

NURSING NEWSLETTER



NOTE FROM THE DEPT. HEAD JACKIE MEYER PHD, RN, CNE

Welcome! In this Fall issue you will meet several new nursing faculty members. We are very excited to welcome these new nurse educators to our UD Nursing family!



We are equally excited to be welcoming a very large junior class this fall! With 29 students, this is the largest incoming class in many years. It is very close to the maximum student capacity (32) approved by the Iowa Board of Nursing. It is so rewarding to be part of the solution to our ongoing national shortage of professional nurses.

Look inside to learn about this summer's UD for Kids Nursing Camp, get an update on UDSNA activities, and our alumni spotlight.

You will also read about faculty and student participation in a mission nursing service trip to Peru. This is especially fitting as a major program goal for this academic year is to facilitate student service across the curriculum.

Finally, we hope you will join us in celebrating our #2 ranking in Iowa for BSN programs by RegisteredNurse.org. This happens with the support of students, families, alumni, UD faculty and staff, and our clinical partners.

I am grateful beyond words for each of you. UD Nursing could not thrive without you.

FACULTY NEWS

MEET YOUR NEW FACULTY MEMBER: **ASHLEY CLEARY**



WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL!

Hello! I appreciate the opportunity to introduce myself.

My name is Ashley Cleary, and this year marks my 20th year as a nurse! Those years have blessed me with so many opportunities and experiences as a nurse and nurse educator.

I am excited to join the nursing faculty at the University of Dubuque (UD) and look forward to working with the members of the UD community, especially the nursing students. I am eager to learn about their interests and to share a mutual passion for nursing care.

Thank you for the warm welcome. I'm glad to be here!

MY INTERESTS

My current professional interests include successful transition to practice for new nurses, successful nurse preceptor and mentorship experiences, palliative and end-of-life care, and hematology.

Additionally, an interest in exploring the historical development of nursing practice and the varied roles nurses have assumed during significant periods in world, national, and medical history.

In any free time, I enjoy walking, hiking, reading, the beach, time with my friends/family and good coffee!

MY FAMILY

On a personal note, I met my husband Paul at Loras. He teaches history & psychology. He is the head wrestling coach at Western Dubuque High School in Epworth, IA.

We have two children, Jillian and Sean, nine-year-old twins. As a family, we love to be active and to be outside. We stay busy with our kid's activities. Sean enjoys wrestling, baseball and soccer. while Jillian enjoys swimming, basketball, soccer and art. I was a competitive swimmer and still enjoy participating in open water races when I am able.



ABOUT ME

- 2004: Earned BS in Biochemistry at Loras College
- 2005: Graduated from the Accelerated BSN (ABSN) program at Loyola University Chicago. It was an exceptional experience, and in clinical experiences throughout the Chicago area.
- My nursing career began as a floor & charge nurse at the University of Iowa Children's Hospital (Stead Family Children's Hospital) in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology/Bone Marrow Transplant. These experiences had a profound influence on my passion for and commitment to the field of nursing. They also deepened my interests in the fields of hematology, palliative, and end-of-life care.
- 2009: Completed a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) in the Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) Program at Clarke College (Clarke University). For 11 years, I worked as an FNP and practiced in Bellevue, IA AND Platteville, Wi.
- 2020: Joined the nursing faculty at Clarke University. During Those five years, I taught medical/surgical nursing classes and clinicals, pharmacology and co-taught pathophysiology.
- 2024: Completed a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) with a concentration in Health Leadership and Practice in 2024. My research interests include the design of pediatric hospice programs (MSN) and recruitment and retention of nurse preceptors (DNP).



FACULTY NEWS

MEET YOUR NEW FACULTY MEMBER: **SARAH HATCHER**



WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL!

Hello! My name is Sarah Hatcher. I have been a nurse for 20 years. My passion for education began at the bedside and has blossomed into a career at UD.

I am excited to become a part of the UD nursing faculty, and the UD campus community. I look forward to connecting with colleagues and students and sharing my love of education and nursing.



MY INTERESTS

My professional interests are in nurse education, nutrition, prenatal and postnatal education and brain health.

In my spare time I enjoy reading, walking, cooking & baking, kayaking and time with family.

MY FAMILY

I am the mother of three children.

Caleb is 24 and wife Keely are newlyweds as they married on October 11, 2025.

Annie is a 2nd year student at Wartburg studying music education.

