

Class of 2024



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Hello and welcome
to the
Spring Newsletter!



Department Head

Jackie Meyer PhD, RN, CNE

My name is Jackie Meyer and I'm very happy to introduce myself as the new department head for the University of Dubuque's Nursing Program. I came to UD in the 2020-2021 academic year after working at Allen College in Waterloo, Iowa, for 19 years, most recently as a professor and assistant dean (graduate program). My husband, Dave, and I moved back to our home town of Dubuque in 2019. I accepted the teaching position here in the UD bachelor of science in nursing program in the 2020-2021 academic year and have taught the Intro to Nursing, Mental Health Nursing, Health Care Issues and Policy, Nursing Leadership, Nursing Research and Senior Internship courses. I assumed the department head role in November 2023.

I received my bachelor of science in nursing from Clarke University in Dubuque, Iowa, earned my master of science in nursing at the University of Iowa and my PhD from Villanova University. I have been a nurse for a long time, with clinical practice experience in obstetrics, public health, home care, and hospice.



Now that you've read my abbreviated bio, let me tell you a bit about what is important to me. First, my mission is to help students meet their educational and personal goals. This is what brings me to work every day! I believe every student who is admitted to the UD Nursing Program can successfully graduate with their bachelor of science in nursing. Second, I am blessed to work with a team of faculty and staff who support that mission of student achievement. Every individual I have had the pleasure to work with shares a commitment to creating a welcoming environment where students can develop as scholars, future professionals, and human beings. Coming to UD has felt like joining a family who share common values and priorities.

Finally, I am excited to build on the program's legacy of excellence by leading efforts to grow and move our program forward. One goal is to have enrollment at capacity. Considering current nursing shortages, it is essential for us to fill all open seats with qualified nursing students. Another goal is for the program to provide more service-learning opportunities in the curriculum. The University of Dubuque's *Mission* includes "...challenging students to live lives of worth and purpose and preparing students for service..." and such service is also a foundation of professional nursing practice. Finally, nursing faculty have been working for two to three years to revise the Nursing curriculum and associated academic policies to be in line with new professional standards. Our goal is to demonstrate achievement of these standards with a successful accreditation visit from the Commission on Collegiate Education this fall.

In summary, I am honored to be a part of the UD community and to lead UD's BSN program. I welcome on-going feedback as we work together to maintain the program's legacy of excellence!

Congratulations!

We are thrilled to announce the induction of the following nursing students into the Alpha Chi National College Honor Society:

Chloe Hild
Logan Kleese
Grace Lagerhausen
Virginia Speltz
Jadeyn Sturm
Ashley Wierman

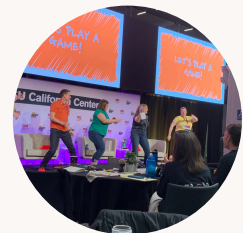
Their dedication to their studies and our community are truly commendable.
Congratulations!

Conference

ASU Playposium 2024

Mary Tobin, PhD, RN, attended the Arizona State University Playposium 2024 in Los Angeles, California, on February 7-8. The keynote speaker was Dr. Stuart Brown who founded the National Institute for Play to study scientific knowledge on play and behavior. Per Dr. Brown, play is life-giving, and adults who play experience less stress and more optimism and well-being. The workshop focused on playful teaching, course design, and curriculum design in the higher education classroom. Improving student learning and success through play was emphasized. Play was portrayed as the new superpower in higher education.

Play was also identified as a way to help build community. It was noted that levels of agitation drop when you get playful, which tends to increase perseverance. Play seems to have a real payoff in classrooms. Infusing joy can decrease stress, foster community, and help students feel a greater sense of belonging. When students have a higher sense of belonging, there is less chance of absenteeism, school dropout, substance abuse, anxiety, and depression. Higher education students are more engaged and motivated when they are taught using playful pedagogy rather than the traditional lecture method. Play increases positive emotions and connections with other students and the professor. Professor Mary Tobin is considering doing a break-out session at the Fall UD Opening Conference to share these ideas with the UD community and other play enthusiasts.



