What will you find in *The Scope*?

*The Scope* is a newsletter/magazine produced by the Duquesne University Student Nurses Association that displays unique perspectives from current students and faculty. You’ll find photographs of students collaborating, writing pieces on life-changing nursing experiences, and messages from faculty aiming to inspire.

*The Scope* is the proud recipient of the 2013, 2014, and 2016 Student Nurses Association of Pennsylvania Excellent Newsletter Award. Past president Morgan Gruender and Vice President Emily Churchill have created such an established piece of work.

As BSN students are incredibly busy with work and with saving lives, please consider writing and giving your time to keep this newsletter going. Our goal is to make *The Scope* something that every Duquesne nursing student can look back on and be proud of.

We would love to hear your thoughts on this year’s newsletter. Please email all suggestions/comments/inquiries to us at either blissl@duq.edu or muellerh@duq.edu. All letters to the editors must include your name, contact information, and major.

All views expressed in *The Scope* are from each individual that contributed their time and work. Views do not represent the views of Duquesne University or Duquesne University School of Nursing. We look forward to producing something inspiring, collaborative, and memorable and sharing stories from all of our peers.

Best,

*Lauren Bliss & Hadley Mueller*

*BSN Class of 2021*
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Dear Duquesne University Nursing Students –

Welcome back to campus! Your professors are so proud of you – your perseverance and your flexibility are truly something to be commended. Whether I am teaching in the classroom or walking around campus, I see students that are being responsible. I had the pleasure of seeing nursing students practicing their population health skills while assisting with COVID testing on campus! You, as student nurses, are especially viewed as role models – you are already in the process of educating those around you and keeping your patients and communities safe!

In March, the National League for Nursing (NLN) identified that COVID-19 was “an unparalleled opportunity for nursing students to assist the nation in a time of crisis and to learn the principles of population health and emergency management.” This remains true even as we enter into the fall - you are an integral part of the healthcare arena. Whether you are a Sophomore or new Second-Degree student learning virtually how to perform a physical assessment or you are a Senior in Critically Ill Adult, you are growing as a student nurse.

I know that the classrooms look different than what we are used to. It is strange being distant from our colleagues – but the learning is still happening and the support is still there. Try to stay engaged, even if you feel like you are on Zoom all day! Also, your pets really are adorable. Your professors want you to be successful, so please reach out if you are struggling. Thank you so much for extending grace to others during this time. Take advantage of the resources that we have to help you to feel confident and be successful.

I am so happy to have students back in the clinical setting because it is one of the best methods to support classroom learning and grow clinical judgment. CEO of the NLN, Beverly Malone, PhD, said “There’s nothing like working directly with a patient.” Take every chance to see and do and learn when you are on the clinical unit. Perfect your physical assessment skills on your patients. Because of COVID, your instructors have fewer students and are therefore able to ask you more questions and spend more personalized time with you, so this should be such a great experience. Use your time wisely and seek out those learning opportunities!

Margaret Harvey, PhD, RN, said “When a person decides to become a nurse, they make the most important decision of their lives. They choose to dedicate themselves to the care of others.” Be sure to take care of yourself so that you can take care of others. Downtime, exercise, and sleep are important. Be sure to spend time with friends, even if it is at a distance. Pay attention to those things that help with your mental health and bring you joy.

I know that you have heard this before, but these truly are unprecedented times. It can be scary, but you are being prepared and you have the education to support your work. Positively, nurses are being seen in ways that we never have been before. You, the next generation of nurses, are growing during this time of not only a pandemic, but also a social justice movement. Keep working hard – I am so excited to see what you do!

Best of luck this semester and take care,

Professor Kolesar
Picture it: March 2020, nearly halfway through a typical spring semester with eager junior-level nursing students, their Starbucks™ lattes, and ‘Bladder Conditions in the Older Adult’ PowerPoints happily displayed on projector screens in College Hall rooms 104 and 105. Spring break was just behind us and the students and professors were just beginning to get back to “normal” after a much needed break. The students were preparing for their full week of group presentations featuring the common diseases and disorders of the golden years. Life was grand; everything was beautiful. And then, all of a sudden, it was as if we were thrust into a real-life scenario of ‘The Golden Girls’ listening to Rose Nylund tell an awful joke that didn’t make any sense: “You know what they say in St. Olaf: COVID-19.”

If we’ve learned anything from ‘The Golden Girls,’ it was to “Live like Rose, dress like Blanche, think like Dorothy, and speak like Sophia.” So, we did just that! We found the good in the situation (if there was any to be found), donned our CDC-recommended face masks and socially distanced in our offices in Liberman Hall, put on our stylish thinking caps, and told COVID-19 to give us it’s best shot as we were ready for whatever it threw our way.