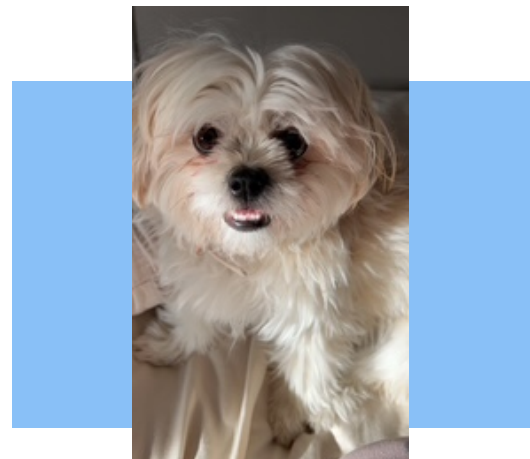
And Gabriel is a senior in High School. We are currently in football season for Gabriel with wrestling to follow.

I am a dog mom to Lottie as well.



ABOUT ME

- In 2005, I Graduated from NICC Calmar with an ADN and began work at Regional Medical Center, with experience in Medical/Surgical, ICU, Labor & Delivery, Nursery and Postpartum.
- in 2007 I began teaching prepared childbirth classes at Regional Medical Center.
- in 2020 I became an adjunct instructor for Kirkwood Community College doing lab and simulation.
- I started with NICC-Peosta in 2022 and have since completed my BSN at Mt Mercy University,
- This December, I will complete my MSN in Health Advocacy at Mt Mercy.



FACULTY NEWS

MEET YOUR NEW ADJUNCT FACULTY MEMBERS

TOSHA: Hello, I have been a nurse for almost 20 years, with experience in cardiac, emergency, long-term care, and clinic nursing.

Professional Experience: currently the Emergency Department Manager At UnityPoint Trinity QC, 2021–Present. And I still work the floor/in staffing in the emergency department to keep up on my skills! I have taught clinicals For Scott Community College and St. Ambrose University.

In 2005, I graduated from Black Hawk College. In 2008, I received my BSN from the University of Iowa. In 2012, I Completed my MSN from Clarke University. And 2014, I EARNED my Doctorate in Nursing Practice.

MY Interests: Reading is a Passion, with a focus on healthcare leadership, emergency nursing, and family-centered care. I Enjoy exercise routines such as running & strength training. And I'm Devoted to spending quality time with family; including two dogs and a cat, emphasizing work-life balance.

TOSHA ALLEN



SERENA JAIME



Serena: Hello, I have been a nurse for 6 years.

Professional Experience: Currently, I am the Assistant Director of Nursing at St. Dominic Villa. In my role I am also the infection preventionist and MDS coordinator. I Also had experience in the Emergency Department. After I transitioned to long-term care, I found a real passion for gerontology and the aging population.

I am most excited to help UD nursing students maximize their nursing skills and critical thinking in any setting. but, of course, in the long-term care setting when resources are limited and patient care still needs to be excellent.

My long-term goal is to become a full-time nursing INSTRUCTOR and dipping my toes in as an adjunct instructor will help me hone my skills in education.

Pictured with me, is my partner Nick, and our boxer Oakleigh!

Sarah: Hi everyone! I am excited to join the UD Nursing Department as an adjunct professor for mental Health nursing class and clinicals and look forward to working with both students and faculty.

IN 2025, I earned my Doctor of Nursing Practice in psychiatric mental health from the University of Iowa.

I am eager to bring my clinical knowledge and experiences into the classroom. Teaching allows me to combine my passion for mental health with my commitment to preparing the next generation of nurses. I began teaching with the goal of influencing students in a meaningful way and reducing the stigma that still surrounds brain health issues.

Interests: hobbies that give me balance and joy include reading, cooking, and canning food. I am married & share my home with three dogs & two cats who keep life lively.

I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the UD Nursing Program.

SARAH MITCHELL





In May 2025, UD nursing students, past and present, collaborated alongside Clarke University's nurse practitioner program and attended a medical mission trip down to Cusco, Peru, in collaboration with International Medical Relief.

While in Peru, students, joined by UD faculty Lisa Kragenbrink and Clarke faculty Kayte McQuillan, **provided care to over 500 patients in just 4 days!**

Students learned valuable assessment, triage, and cultural communication skills. The team was also able to provide community education to many involving safe water drinking, hand hygiene, and personal care. Both programs have hopes in organizing another trip to Guatemala in June of 2026, and are looking for others to join, medical and non-medical professionals, as they seek to help another area in need.

If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Kyla Roberts. (kr Roberts@dbq.edu)

Service in **PERU** MAY 2025



UD FOR KIDS NURSING CAMP SUMMER 2025

"I enjoyed working with these middle school students! They had so much energy and eager to learn."