Simulation User Group (SUN) Conference

The Simulation User Network (SUN) Group was created as an opportunity to network in the Dubuque area about simulation. The initial group started with representatives from University of Dubuque, Clarke University, NICC, MercyOne and Unity Point Health-Finley Hospital. Participation has widened and there are now representatives from paramedics to physical therapist at Loras, Des Moines University, Allen College and Dordt College here in Iowa.

The SUN worked hard to organize their first annual Mini-Sun Conference with the help of Laerdal Medical. The Laerdal educators provided two sessions for the conference. Conference topics included unfolding case studies, cultural diversity with a focus on ETOH addiction, and the INACSI (International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning) standards and how to incorporate them into simulations.

There was a great turnout with around 30 participants who attended face-to-face and 12 who joined the conference virtually. Attendees had very positive feedback on the conference and appreciated this opportunity to collaborate and network to improve simulated learning experiences. There are plans to make this a yearly conference and organizers look forward to growing the SUN Group.

Simulation

Wendt Healthcare Simulation

On March 18, several nursing faculty and Students helped to staff the Wendt Healthcare Simulation at Blades Chapel. Faculty and students played a variety of roles in the simulation including as clinic providers, and as workers in social services and insurance companies.

This exercise aimed to replicate the dynamics of the healthcare system. To begin, participants were assigned to a three-person family unit. Throughout the simulation, individuals received notifications about various medical needs within their assigned family. Their task was to strategize the best ways to support their family while addressing any unexpected needs that arise.

The simulation unfolded across three rounds. In each round, participants engaged in diverse activities, both alone and with their family members. They worked to earn income and cover expenses. Some of them fall ill, requiring visits to healthcare providers and associated medical bills.

At the end of each round, they reconvened with their families to tally total income and expenses, including new medical bills. Subsequently, they settled their bills. When bills were not able to be covered, real-world consequences were encountered. For example, some families were not able to cover housing expenses and ended up in shelters. Others sold their car to make ends meet. Following the simulation, we'll have an opportunity to reflect on our experiences.

Waiting periods, boredom, mistakes, and frustration were all potential elements of this experience, mirroring real-life scenarios. Some situations left participants uncertain about the best course of action, while others progressed smoothly.

While the simulation covered only a fraction of real-world healthcare complexities, everything encountered is rooted in genuine circumstances. While not all aspects of the system could be portrayed realistically due to the nature of the simulation, all scenarios were inspired by real cases affecting real people.

Throughout the simulation participants were challenged by transportation, language barriers, and insurance struggles. They asked questions, were curious, and reflected on the presence of justice, compassion, and integrity in the healthcare system.

A special thanks goes out to the Wendt Center for Characters Education for coordinating this event. Both participants and those who staffed the simulation learned a great deal!

Nurse Camp Planning Continues

The first ever UD Nurse Camp, will take place this summer and be will called Adventures in Nursing - UD for Kids. Session one will be held June 24 – 28, and session two will be held July 8 – 12. On Monday, campers will explore the specialty of pediatric nursing, and discuss what to do for various common pediatric disorders such as type 1 diabetes and seizures. There will also be a session focusing on common babysitting first aid skills. Campers will learn how to draw up insulin and get the opportunity to perform injections in simulation equipment. On Tuesday a simulation representative will set up portable medical equipment for campers to practice IV and tracheostomy cares with. Also on Tuesday, the Birth Center of UnityPoint Health-Finley Hospital will showcase OB nursing and give campers a tour of the various OB units at Finley Hospital. On Wednesday Professor Beth Neyen will offer a session showcasing high-fidelity mannequins and get the opportunity to participate in a mock code, practice CPR skills and discuss emergency nursing. UD alumni Sam Wu, RN (C'21), will also discuss medical nursing and why he loves working in this area. On Thursday, campers will have a whole day at MercyOne, and will have the opportunity to be trained in various "Stop The Bleed" techniques by a MercyOne ER Nurse. Campers will also get to see how MercyOne surgical nurses put on protective equipment. They will also learn how to scrub in for surgery. Camp will conclude on Friday with some friendly competitions (e.g. crutch walking, bed-making, group jeopardy). They will also get to tour the beautiful UD campus. Department Head Jackie Meyer will discuss why it is great to become a nurse and advantages of enrolling in the UD Nursing Program. Camp will conclude with a cupcake celebration for parents and campers and each camper will get a badge indicating they are competent in "Stop The Bleed" techniques.