Thinking on the spot amidst crisis, just as we are trained to do in the nursing profession, aided us in easily transforming our courses from traditional lecture to fully remote on the fly. As nurses, we are often required to think outside the box in order to provide competent care and build meaningful relationships; we took the same approach as nursing professors in creating our students’ alternative clinical assignments to promote critical thinking and value-added learning that encouraged the students to reflect upon what they had previously learned in lecture and apply it to providing care to geriatric patients in various capacities. Nursing is a holistic approach and we wanted our students to understand that care of the older adult doesn’t only focus on physical attributes, but includes the care of the individual related to financial, social, and psychological needs as was depicted by the alternative clinical assignments.

Our students’ learning and experience(s) were a top priority and we were determined to maintain high quality learning in a time of great uncertainty. Just as Rose, Blanche, and Dorothy always spoke the truth, we were dedicated to transparency on behalf of our students as so much was unknown about the pandemic that had uprooted their traditional learning styles and placed them into an academic cyberspace that looked as foreign to them as Sophia’s description of Sicily in 1922 was to us. Blanche taught us that flexibility helps to keep everyone happy so we adjusted our course profiles to accommodate both synchronous and asynchronous learning as students were moving in more directions than they could have ever imagined. This allowed students the ability to successfully complete their predetermined, pre-COVID course objectives for our course while still granting ample time to complete the new activities designed in a mere six-hour timeframe.

Finally, maintaining collaborative relationships with your peers, both as students and professors, permits more than just sharing cheesecake at the kitchen table. Our shared working relationship allowed us to act immediately to ensure a timely and effective product to be produced. We wanted the outcome of the alternative clinical assignments to be effective in not only meeting time requirements, but to aid in our students’ understanding of the complexity in providing care to one patient. It was almost as if COVID-19 was helping our students see their overwhelming potential from behind a computer screen as they typed and clicked their way into providing multifaceted care to their fictitious geriatric patients.

Although COVID-19 changed the façade of face-to-face learning in 2020, it granted time for professors and students alike to reflect on what truly matters in this life. Nurses give so much of themselves to those to whom they provide care, and our nursing students were able to witness that firsthand during this very unconventional and scary time. Our hope for them is that someday, some patient will hold their hand, look them directly in the eyes, and tell them, “Thank you for being a friend.”
This past summer before going into my senior year of nursing school, I got a patient care assistant (PCA) job in the observation unit at my local hospital, outside of Philadelphia. I was oriented to the floor for about a month and then was quickly scheduled to work on the floor. Working on the observation unit was very different compared to other floors because there are only twenty beds. These patients are not admitted, but they are coming from the Emergency Room for observation by doctors while they try to decipher what is going on. The patients tend to only stay on this floor for a maximum of two days, and then they are either discharged or admitted if they need more care. I think the hardest part of my job is how fast the turnover is because I am constantly getting admissions and helping the nurses discharge patients. But overall, this unit was very enjoyable because it was fast-paced, and I was always on my feet.

I would highly recommend working in a hospital as a nursing student because you will learn so much, and it will make you more confident when it comes time to graduate and find a nursing job. Working in the observation unit, I witnessed a lot. I saw things such as inmates from a local prison being shackled to the bed with two correctional officers watching them. It was quite the experience. I was very nervous while getting their vitals because I was not sure what to expect. I have also experienced dealing with patients going through alcohol and drug withdrawal, which caused them to become very violent to the point where they have attacked me. These experiences are not meant to scare you, but they are just experiences that I have dealt with. The reality is that nurses have to deal with these scary situations.

The benefits of working as a PCA in the observation unit are that I can talk to my patients and listen to them when they are frustrated with not having any answers as to why they are so sick. It is very rewarding when I can provide compassionate care because it can go a long way in improving patient outcomes. I have gained so much knowledge about patients of all age groups while expanding my expertise, as well as my skills. Some skills I acquired included an improved bedside manner and how to apply the knowledge that I have gained from both my psychology course in nursing school and personal experiences. I developed a greater sense of empathy for how patients are mentally affected. While on this unit, there were a lot of tests that had to be performed, so a lot of blood was drawn and sent to the lab. I was able to come across a lot, making me feel more prepared to graduate. Some of the things I accomplished as a PCA were drawing blood, getting EKG’s, taking out IV’s, hooking a patient up to a heart monitor, bladder scanning, and taking blood sugars before meals. Overall, working as a PCA in the observation unit was an amazing opportunity, and working in this unit allowed me to come to the conclusion that I want to be a critical care nurse after graduation.
Covid-19 pandemic has been very impactful not only to individuals that have lost their lives to the virus but to everyone as well in some sort of way. People lost their jobs, seeing their families on a regular basis, and most importantly human interaction. Human beings are meant to have interactions with others. That is what makes us people.