I loved watching them get excited when they move to hands-on doing skills in the lab to actually touching a human heart, lung and placenta. Our goal was to encourage future health care providers."

Beth Neyen, MSN, RN, CMSRN, CHSE



The 2025 Summer UD for Kids Nursing Camp was Held June 23-27 and July 7-11. It was an exciting opportunity for our Youth to experience and learn about the nursing profession. This year's camp was led by faculty member/ simulation leader Beth Neyen MSN, RN, CMSRN, CHSE.

The Campers gained so much knowledge. From Seizures, a First aid refresh to Stop Bleeding, even administering an EpiPen. Another day Campers explored Baby Development and Childcare Safety. Our time included Hands on regarding diabetes, insulin administration. and vital sign assessment, including blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate, temperature, and pulse oximetry. another day involved analyzing the day and life of a stroke patient receiving hospital treatment.

We love seeing the impact go beyond campus! Campers are getting a first-hand look at the incredible work local providers do to serve, support, and shape our community. And on the last day: the Campers took the opportunity to showcase their accomplishments to their families.



UNIVERSITY OF DUBUQUE NURSING PROGRAM

RANKED #2 IN THE STATE OF IOWA



#2 **University of Dubuque**
Dubuque, IA - Private 4-year - dbq.edu

"We are firm believers in providing students with all the information possible to make the right choice when selecting a nursing school. With this in mind, we believe a great way to provide transparency is by studying nursing programs and their students' performance on the NCLEX-RN exam."

<https://www.registerednursing.org/rn-ranking-methodology/>



Registerednursing.org provides comprehensive rankings of the Best Nursing Schools in Iowa, focusing exclusively on NCLEX pass rates to help students make informed decisions. Our rankings prioritize programs with consistently high NCLEX performance, offering a reliable guide for nursing education selection.

The University of Dubuque's Bachelor of Science in Nursing offers an exceptional pathway to becoming a skilled registered nurse. With a remarkable 100% NCLEX RN pass rate, the program provides comprehensive academic preparation and extensive clinical training. Students benefit from advanced simulation labs, a 144-hour precepted internship, and exposure to diverse healthcare environments. The curriculum emphasizes evidence-based care and collaborative practice across rural and urban clinical settings. Standardized testing is not required for program admission. Accredited by CCNE, the program cultivates ethical healthcare professionals through rigorous academic training and hands-on experiences, positioning graduates for successful careers in a growing nursing field.

- **100% NCLEX RN pass rate**
- **Committed clinical partners**
- **Extensive lab simulation experiences**
- **1:1 precepted internship**
- **CCNE accredited program**
- **Active Student Nurses Association**
- **Multiple clinical settings**
- **Well-qualified nursing faculty**
- **Rural and urban clinical exposure**

REGISTERED
NURSING.ORG



MEET OUR UDSNA REPRESENTATIVES

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**LIZZIE -
PRESIDENT**



Lizzie Borton, from LaPorte City, Iowa.

As the president, I work with the other board members of UDSNA to plan meetings, fundraisers, events, and more! I also listen to nursing students' questions and concerns and communicate them with nursing faculty.

Aside from SNA, I also serve as the nominations and elections director on the IANS board of directors.

In my free time, I like to attend UD sporting events and hang out with my friends and family. I also work as a CNA in the emergency room!

2

**KYLA -
VICE
PRESIDENT**



Kyla Roberts, from Ladora, IA

I have been apart of UDSNA for 3 years and have loved the positive environment and the change we make as students! For UDSNA, I serve as Vice President. In this role, I assist the President with any executive decisions, but also provide support to all other board members!

One of my favorite parts about SNA is our mentorship program that allows students from all grades to join together and discuss questions regarding classes, the nursing program, or just college in general. I can't wait for another year of fun-filled UDSNA!!

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**LOGAN -
TREASURER**



Logan Kleese, from Des Moines Iowa.

I am the treasurer of UDSNA. My responsibilities as treasurer include keeping track of the deposits and withdrawals from our account as well as helping to place orders for anything we want to purchase and being the point of contact for setting up fundraisers with companies.

Also, I play on the Women's soccer team at UD.

CLASS NEWS

MEET OUR UDSNA REPRESENTATIVES

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**ANNABELLE -
SECRETARY**



Annabelle Woodward, from Aurora, IL.

I am a senior in the nursing program at the University of Dubuque.

I am Secretary on the UDSNA board. My responsibilities include sending out reminders, recording what happens at all meetings, and communicating with all nursing students. This will be my second year on the board!