Honors Convocation

Nursing Scholarship Recipients

We want to congratulate the nursing students who received recognition and nursing scholarships during the University of Dubuque's Honors Convocation on April 11. Nursing scholarships are available to students once they enroll in the nursing major. Students must be in good standing in all current nursing courses in order to be eligible for consideration. Leadership, compassion, and professional promise are just a few of the qualities taken into consideration when selecting scholarship recipients.



William Randolph Hearst Scholarship

The William Randolph Hearst Scholarship is awarded to a nursing student who maintains a 3.0 GPA and be deemed by the nursing faculty to exhibit leadership, skills, and compassion to be an excellent nurse.
2024 Recipients: Delaney Dietz and Skylar Mullen



Dr. John L. Bender Nursing Scholarship

The Dr. John L. Bender Nursing Scholarship is provided in memory of Dr. John L. Bender. The recipient of this award is a junior nursing student, who holds a 3.0 GPA and also has demonstrated service both to the nursing profession and to the community during his/her time as a student.
2024 Recipient: Jadyne Werner



UD Student Nursing Association Scholarship

The UD Student Nursing Association Scholarship goes to a student entering his/her senior year, with a GPA greater than 3.0, who is a candidate for office in the SNA, shows caring and compassion in work, school, and community, has experience in CNA work, and goes above and beyond in his/her participation in the nursing program and his/her class.
2024 Recipient: Elizabeth Borton



UD Nursing Faculty Scholarship

The UD Nursing Faculty Scholarship is awarded to a junior nursing student who has a minimum GPA of 3.0 and exemplifies professionalism. The recipient is a role model to fellow students in both clinical and classroom environments and demonstrates the care and compassion of a nurse you would want caring for you or your loved ones.
2024 Recipient: Grace Lagerhausen and Kaelyn Weigel

Honors Convocation

Nursing Scholarship Recipients



Dr. Kathy Dolter Nursing Scholarship

The Dr. Kathy Dolter Nursing Scholarship is awarded to a junior nursing student who has a minimum GPA of 3.0. The student must have demonstrated commitment to gaining experience in nursing care by work experience as a nursing assistant or LPN prior to admission to UD's nursing program. The student demonstrates care and compassion and exemplifies professionalism in both clinical and classroom environments.

2024 Recipient: Claire Lahey



Holley Lynn James Memorial Nursing Scholarship

The Holley Lynn James Memorial Nursing Scholarship is awarded in memory of Holley James, daughter of Jesse James, University of Dubuque emeritus dean of admission. Second Lieutenant Holley James, a 2007 graduate of the St. Ambrose nursing program, died at Fort Bragg North Carolina, while serving as an Army nurse. The recipient must be a junior or senior in the nursing program, and it is preferred they are a member of the UD Army ROTC program. The recipient is chosen by the senior military advisor of the UD Eagle Company and the head of the nursing program.

2024 Recipient: Nykka Lou Fernandez



Eunice Kruse MacNaughton Nursing Scholarship

The Eunice Kruse MacNaughton Nursing Scholarship is awarded in memory of Eunice Kruse MacNaughton, mother of Neil MacNaughton, PhD, professor emeritus of nursing and former head of the Department of Nursing. Eunice attended the University of Dubuque in 1938, then she entered nursing school at the Marshalltown Evangelical Deaconess Hospital where she graduated in 1943. In 1976, Eunice returned to UD to earn a bachelor of science in nursing. Eunice worked as an RN in various areas, but her most enjoyable area of work was caring for children. Her last professional nursing position, greater than 20 years, was as a school nurse in the Marshalltown, Iowa, school district. The recipient of this award is a nursing student who holds a grade point average of 3.0 or above.

