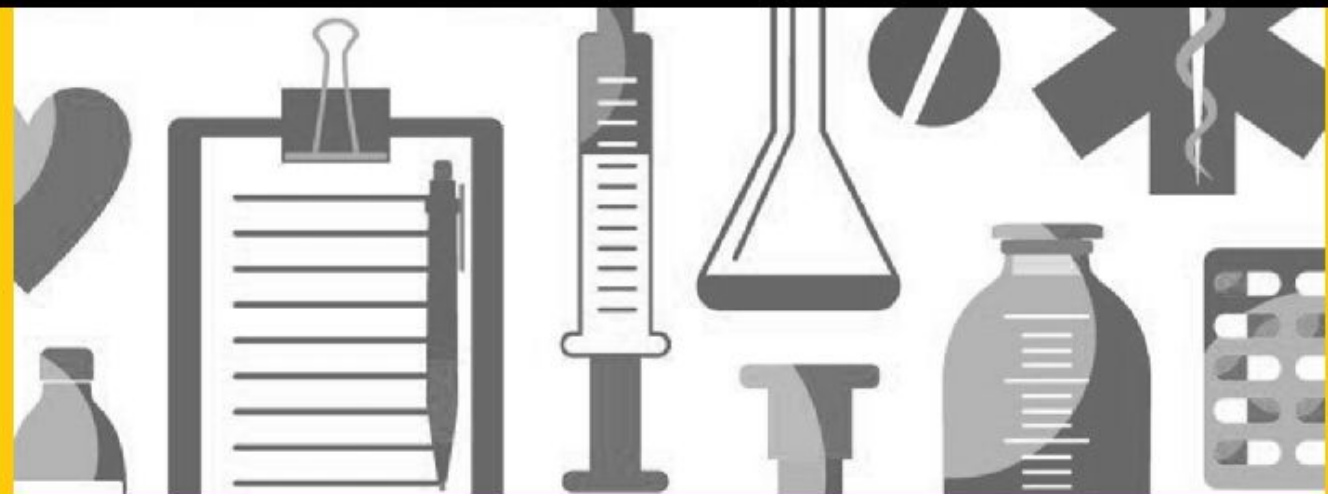


STUDENT NURSES'

ASSOCIATION

AT UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

ORLANDO



Editor's Piece

Amber Keller

SNA Media Director, Basic BSN '21

Hello everyone! I'm the SNA Media director for the 2020-2021 academic year. I am so excited to work with everyone this year! As the Media Director, I make sure the SNA social media is up to date, create the Lifeline Newsletter, and help plan SNA events. Reach out to me if you have a newsletter submission or questions regarding submissions. Newsletter submissions are a great way to contribute by sharing your experiences, informing other students on health care related issues, and getting involved!





My Pediatric Clinical - Spring 2020 at Nemours

A little about myself:

I have lived in three countries and five states although I have lived in Florida the longest. I was inspired by both of my parents, who served in the U.S. Army, to join Army ROTC, which has given me so many amazing opportunities. My favorite ROTC experience involved traveling to Estonia last summer for a month of military and cultural experiences. I love the outdoors, running, avocados, reading, my pets, and Disney. I love learning and I love nursing school! My advice for other students is to be engaged, do things hands-on as much as possible, and study early and often. Find ways to make things relatable!

I am looking forward to this year with all of you! Until then, stay safe!

Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Mary Lou Sole, PhD, RN, CCNS, CNL, FAAN, FCCN

Dean of UCF College of Nursing



Tell us about yourself and what brought you to the UCF College of Nursing?

I ended up at UCF because of my husband's job. He was in the homebuilding business and we were relocating from Texas. He said, "We need to be in Orlando." I had never heard of UCF (1991) and told him we needed to be in Tampa or Gainesville for my opportunities. I found UCF by old-fashioned searching and was offered a position as a visiting (temporary) faculty member. What a great decision it was, and what a great journey for my family and me!

What motivated you to pursue a career in nursing?

I did not decide on nursing until I was a senior in high school. My first plan was to become a teacher—first Spanish and second kindergarten! Then I explored medical technology, which sounded interesting. Both my mother and grandmother were exceptional nurse and their influence encouraged me to seek nursing as a career path. Although I wanted a college degree, my parents told me that we could not afford college (and I was very disappointed). However, they told me they would pay for my diploma education and that afterwards I could seek a degree, which I did.

What are some of your research interests and why are you passionate about them?

I fell in love with critical care nursing during my senior year. The adrenaline, teamwork, and technology inspired me. I was always interested in care of ventilated patients and physiological changes in the patient. My first research study was on oxygenation in ventilated cardiac surgery patients, and it has evolved to focus on management of the patient's breathing tube or tracheostomy, oral care, and infection prevention.

