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, and inquiries to us at either blissl@duq.edu or muellerh@duq.edu.

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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An Introduction to the Second Degree Program

Professor Kolesar MSN, RN, CNE, CCRN-K Instructor Director of the Second Degree Program

The Second Degree Program at Duquesne University School of Nursing was established in 1991 as a way for students who already held a baccalaureate degree to pursue a career in nursing.

The undergraduate degree that the second degree student possesses does not need to be in a science. We have students that have their first degree in everything from psychology to fine arts. Second degree nursing students form a unique group because they bring a wealth of experience with them. As a professor, I find it interesting to be teaching about a content area and when a student brings forth an example from their previous education or work that makes things click for the whole class.

It is interesting to see the mix of students that a program like this brings to Duquesne. We have parents, former military personnel, students that have been out of school for quite a while, and those that have recently graduated. Students come from all over the country and from outside of the US. This mix keeps things interesting – and gives each student many reasons to work hard!

Students have the option of two different pathways for obtaining their BSN: 12-month or 16-month programs. Second degree students start in the clinical units right away with Fundamentals and Health Assessment their first semester. The semesters are quite full with a challenging schedule. Students opting for the 12-month pathway have three semesters with 21-24 credits each. The 16-month pathway students have four semesters with 18-19 credits except in summer when they take 12 credits. Students are on campus or in clinical Monday through Friday.

Duquesne has a wealth of potential clinical experiences in the Pittsburgh area. This is a wonderful benefit because students get to see several facilities and get comfortable with different charting systems.

In my opinion, one of the biggest things that sets Duquesne’s program apart from other schools’ is the faculty. The faculty here at the School of Nursing want their students to do well. We recognize that this is a rigorous program, but students are given all of the resources that they need to be successful.
My name is Christine D’Antonio RN, MSN-Ed, and I have had the privilege of educating students in the accelerated Second Degree BSN Track in a variety of courses in their academic curriculum. The greatest observation that I have made is that the Second Degree students have made the decision to enter into an accelerated nursing program with the knowledge and understanding that this may be the toughest twelve to sixteen months of their academic lives. They are often asked to put their previous careers and personal lives on hold and devote all of their time and energy to nursing school.

Some Second Degree nursing students may have just completed their first undergraduate degree, some may have worked in a career in another professional field, and some may have worked in an aspect of healthcare delivery. Regardless of their background outside of Duquesne University School of Nursing, they bring many professional attributes and individualized success stories to the program.

So what is my advice to a Second Degree nursing student beginning their journey into nursing school? Pack your bags and get ready for the ride; you are now in route to Destination BSN! Before you depart, it’s vital to take part in self-reflection by asking yourself some rather basic questions. Why am I here? Where will I be tomorrow, next month, in twelve to sixteen months? How am I going to get there, and who is coming with me? What challenges may I encounter? When will I arrive at my destination?

It is essential for the Second Degree nursing student to find their inner “why,” as this is their motivation to complete this accelerated program. As I often refer to with patient care, the “why” must be student specific! After some self-reflection, the journey is now underway, and it will be packed full of pit stops: class, clinical, lab, and simulation, just to name a few. At some point throughout the first semester, the students begin to wonder how one will ever get through this trip, and more importantly… Are we there yet? My answer is that your journey has just begun, and yes, you can do it!

After their first semester, the Second Degree nursing students have now developed the understanding and the importance of utilizing their resources, practicing effective time management, and incorporating deliberate practice into their routine. Most importantly, during the first semester, they have developed persistence and perseverance. They pick up their friends, the ones that are also on their way to Destination BSN, by supporting one another. I have witnessed these students stay after long days of class just to take the initiative to reach out to their faculty and utilize their academic support systems. Often the Second Degree nursing students may need the reminder that it’s perfectly acceptable to refuel with some self-care!