2024 Recipient: Calvin Richey

In the Classroom

Parking Lot Delivery

New to the spring of 2024, students have had the opportunity to work an on-call OB shift at UnityPoint Health-Finley Hospital or MercyOne hospitals in Dubuque. The purpose of the call shift is to provide students a better opportunity to see a family's birth. This semester, the majority of students had the good fortune to accompany a labor and delivery nurse and observe both the birth of a baby and the care given to laboring women.

During the latter half of their junior year, UD nursing students engage in an immersive seven-credit hour maternal-child course. This course delves into the intricacies of obstetrics, labor and delivery, and pediatric care. Within this comprehensive class, students have the invaluable opportunity to apply their learned skills in real-world settings, specifically within local inpatient labor and delivery units. Furthermore, they undergo simulation exercises meticulously designed to prepare them for obstetric emergencies, including the challenging scenario of delivering a baby in less than ideal conditions.

Guiding them through this crucial phase of their education is Kerri Chapman, MSN, RN, RNC-OB, a seasoned instructor with over 13 years of experience as a labor and delivery nurse. Having witnessed and assisted in numerous births in unconventional settings such as parking lots, hospital entrances, and even elevators, Professor Kerri Chapman knows the importance of readiness for any eventuality. Birth, after all, is a momentous occasion that can transpire unpredictably, and as future nurses, students must be equipped to respond adeptly under any circumstances.

While not all students may aspire to specialize in labor and delivery nursing, Professor Chapman emphasizes that the skills learned in Maternal Child Health are indispensable for every nurse. In rural America, where access to medical facilities may be limited, the ability to assist in childbirth can prove to be life-saving. This reality is underscored by the fact that for some individuals, the nearest labor and delivery unit may be an hour away from their homes.

A pivotal moment in the course is the "parking lot delivery" simulation, which took place in March. In this scenario, students are faced with the challenge of assisting Noelle, a mother in labor with her fifth child, who arrives at a rural emergency room amidst a blizzard and a crowded influx of patients from a motor vehicle accident. With the baby's showing upon arrival, students must swiftly and safely aid Noelle in delivering her infant within the confines of her vehicle. Under the guidance of Professor Kerri Chapman and Beth Neyen, MSN, CMSRN, who orchestrates the simulation with precision, students enter the exercise with some anxiety but emerge with a profound sense of accomplishment and readiness to assist delivering mothers in real-life situations.



Graduating Seniors



2024 Nursing Graduates



Kaylynn Murray

Hometown: Orland Park, IL

What is your most memorable moment at UD?

My most memorable moment at UD would be playing bags (corn hole) outside of the Heritage Center with my friends.

What are your career goals?

My career goal would be to work in a specialty that I enjoy.

What advice would you give to future nursing students?

The advice I would give to future nursing students would be to keep pushing yourself even when it gets hard. Not everyone has the same path in nursing school so if nursing is your passion, let nothing stop you from achieving your goals!



Kathleen Messino

Hometown: McHenry, IL

What is your most memorable moment at UD?

My most memorable moment at UD would be playing volleyball and being part of a team that won two conference championships.

What are your career goals?

My short-term goal would be to start off on a unit where I can develop a variety of nursing skills with supportive staff that I can eventually utilize in the specialty of my choice. Long term goal: specialize in labor and delivery and continue to give great care and support to my patients.

What advice would you give to future nursing students?

Take advantage of the resources the school offers and do not be afraid to ask for help. Being in nursing school is stressful. Asking questions and going the academic success center can be helpful for success in the program.



Jaida Kramer

Hometown: Dubuque, IA

What is your most memorable moment at UD?