How are you involved as a faculty member at UCF?

I have done a variety of things in my long tenure at UCF. I have taught undergraduate health assessment and essentials (hardest course I ever taught!), critical care, and research. I have taught a variety of MSN and PhD courses, with research-related courses my favorite. I have mentored several honors in the major students, which is a highlight. Most have gone on to further degrees and they always share their success.

What are some things you enjoy doing in your free time?

I love to read for down time, especially mysteries and thrillers. I love watching college football and some basketball. I love the ocean and enjoy taking our boat out for a nice leisurely ride or fishing. I also scuba dive. The Keys are a great local gem that I visit at least once per year. Traveling to new places is also fun, but I do not know how traveling during the next few years will be.

What advice would you give a UCF CON student?

Focus on your studies and do not just do what you have to do to “pass the course.” You will be responsible for someone’s life each day of your nursing practice. Experience new adventures, such as a club or professional organization, and continue this after graduation. Share your personal and professional stories and experiences with others and me. We need to know how each of you contribute uniquely to the profession. Develop strong relationships with your faculty members. They genuinely care about your well-being.



Lastly, be bold! You are our future leaders!

Reflection on Nursing School

Tom Gregorich

SNA Accelerated Liaison, Accelerated BSN '20

The members of the accelerated class of the UCF College of Nursing are in a different set of circumstances compared with the traditional nursing student. We all dream of becoming a nurse, but in our case, it just may not be our first dream in life. We arrive in May with diverse backgrounds



including previous careers as disparate as Army helicopter pilots and animal trainers. The fact that we are all here now, returning to school for another undergraduate degree, shows that our desire to become a nurse is as strong as anyone's. This isn't the regular pathway, and for many of us it meant making a big decision about a quite radical change in our career and family life. In my case, it took almost 20

years after my first graduation before I realized that being a nurse was my calling. But that doesn't mean there weren't some doubts along the way.

I can clearly remember my first day at orientation when I received my nurse pack. It was the one and only time in nursing school when I questioned if I had made the right decision. Digging through the black backpack we all received, making sure I had all my syringes and Foley catheter kits, it hit me

hard that this was real. Being a nurse was no longer a vague idea in my head, these were real tools, to be used on real people who I would be responsible for caring for very soon. It only just a few minutes of thought before telling myself, "yes, this is exactly where I want to be". I looked around at this amazing group of people, proud to have been admitted into the UCF College of Nursing and told myself I would do everything I could to make the best of my year.

Course work never worried me too much. That's not to say that I was a straight A student- far from it- but I had passed many exams in my life and I knew how to study. In fact, I enjoyed it and was looking forward to digging deep and learning everything about nursing. It might surprise some people but my best class, and the one I looked forward to most, was pathophysiology. I've always been drawn to theory and explanations for why things happen in the physical world.

My toughest two classes that first semester were Essentials of Nursing Practice and Health Assessment. They were also my two most rewarding. I had no idea what health assessment even meant when I first registered for classes that spring. As for essentials, I assumed was just nursing basics. Later on, in the year I came to believe that these were the two most important classes in nursing school.

If you were to poll our cohort, I would place my money on Dr. Gonzalez's Health Assessment lectures being their favorite class. It was not just the breadth of information that was being taught and the quality of the teaching, it was the sense that we were learning incredibly powerful skills of interviewing and physical assessment that would be fundamental building blocks in our nursing career.

In Nursing Essentials, Mrs. DeGennaro was like having a friend and mentor teach us the ropes of what it meant to be a nurse. I can't say that I left that course being able to perform every one of the many skills we learned perfectly- although I was very proud of my score on the foley catheter insertion check off- but as with Health Assessment, more building blocks were laid and I would return to what I learned in this class for the rest of my time as a nursing student.

I was far more worried about clinicals where I'd be working with real, not plastic, patients. This would not be a multiple-choice test where I would be provided with four possible options for how to change a dressing. I also wouldn't have access to a textbook at my side to pull up the nursing interventions when caring for a patient with a COPD exacerbation. Nor would I have time to watch the video on how to insert an NG tube that was included with our Essentials course. Caring for my patient would require me to master and put in practice what I had learned in class on my own.

It turned out that clinicals weren't as scary as I had imagined they'd be. Both my clinical instructors and the nurses I shadowed always were there to teach and mentor me. I remember the first time I was administering aspirin to a patient and Tyler, my instructor, asked why this was being prescribed. "For the pain!" I replied, upon hearing which he slapped his forehead and gave me a look to indicate I should have known better (it was to prevent blood clots, of course). Brief teaching moments like these were incredibly valuable because the lessons I learned often stuck far better than what I learned in class.