There will certainly be challenges to face and obstacles to slow you down as a nursing student. Exams, quizzes, group projects, lab competencies, and clinical care maps are just a few of the many parts of your nursing education. Just remember that these elements will continue to enhance your knowledge and character, as the student’s inner nurse will begin to emerge.

As I have heard many Second Degree School of Nursing alumni reflect on their time spent at Duquesne, they conclude that their journey wasn’t easy, but yes, it was certainly worth it.

To the Second Degree nursing students nearing graduation, congratulations; you have arrived at Destination BSN. To the Second Degree nursing students in the middle of your journey, remember that this is a relatively short road trip into your professional career. I enjoy every opportunity to educate and support the second degree nursing students at Duquesne. They truly are one of a kind!
In the Summer of 1998, I came to Duquesne University as a second degree student. After a 20-year career teaching elementary and high school, I had finally begun my longtime dream of becoming a nurse. From that day until December of 1999, I was part of one of the hardest and most challenging courses of my life. In 18 short months, Duquesne School of Nursing had transformed this high school history teacher into a critical care nurse!

To be back here as the Success Coach working with undergraduate and 2nd Degree students is like coming full circle in my life as I find myself again in the role of educator. Our 2nd Degree Program is now even more challenging! 20 years ago, there were no “Select All That Apply” questions, and 18 months have now turned into 12 or 16 months. Because of the demands of healthcare in the United States, it is imperative that we turn out nurses who are ready for any challenge: In other words, Duquesne nurses.

Tackling 21 to 24 credits a semester, our 2nd Degree students are quickly introduced to the world of clinicals and nursing courses. At lightning speed, they are taking vital signs, making beds with people in them, and learning about medications and procedures. In each nursing course, they are introduced to the phenomenon known as HESI testing. HESI exams are standardized tests that measure an overall grasp of the subject matter. At the end of the program, they take an Exit HESI which tests their ability to remember and understand key parts of the nursing curriculum. This testing is used at Duquesne because it has over 20 years of research and validity behind it, and while it is not easy, the studying required allows our students to sail through their NCLEX Exam and get a license. I was the first cohort that used a HESI Exit as part of the requirements for graduation.

For many students, there is a learning curve in tackling nursing questions. 2nd Degree students come to us after recently successfully completing another course of study. Sometimes, the study habits used before do not serve them well in nursing. In this program, every single bit of information builds on information from the course before it. There is no option to take Fundamentals and think you will never see it again. Despite a hope that they will one day be a pediatric or labor and delivery nurse, information about adults, and elderly patients are crucial to their nursing education. And it must be mastered in one year, not four.
2nd Degree students are highly motivated and work hard. Despite schedules that are exhausting, they often seek me out for some tweaking of their study plan and some work on content that might be confusing. One of my favorite parts of my job is doing a review for their critical care class. The information comes at them quickly, and once a week for an hour, I try to slow it down and go over rhythm strips. It doesn’t hurt that the person teaching them critical care, Dr. Lynn Simko, also taught me in the program! She made me into a pretty good critical care nurse, and for those who fall in love with it, she will do it for them too!

For 2nd Degree students reading this, you may be wondering what you were thinking when you made the decision to become a nurse! While this may be one of the most difficult years of your life to date, I can assure you it is worth it. You will leave here new people ready to care for patients with complex health conditions. You will discover your own ability to be leaders in nursing. You will never be the same, and you will love it! Hang in there. It will be over in the blink of an eye. I walked your road. Now, I’m a nurse practitioner and am in a Doctoral program. The sky is the limit as a Duquesne nurse!
Why I Chose Duquesne
Danielle Parker, Second Degree Student

I picked Duquesne’s accelerated Second Degree BSN program not only for the reputation it holds, but for the strong foundation and experience it would provide me for my nursing career. This program was also enticing given that I would have my BSN in one year instead of 16 months or longer. Before I even stepped onto campus, the facility was in contact with me to ensure I had all the requirements completed so I would not be behind starting the program. Duquesne’s program gives people the opportunity to come from different backgrounds and share the same passion. Only three weeks into the program, I can see growth within myself and all my peers. Even though the program is challenging, it is rewarding when you are able to do the job you want to succeed in with confidence.