As a very outgoing person, losing that in person connections made things difficult for me. We all were trying to figure out the new normal and adjusting every day. I would be lying if I said my mental health was still strong throughout this pandemic. When I came home from school at the beginning, I was coming home to my stepfather who had stage four cancer and was petrified of the world. It took a good bit of time to figure out how this was going to work. I had a job at the hospital that I couldn’t neglect. It was scary to think about how I could possibly bring something in that could potentially hurt a loved one.

Things were extremely difficult at the beginning of this pandemic. I had to adjust to life in a way I never thought I had to. I was miserable at first and hated life but, I told myself that I needed to be that light when everyone’s lives seemed to be so dark. I began to do home workouts every day to keep some type of normalcy. My mom and I would go for walks everyday with our dogs too. It was helpful to have an escape from reality. Soon the workouts weren’t enough for someone like me. I love to be around people and needed a distraction when I physically couldn’t. I became an expertise at cleaning and going through old stuff that needed to be sorted. It helped me give some type of focus on something that wasn’t every news broadcast that talked about the coronavirus.

The pandemic has taught a lot of us about who we are and how we are able to overcome obstacles in our life that we had never faced before. If anything, this pandemic has made my mental health stronger, and I have the ability to maintain my schoolwork when being home. I know that Covid-19 has made everyone’s life challenging but, I think the key to moving forward to a new normal and overcoming this is to think of the positives when you can. Many people were able to grow closer as a family. People also learned their mental health strengths that they did not know they have.
COVID-19 In the Big Apple

Abbey Whitewood, RN, BSN

My name is Abbey Whitewood, and I graduated in May of 2019 with my BSN. I moved to New York City in October 2019 to work on a stepdown transplant unit. I was very lucky to get this job because of the rigor and competition for the position. I started my orientation on days and then moved to nights once I came off orientation. Luckily, I was able to complete all of my orientation in February of 2020 before Covid hit one month later. Not all new nurses at this time can say the same. They were rushing some new hires off orientation early before the hiring freeze because they needed the nurses.

I was very excited to be starting this adventure in a new city, a city that I always pictured myself being in, enjoying the hustle-bustle of the big city life. I have always had a dream of coming to New York City for as long as I can remember, but I just never thought I would make it. When I talked to my friend who works in one of our ICUs, she put me in contact with human resources, so I jumped at the opportunity to fulfill my dream. This past year has not gone how I initially planned it, but I feel that I have grown more as a nurse and an individual during these trying times than if COVID-19 did not happen.

When things first started in early March, it was just rumors of one or two patients in the hospital. We did not think that it would become as widespread as it did in the city. On my unit, when we had a patient that had any possible symptoms, we would send them to another unit because our patient population is severely immunocompromised due to their transplants. We did not want to expose them to any more than they already were by being in the hospital. By the middle of April, the whole hospital was COVID positive except for one unit. They even created make-shift ICUs in the ORs. There was no way around the positive cases. We just had to do our best to keep our transplant patients as safe and as healthy as possible. We did end up losing several of our transplant patients which was very sad and disheartening as we cared for these patients over months and years. We really get to develop relationships with our patients and form bonds with them which is something that usually doesn't happen on any other unit.

In the beginning, the patient load was very heavy. Usually, we can take care of up to 3 stepdown patients or 4 “floor” patients, but we were taking care of up to 5 patients in total. These patients were very sick, and it was exhausting to try and manage every patient with the new medications that were coming out left and right and the rapid decline that could happen at any given moment. By early May, we had travel nurses available which helped to ease the burden and even out the assignment load.
Every day coming into work during the height of the pandemic, we saw refrigerator trucks sitting next to the building with a make-shift tent for access. It was very eerie seeing these trucks and not knowing how much longer this would be going on for. In a way, we were facing our own mortality every day walking into the building, not knowing if we would be the next nurse to fall sick.

One of the good things that came out of this whole situation was that for several months, every night at 7pm, the whole city would clap for the health care workers. The first few times that it happened, I had tears in my eyes because it felt good to have people appreciating us and acknowledging the struggles that we were facing every day. I also remember walking down the street past the giant line outside the grocery store with my headphones in, and a woman stopped me to thank me out of the blue. I will never forget these moments because it shows that people recognize the work that we are putting in, and they appreciate us for it.