All the late nights and early morning study groups with friends that I made throughout the program that eventually turned into family.

What are your career goals?

My career goal is to work out of state for a while in the ER and then eventually go back to school for my CRNA.

What advice would you give to future nursing students?

Enjoy and take advantage of every opportunity that is given to you along the way. NEVER give up, the long study hours and stress are all worth it in the end and have prepared you to be a great nurse. Nursing school is hard and challenging, but it goes by quick! Remember that it's always okay to lean on your peers and even professors when you don't understand something, they're there to help.



Annika Braaten

Hometown: Bettendorf, IA

What is your most memorable moment at UD?

Experiencing my first clinical as a nursing student.

What are your career goals?

Working in the ICU!

What advice would you give to future nursing students?

It's all about balance!

The best nurses are those who value their mental health!



Graduating Seniors



2024 Nursing Graduates



Emma Kober

Hometown: Waukesha, WI

What is your most memorable moment at UD?

Making some of my best friends through the nursing program as well as being a part of the soccer team. My friends.

What are your career goals?

Become a pediatric nurse while providing the best care to impact each patient's life.

What advice would you give to future nursing students?

To never give up because all of the hard work will eventually pay off. Say yes to every opportunity because you'll learn so much more!



Alana Aguilar

Hometown: Carpentersville, IL

What is your most memorable moment at UD?

My most memorable moment at UD was creating long lasting friendships with my peers while encouraging each other to study hard and accomplish our goals in nursing school.

What are your career goals?

My career goals include becoming a labor and delivery or OR nurse after graduation and learning the skill set to provide the best quality care to each of my patients.

What advice would you give to future nursing students?

My advice to future nursing students is to work hard, don't give up, and make time for yourself whenever possible. It will all be worth it in the end!



Josie DeLapp

Hometown: Pardeeville, WI

What is your most memorable moment at UD?

Meeting some of my best friends and making it through nursing school with them.

What are your career goals?

Gain experience as a nurse in the emergency department and enjoy what I do every day.

What advice would you give to future nursing students?

All the late nights studying pay off, keep working hard as if it is all worth it in the end. It may seem stressful but confide in your classmates, they're going through the same struggle.



Abbey Dunwoody

Hometown: Dubuque, IA

What is your most memorable moment at UD?

Getting to go to Nashville for the National Student Nurses Association Convention.

What are your career goals?

As of now, my career goal is to either start out or eventually end up working with intensive / critical care unit.

What advice would you give to future nursing students?

Step outside of your comfort zone and do all things you can while in school. The two years in the program are your turn to grow and develop your knowledge and skills, and you can't learn it from hiding in the back of the classroom. Ask and answer questions, practice your skills in the lab, volunteer in clinical to do skills; try to do it all!

Graduating Seniors



2024 Nursing Graduates



Gianna Farinella

Hometown: Hampshire, IL

What is your most memorable moment at UD?

Being recognized with the women's golf team at the UD homecoming football game!

What are your career goals?

To enter the nursing field as either a medical surgical nurse or pediatric nurse!

Possibly continue my education and become a nurse practitioner one day.

What advice would you give to future nursing students?

Do not compare yourself to your classmates! Everyone learns differently, studies differently, and will make different grades. Worry about yourself and don't let anyone discourage you!



Madelyn Huschitt

Hometown: Browntown, WI

What is your most memorable moment at UD?

My most memorable moment at UD was both times I attended the National Student Nurses Association with Professor Kragenbrink and some of my fellow classmates!

What are your career goals?

I have accepted a position as a Registered Nurse at Memorial Hospital of Lafayette County in Darlington, WI. I am thinking about continuing my education after a few years of experience as a nurse to become a Family Practice DNP.

What advice would you give to future nursing students?

Use your time wisely, be kind, remember why you started nursing school, and if you are determined you can become a great nurse!



Douglas Dremmel

Hometown: Dubuque, IA

What is your most memorable moment at UD?

Adapting to online and hybrid classes during COVID.