Giving Back
Nicolas Ruiz, Second Degree Student

My name is Nicolas Ruiz and I attended Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where I received my first Bachelor’s degree in Exercise Science and Exercise Physiology. Throughout my course of study, I was able to meet and connect with amazing people in and out of the program, which sparked two opportunities to travel to the Dominican Republic for mission trips with a group called Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). Throughout this trip, I was able to work with doctors and nurses to help marginalized people in these areas. I looked at these people in the Dominican Republic as family because of my roots, but at the end of the day, they are remarkable, hardworking people who do not receive nearly any help, especially when it comes to medicine. There were some cases that were extremely tough and difficult to navigate. My inspiration to pursue nursing came when I saw the children of these villages sick and fighting for their lives. I thought to myself, “Why can’t they have a fighting chance at life like I do? I am blessed, so why shouldn’t I try to bless them in this way?” That is why I chose nursing. Being an athlete in college, I never truly had the opportunity because of the rigorous schedule that would’ve been full of clinical rotations, practices, and games. Duquesne presented me with a fast track opportunity to earn an additional degree and get to help those in need. Duquesne holds true to their faith and values that are so important to me. To graduate from Duquesne with my Bachelors of Science in Nursing will equip me with the ultimate tools travel the world and leave it just a little bit better than the one we currently live in. The words that mean the most to me and still hold true: Sometimes you have to let go and let God. Duquesne came to me, now I want to come to the world.
Summer Work Experience
Julia Ciotti, Junior

This past summer, I decided to take a step further into my future profession and apply for a full-time position as a nursing assistant at my community hospital. I know that working long hours during the summer may not sound very appealing, but it was honestly the most rewarding experience. I learned more during those 12 weeks than I ever could have imagined.

My position is referred to as a PRN Care Partner. That designation means that I float to every floor in the hospital and am placed as needed. I enjoy the flexible and ever-changing work environment because I have the opportunity to experience a little bit of everything. My hospital operates floors ranging from Medical-Surgical, Behavioral Health, Pediatrics, Geriatrics, Oncology, Obstetrics, Rehabilitation, and everything in between.

My employer combines the duties of a nursing assistant and a unit secretary into a single role. Therefore, I am responsible for providing patient care under the direct supervision of a registered nurse while also answering and directing phone calls, calling consults and referrals, and making discharge appointments. The hustle and bustle of the work day can become chaotic, but time flies, and it is truly worth it in the end.

Personally, I am still unsure as to which department I would like to specialize in once I become a registered nurse. Floating to the various floors has allowed me to gain hands-on experience in those respective areas and helped narrow my ongoing search. Another aspect I particularly enjoyed was the close-knit community of the hospital environment. This summer allowed me to make great connections with other nurses, doctors, and medical staff. I feel so privileged to have had this opportunity.

I could not recommend this position more! I truthfully had the best possible experience. I enjoyed my time so much that I have decided to continue working casually throughout the school year. If you have ever thought about getting a hospital job while in school, take the chance and apply. You have nothing to lose. It is a great opportunity to practice your clinical skills, make professional connections, care for patients, and find your passion. Above all else, I can assure you that this experience will make you feel more comfortable in the hospital setting.

Let’s be honest; nursing is scary. The thought of becoming a new nurse and gaining that immense amount of responsibility in the near future can be terrifying. However, this summer has given me the confidence to know that I can face all of the challenges placed in front of me. Being in the hospital environment will allow you to get a foot in the door and prove to yourself that you have what it takes.
Hi, everyone! My name is Lauren Bliss, and I am so happy that you’ve made it far enough through this issue to be reading this piece. *The Scope* is one of my biggest passion projects, and I am thrilled to be sharing it with you all. First and foremost, thank you for supporting *The Scope*. Working on creating a source for all things nursing at Duquesne has been such a joy. I came to Duquesne to culture my love for helping others and combine it with my curiosity about illness, and I aim to put a smile on someone’s face with everything I do.