New York has done an amazing job so far about making sure that people are wearing their masks and staying six feet apart. The subways and streets have been empty for a very long time. It is very encouraging that our numbers are still staying so low given the fact that we were the epicenter for so long.

While my first year as RN was definitely not what I was expecting, I am very thankful for this experience and everything that it taught me. Holding the hand of someone while they are dying or holding an iPad for family members to say their last goodbye is something that will stay with me for the rest of my life. It is very humbling to be able to experience these events even when the rest of the shift may be very stressful. It has made me a better nurse and has reminded me why I became a nurse in the first place - to help those in need. New York is such a resilient city, and I know that one day it will be back to the vibrant and exhilarating city that we all know it to be.
Pizza is always an easy choice especially cooking for one, but why stick to boring cheese or pepperoni? Not only is this a quick and easy meal, but is also a healthy alternative!

Ingredients:
- Pita bread or naan bread (whole wheat)
- Olive oil or tomato sauce
- 2 Roma tomatoes
- 1 Bunch of spinach, chopped
- 4 Mushrooms
- ½ cup of crumbled feta cheese
- 2 tablespoons for grated parmesan
- Black pepper to taste

Due to college budgets or whether you live on or off campus, any of the ingredients can be substituted for left-over veggies you have in the fridge. Have fun with it!

Directions
1. Preheat Oven to 350 degrees
2. Brush pita bread with olive oil or tomato sauce
3. Top with sliced tomatoes, spinach, mushrooms, feta and parmesan cheese (PILE IT UP)
4. Drizzle with olive oil and finish with pepper to taste!
5. Bake for 12 minutes or until pita is crispy
Holiday Gift Guide for Students
Meghan Jones, RN, BSN

It’s that time of year again folks…HOLIDAY SEASON! Worried about what to give your college student? Have no fear! Whether you are celebrating Christmas, Kwanzaa, or Hanukkah, these gifts will definitely wow your college student.

**Wireless headphones**
Whether it’s AirPods or Beats, these are a staple for college students. They are perfect for those long hours in the library, a hard workout at the gym, and tangle-free FaceTiming.

**Amazon gift cards**
Amazon is used weekly for some students. It’s perfect for ordering snacks, school supplies, or anything else your heart desires. Have no doubt, an Amazon gift card will be put to good use.

**Uber/Uber Eats gift cards**
Most students in a city campus don’t have a car which makes Uber a necessity. Getting a ride paid for? It’s a no brainer.

**Fuzzy blanket or fuzzy socks**
Nothing is better than coming home and snuggling with a nice cozy blanket or throwing on your favorite pair of fuzzy socks to relax during the winter.

**Shoes**
A good pair of shoes should not be underestimated. Make sure your student is walking around comfortably and looking stylish.

**Subscription to a new streaming service**
With all these new streaming services to choose from, get your student the one that best suits them.

**Apple pencil**
Apple pencils, and other compatible styluses, are becoming more and more popular. With them, your student can take notes or create drawings on their compatible tablets and computers. Switch to electric and save some trees!

**Clothing**
Make sure your college student is stocked up on all their favorite brands this holiday season.

**Concert/event tickets**
One of the best things about living in/near a city is the close proximity to concert and event venues. Get your college student and their friends a few tickets for a night they will never forget.

**Sweats**
A good pair of sweatpants and a sweatshirt are a timeless gift. Whether it’s college wear or their favorite brand, sweats will be you student’s new best friend.
News & Announcements

Upcoming Meetings

Meeting info is sent out by email by President Julia Ciotti. Check your Duquesne email for details and times!

All meetings are held via Zoom.

NCLEX Practice Question!

The nurse has opened the sterile supplies and put on two sterile gloves to complete a sterile dressing change, a procedure that requires surgical asepsis. The nurse must:

a. Keep splashes on the sterile field to a minimum.

b. Cover the nose and mouth with gloved hands if a sneeze is imminent.

c. Use forceps soaked in a disinfectant.

d. Consider the outer 1 inch of the sterile field as contaminated.
Interested in writing for *The Scope*?

We are always looking for new writers. Contact Hadley Mueller for more details!

muellerh@duq.edu

**NCLEX ANSWER : D**

d. Consider the outer 1 inch of the sterile field as contaminated.

**DUSNA BOARD OF DIRECTORS (2020-2021)**

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Pictured: Julia Vozella, Carissa Rohrbach, Colleen Rafter, Julia Ciotti, and Emily Scanlon