Virginia Speltz, from Rockford, IL

I serve as the social media manager for UDSNA. In this role, I'm responsible for promoting upcoming events, meetings, and important updates for our organization. Also, I aim to highlight the incredible work our members are doing as future nurses.

Aside from my role with UDSNA, I serve as the captain of the women's soccer team, a student ambassador, and work as a nursing assistant in the emergency room.



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**VIRGINIA -
SOCIAL MEDIA
MANAGER**

UDSNA DATES & EVENTS

What: Chipolte Fundraiser

When: 10/15/2025 4pm-8pm

Come to Chipotle and support UDSNA! Show them the flyer or use our code

What: UDSNA holds monthly Large organization meetings with guest Speakers and/or activities.

The October meeting hosted Triclyn Flogel who spoke about her new grad experience in the ER.

When: Upcoming meetings will be held on

11/6/2025 at 6pm located in USC 105.

12/4/2025 at 6pm which will include tie-blanket-Making and a potluck!

Other Activities: Clothing Order, Butter-Braids. More information coming soon!



ICE CREAM SOCIAL!

MEET OUR UDSNA REPRESENTATIVES

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**ASHLEY -
SENIOR
REPRESENTATIVE**



Ashley Wierman, from Dixon, IL.

In the position of senior representative on the UDSNA board, I work to represent my senior class in ideas of fundraisers, ways to better improve our nursing association and program as a whole. I send out reminders of events to our senior class regarding meetings, upcoming events, as well as actively participate in board meetings.

On campus, I am a student ambassador. in my hometown, I work as a CNA in the emergency department and in the medical surgical unit!

This is my first year being a part of UDSNA and am really excited to be a part of this great association!

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**EMMA -
JUNIOR
REPRESENTATIVE**



Emma Kempel, from Winslow, IL.

I am the Junior Representative of the UDSNA! My job is to be a communication bridge between the other board members and the Junior Class.

This will be my second year on the UDSNA board, and I love being involved in our SNA chapter. and I am so excited to be a nurse one day!

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**MIA -
SOPHOMORE
REPRESENTATIVE**



Mia Farinella, from Hampshire, IL

This year, I'm serving as the Sophomore Representative on the UDSNA board. In this role, I act as a bridge between sophomore nursing students and the board—keeping classmates informed about upcoming events and sharing their feedback, ideas, and concerns with both the Student Nursing Association and the nursing department.

I'm excited to support and connect with my fellow sophomores as we continue our journey through UD's nursing program!

IN THE CLASSROOM

INTERPROFESSIONAL SIMULATION

Interprofessional simulation is a learning approach that involves multiple disciplines working together to simulate real-world scenarios.

On September 13, 2025, the UD Nursing and Physician Assistant students partnered for a collaborative training session focused on sepsis.

In simulated scenarios, they practiced patient care, communication, and teamwork. This hands-on approach helped students:

- Recognize early signs and symptoms of sepsis to ensure timely intervention.
- Apply effective treatment protocols while prioritizing patient safety.
- Strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration through clear communication and coordinated care.



SUPPORT FOR OUR NURSING STUDENT ATHLETES



In addition to pursuing their nursing education, many of our students also shine as athletes. Our faculty lead in the classroom and take A seat in the stands cheering on their students as athletes.

It's another way the UD community stays connected—through learning, teamwork, and shared support.

Go Spartans!

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Hi, my name is Cailyn Pienschke



MY FAVORITE

What do you love most about being a Spartan?

I loved the community of UD. I met my best friends at UD, I met my wife through UD, and I met some of my best mentors through UD!

ABOUT ME

What year did you graduate?

2022!

Where has your degree taken you in your career?

Right after I graduated, I started working on the surgical unit at Mercy in Dubuque. I worked there for two and a half years then I switched to the labor and delivery unit! Now I'm working on my MSN and should be done with that soon!

What do you like best about being a nurse?

I love that everyday it feels like I'm doing something important. I always leave work feeling like I helped at least one person with at least one thing. Whether it was helping someone walk after surgery or delivering a baby, I love celebrating people's successes with them.

What advice would you give to current nursing students?

First of all, nursing school was so hard, so don't get discouraged and don't be too hard on yourself! I personally struggled through a lot of nursing school and made it out to become a pretty good nurse. Being a nurse is so worth it and it's such an amazing thing to be a part of!



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social
media!**



THANK YOU FOR READING OUR UINVERSIY OF DUBUQUE 2025 FALL NURSING NEWSLETTER!