When I’m not studying or at clinical, you can find me taking photos, drinking coffee, working out at a local CrossFit gym, and spending time with loved ones. I run my own business, *lauren e. bliss photography*, and I spend many weekend hours shooting weddings, families, couples, you name it! My passion for nursing started when I was young and was in and out of the doctor’s offices for scoliosis. I wore a Boston Brace from seventh to tenth grade, and during that time, I encountered many different areas of health care. I then spent the summer before my senior year doing an internship at a Women’s and Babies’ Hospital, and after witnessing my first birth, I decided this was what I was made to do. I have always been a huge advocate when it comes to empowering women, and that passion has transformed into one for reproductive health. After graduation from Duquesne, I plan on being a nurse working in women’s health, whether that be on a labor and delivery floor, in an OBGYN office, or in a fertility clinic. I also plan to further my photography business, continue to capture people’s smiles, and make them smile, too.

Well hello there! I am truly delighted that you have read this edition of The Scope! My name is Hadley Mueller and I am currently a junior in nursing school. I was so thrilled when my close friend Lauren reached out to me during the spring semester of our freshman year and asked me if I would be her partner in creating and editing The Scope. My answer was a resounding yes! I cannot put a finger on why I chose to come to nursing school. I honestly felt like it was put on my heart, and I could not see myself pursuing any other career. Throughout my clinical experience, I have discovered that I have a passion and a knack for caring for elderly patients. Caring for older adults is my favorite part of nursing. Many of my friends say that I am an old soul in a 20-year-old body. In addition to geriatrics, I absolutely love wound care! Wounds fascinate me. I never thought I would say that, but what can I say? Nursing school changes you.

Outside of nursing, my interests include re-reading *Harry Potter*, watching *Doctor Who*, and singing show tunes very obnoxiously and loudly. If any nursing students are reading this and they’re struggling with anything, please feel free to reach out. Nursing is challenging, and it should never be faced alone.
COPYCAT PANERA BROCCOLI CHEDDAR SOUP INGREDIENTS:

- 2 bunches broccoli, cut into small florets
- 1/2 medium onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, julienned (about 1 cup)
- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 cups half & half
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 8 oz sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Sauté onion in 1 tbsp of melted butter until transparent.
2. In a separate pot place melted butter and 1/4 cup flour. Cook approx. 5 minutes over medium heat, constantly stirring with a whisk.
3. Slowly add in half & half, continue stirring.
4. Add chicken stock, stir and let simmer for 20 minutes.
5. Add in broccoli florets, carrots, and sautéed onions. Let cook for another 25 minutes over low heat.
6. Stir in cheese until melted, and add salt and pepper to taste.
7. ENJOY!!
News & Announcements

Upcoming Meetings

October 8–7 pm
November 12–7 pm
December 10–7 pm

All meetings are held in College Hall 104! Come for a fun time, a new guest speaker from the field of nursing, and for some snacks!

NCLEX Practice Question!

The nurse performs a physical assessment on a client admitted for notable weight loss related to a reluctance to eat. Which assessment finding will provide the nurse with the best insight to the client's condition?

A.) The client has a slight hand tremor related to Parkinson disease.
B.) The client has missing teeth and multiple cavities with an abscess.
C.) The client expresses a dislike for cooking and cleaning up afterward.
D.) The client has unidentified allergies and is unaware of foods to avoid.
Interested in writing for *The Scope*?

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

muellerh@duq.edu

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**NCLEX ANSWER : B**

The nurse is looking for physical assessment findings that will provide the best insight about the client's reluctance to eat. Missing teeth causes difficulty with the process of biting and chewing food. Most importantly, the presence of multiple cavities and an abscess can cause pain and initiate a reluctance to eat.

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