What are your career goals?

To provide the best care possible to my patients. I hope to find work in interesting and dynamic fields of nursing such as Psych and ICU.

What advice would you give to future nursing students?

Prioritize time to destress, and reach out for help when you need it.



Brooksey Hudspeth

Hometown: East Dubuque, IL

What is your most memorable moment at UD?

Getting to spend a day in the NICU at the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital and attending National Student Nurses Association in Nashville!

What are your career goals?

To become a great nurse and learn a lot! I plan to start out in a general unit and gain as much experience as possible.

What advice would you give to future nursing students?

Make sure you are learning the material instead of memorizing, it will help you in the future because all nursing subjects intertwine; take every opportunity that comes your way; work hard, but be sure to take time for yourself too :)

Graduating Seniors



2024 Nursing Graduate



Kaitlyn Kaufmann

Hometown: Dubuque, IA

What is your most memorable moment at UD?

Transferring into the nursing class as a Junior and feeling welcomed on my first day. I've had the opportunity to get to know lots of great girls.

What are your career goals?

To become a labor and delivery nurse and provide safe and compassionate care to antepartum, intrapartum, and postpartum patients and their newborns.

What advice would you give to future nursing students?

Study hard, stay organized, ask questions, and drink lots of coffee. I'll all be worth it!



Karsen Kershner

Hometown: Bangor, WI

What is your most memorable moment at UD?

Being on the basketball team.

What are your career goals?

To gain experience working in a hospital setting (undecided what specialty currently). I also plan to make a nursing mission trip.

What advice would you give to future nursing students?

What got me through nursing school was having a study group. As we went through classes together, we became great friends and helped each other through everything. It is also important to make time for fun when you can!! You can do anything you put your mind to!



Kayleen Sebo

Hometown: Schaumburg, IL

What is your most memorable moment at UD?

Being a member on the softball team, as well as all the friends I have made over the years.

What are your career goals?

Have a nursing position at a hospital around my hometown.

What advice would you give to future nursing students?

Take a deep breath, make sure you stay organized, and always make time for yourself!

Not Pictured

Zachary Thomas

Kalista Smit

Emma Howard



Alumni SPOTLIGHT

Shelby Lane

What year did you graduate?
2019

What inspired you to become a nurse?

I always knew I was going to be a nurse! I got my CNA in high school because I knew that's the route I would go. I never had any of those "Aha" moments that happened growing up that made me want to be a nurse, I just knew that's what I was going to do and truly feel I was meant for.

Where has your degree taken you in your career?

I graduated in 2019 and worked for about 4 months at MercyOne-Dubuque on the, Medical floor. My heart was always in emergency nursing, so I didn't work there long before I applied and got a job in December of 2019 at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics Emergency Room. I worked there full-time until January 2022 when I started travel nursing. I took a contract at the Unity Point- Trinity ER where we float to three different ERs in Rock Island, Illinois, Moline, Illinois, and Bettendorf, Iowa. I have since worked there as a traveler and currently have a contract signed to return there at the end of January. I still work PRN at the UIHC ER and I also do substitute school nursing in the Davenport School District on the side, strictly for fun :)

What do you like best about being a nurse?

I absolutely love the variety in emergency nursing. Every day when I walk into work I have no clue what I'm getting or what will happen that day. Especially working at a level I trauma center, I am very passionate about trauma patients, and all of the patients we see who need intensive care. At any moment I can get a patient who is extremely critical and having the worst day of their life, and we get to step in and try to change that. We see so many exciting and interesting things in the emergency room it keeps work exciting. My personality is very go with the flow, laid back, and spontaneous which allows me to thrive in a chaotic environment.

What advice would you give to current nursing students?

I wish I could go back and know what I know now about being a student nurse.

I would tell these student nurses to stop being so hard on yourself. Enjoy college while you can because it goes by way too fast, and it's some of the most fun years! You don't have to know every single thing you are taught when you graduate nursing school. When you start your new job you will feel like you know nothing, and in the grand scheme of things you do not. We all were there, and there is nothing wrong with that. You will get there! Get comfortable saying when you don't know something, I still do every day! It'll all be worth it.