The school year would go on and I had my ups and downs in the classroom. Just as my lab instructor predicted, Adult 2 was my toughest course and it took some extra hard studying to pull myself out of a C on my first exam. In the spring I learned everything I could hope to learn regarding EKG rhythm strips from Dr. D. and the fundamentals of therapeutic communication techniques from Dr. Valenti in Psych.

Everything was going great until March came along, and Covid-19 hit. We were on spring break when classes were moved on-line and all in hospital clinicals were cancelled. At the time it felt momentous. Perhaps it was, but still we managed to get through that period and stay on track for graduation. I missed seeing my classmates and the missed clinical hours in the hospital were unfortunate, but I did get to spend more time with my family and avoided the long commute to campus. The reality is that we were in an unprecedented situation and others around the world were dealing with far worse circumstances than me. Everyone was making a sacrifice and nursing students were not exempt.

In a few weeks we'll be returning to the hospital for practicum and I couldn't be more excited. It will be a test of whether I'm ready to take the next step from student to professional nurse. I'm confident it's a test that I will pass as will all my classmates in the accelerated cohort. UCF has prepared us well and it's now time to go out and prove it.



***Congratulations to the
Accelerated Class of 2020!***

Student Spotlight

Nate Wagner

Accelerated BSN '20



Tell us about yourself and what brought you to UCF?

My name is Nate Wagner. I am originally from Olympia, WA, however prior to nursing school I spent the previous 8 years in the US Army as a UH-60M Blackhawk helicopter pilot. My wife and I have a three-year-old son and a baby girl due in July. We chose to leave the military because of a desire to have more stability as a family. We moved to central Florida for two reasons – first, because we have family in the area who have been graciously supporting us through our transition from Army life and second because of the stellar reputation of the UCF CON.

What motivated you to pursue a nursing education?

As a follower of Jesus Christ, I believe that we are called to serve and love people in our community. I believe that nursing provides a unique opportunity to do this for our patients regardless of their background.

What is your favorite experience/part of nursing school?

Clinicals for sure. They were the most intimidating and challenging at first, but after a few uncomfortable shifts they were great. It was the place where all of the information accumulation from class was translated into practice. I also really enjoyed many group study sessions with my friends in the program. I didn't expect to grow so close to a group of people in such a short time but I was very pleasantly surprised.

What advice do you have for other students?

Find a group of students that you can traverse through nursing school with – not just to help with studying but also for friendship and support. Things can get busy very quickly at the CON but having people in your corner who support you and are sharing the same experience goes a long way. Our cohort had a Bible study group that was super helpful. If this is your thing, I strongly encourage you to find other students that you can press into your faith with during school.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I love being outside - whether it is hiking, camping, backpacking, kayaking, sports etc. I also love watching baseball – specifically the Seattle Mariners. My wife and I have a 3-year-old son so any opportunity we have to share these things with him is always the best. I'm very excited to start doing these things more often now that I'm wrapping up my final semester of nursing school.

What are your plans after graduation?

We are going to move our family back to Washington state after 10 years of being away from home. I am hoping to find a job in the ICU shortly after graduation – either straight into a unit through a training program, or after a year on a PCU if necessary.



President's Corner

Samantha Cooney

SNA President, Basic BSN '21

Hi everyone! I am so excited to be a part of this new amazing board and make this year a great one! Now that the virus is slowly becoming more controlled, we can focus on more fundraising events and plans for the future of SNA. With August being just two short months away, we have the Back to School BBQ and the beginning of the Fall semester. I encourage you all to stay tuned on our social media pages for announcements on future events!

While we are still battling this pandemic, it is important to remain organized with classes and up to date with Castlebranch. My personal advice would be to use a planner or calendar to mark due dates for assignments, appointments, and future exams. I currently use Google Calendar and enjoy the ability to set reminders for myself. With good organization comes success! I look forward to seeing you all again in the Fall! Stay safe!



Congratulations and welcome to our newest board members!

Andrea Alvarenga - Clubhouse Director
Megan Donnelly - Accelerated Liaison

And a big thank you to our graduating **Heather Plachte** and **Tom Gregorich** for everything you did for SNA while on the board!



Announcements & Upcoming Events!



The next
Newsletter
Submission
Deadline is
**September
20th!**

Join the
**Junior-Senior
Buddy
Program!**

Back to School
BBQ in
August!

Stay tuned for
future Ronald
McDonald
House and
Straight Street
**meal sharing
events!**

Contact Info for the 2020-2021 SNA Board!



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