What did you love the most about being a Spartan?

I loved the small community at UD. I did track in college on top of the nursing program, and I truly felt like my coaches and professors cared about me and my wellbeing. Growing up in a small town, UD gave that same small-circle feel. I was lucky enough to find friends at UD that I will keep for life.



Alumni SPOTLIGHT

Annie Meyer

What year did you graduate?

2021

What inspired you to become a nurse?

I have wanted to be a nurse since high school. I was always very interested in the medical field and all the different pathways you could take within it. I took a CNA class when I was in high school which allowed me to do clinical in different nursing homes. I really enjoyed interacting with the different patients and being able to help them when they were in need. My future career in nursing was solidified for me when I went through some health issues in high school. I had to see different doctors and undergo different testing. Going through this made me see healthcare in a whole new way. I had a different appreciation for the field than I had previously.

I decided I wanted to help others the way those healthcare professionals helped me. From then on, I knew that I wanted to be a nurse and help others.

Where has your degree taken you in your career?

I started my career after graduating from UD on the Medical-Surgical unit at Finley Hospital here in Dubuque. Originally, I had always wanted to be a pediatric nurse, but I really enjoyed my clinicals on the Medical-Surgical unit at Finley. I enjoyed how I was able to see a lot of different things and learn something new each day, which was what made me choose this unit. I am also able to take care of pediatric patients on the floor I work on since I am also certified in the care of pediatric patients. It is always nice to see a variety of patients and different medical conditions in order to become a better nurse. I work the night shift on my unit. Since graduation, I have learned so much as a nurse and taken different steps to further my career. Some of those things include training nurses starting on my unit, being a preceptor for students at UD, stepping into my role as one of the charge nurses on night shift, and even being nominated for a DAISY Award, which I am very grateful for. My nursing career has just begun, and I am very happy to be working on the floor I do with such an amazing team. My coworkers, patients, and different family members have touched my heart in so many ways while working as a nurse on this unit. I am excited to keep learning and growing as a nurse, and see where this journey takes me.

What do you like best about being a nurse?

The thing I like best about being a nurse is being able to be the person helping someone when they are most vulnerable. Patients come to us when they are very sick and not feeling their best and I am able to care for them at this time. I do my best to make them feel better and give the best care possible, so they have a positive experience. It makes me so happy to be able to help patients in a time of need and show them the compassion they deserve. This is one of the many reasons I love being a nurse and am very grateful to have chosen this career.

What advice would you give to current nursing students?

The most important advice I would give a current nursing student is to never give up. Nursing school is hard work, and not everyone will understand that. As a nursing student you are constantly doing homework, studying, taking tests, and attending clinicals all while losing sleep and at times giving up social time with family and friends. Although sometimes it may not feel worth all of the stress, I can promise you when you come out on the other side as a nurse it will all make sense. Nursing is a tough career, but it is so rewarding. All of the hard work and dedication will pay off in the end if you stick with it.

What did you love the most about being a Spartan?

There are so many things I loved about being a Spartan, but I would have to say the community is my favorite. When you are a Spartan, you are part of a tight-knit community. Everyone gets involved in different activities and events which helps you form many bonds. The people I met at UD were the best, they were like a second family to me. I had so many different opportunities while I was at UD, and I am so very grateful for those. UD is a great school, and it provided me with the option to be a student and an athlete. Being a Spartan is what made me who I am today. I am so proud to call myself a UD alum!



Alumni SPOTLIGHT

Edgar Gomez

What year did you graduate?

2021

What inspired you to become a nurse?

When I was in high school, I was in and out of the hospital for a period of time. When I was unsure of everything and still just figuring out who I wanted to become, I was lucky enough to have had an amazing set of nurses look out for me and show me so much compassion/empathy. It reminded me so much of my mom who never had the opportunity to go back to school and get her license. So I made it my goal to fulfill her dream and become the nurse I knew she always wanted to be. I then vowed that I would return the favor by working one day in pediatrics to help as many children and their families as much as I possibly could.

Where has your degree taken you in your career?

I was lucky enough to go back to my hometown and work at Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, Illinois, which is a level one trauma center and 4-time Magnet designated. At first, I worked as a Orthopedic-Med Surg nurse for a year to gain as much experience and knowledge as possible. There, I learned from some of the best nurses I could have ever possibly met, and this helped me build my confidence to pursue my dream of becoming a pediatric nurse. I then applied at the end of 2022 to work as a general pediatric nurse and have since been working there. Just this past year, I was proudly honored and recognized being awarded by the DAISY Foundation within my first year in pediatrics by winning the DAISY Award. I hope to continue to spread the compassion I was given by my nurses who took care of me and pass it to every patient, family member, and coworker I come to work with.

What do you like best about being a nurse?

The best thing about being a nurse has undoubtedly been the experiences and connections I've gotten to build with my patient and their families I've come to work with. Being in the hospital isn't easy, and many are scared/unsure of what's happening. So, I do my best to create a warm welcoming environment and get to everyone's level to make them feel comfortable, heard, and understood as I once felt when I was in an unfamiliar situation being in the hospital.

What advice would you give to current nursing students?

Take a breath. Everything will be okay in the end, and you can get through it with persistence. Continue to study, go out of your way to ask any/every question you can (seriously there is never a bad question), and never be afraid to go out of your way to see your professors one on one if you're unsure of a topic/scenario. Also, I bet what you're feeling, another classmate of yours has had that same thought. So really lean on each other to support one another, and you'd be surprised what all of you can achieve together. My final piece of advice is ask yourself, "why did I choose nursing?" Now when you're questioning yourself, reflect on that and use that as your motivation to get you through it. Nursing is an amazing field to be in, and I hope one day you'll get to experience all the rewarding moments that come with it.

What did you love the most about being a Spartan?

Being a Spartan has so many things to love and be proud about. For starters, I believe the faculty at UD really do follow their commitment to their mission statement of educating students, pursuing excellence, challenging students to live lives of worth and purpose. I always felt welcomed by my professors and peers at UD whom I will forever be grateful for with the experiences I made there. Meeting so many people from all over made Dubuque a home away from home. Forever a proud Spartan!!



Alumni SPOTLIGHT

Ashley Sullivan

What year did you graduate?
2014

What inspired you to become a nurse?

I have always just had the drive to help people. I received my CNA in high school around age 15/16 and just continued to further my career from there. It has always been a passion to care for others in their time of need.

Where has your degree taken you in your career?

I started off working at MercyOne hospital in Dubuque on the medical unit. Then, I transferred to resource pool. After three years, I made a career change and started in the public health department. at Grant County Health Department in Wisconsin. After a year I switched to home health full time, where I found my passion for nursing. In the summer of 2022 I got wound care certified through wound care education institute.

What do you like best about being a nurse?

After becoming wound care certified, I have very much enjoyed helping my wound care patients and seeing the happiness of my patients as they see chronic wounds healing.

What advice would you give to current nursing students?

I would tell current students to continue to strive for their goals. And continue learning something new every year. As there are always advances in technology and knowledge in healthcare.



What did you love the most about being a Spartan?

I loved having the small class sizes and the feeling of family within the Spartan community! You always had someone to go to if you had any problems or concerns..



Top row left to right:

Lisa Kragenbrink, MSN, RN;
Linda Hanson, MSN, MEd,
RN; Jackie Meyer, PhD, RN,
CNE; Kerri Chapman MSN,
RN, RNC-OB; and Mary Tobin
PhD, RN

Bottom row left to right:

Kristi Steinbeck MSN, RN; Beth
Neyen MSN, CMSRN; Holly
Sinnø, MM; Hailey Barsema,
MM