Welcome Cohort 7!

We want to welcome you all to the George Washington School of Nursing! We hope that you are settling into the semester and getting into the swing of things. First semester is very overwhelming with tests, classes, clinical, lab and learning to balance it all. But before you know it spring break will be here and soon after that it will be the end of the semester! Cohort 5 and 6 are very willing to support you in anyway possible because it was not that long ago that we were in your shoes. Feel free to reach out for help or with any questions that you might have about the program, study tips, clinicals, etc. It might seem hard to stay connected at the Virginia Campus with students so spread out and on campus different days of the week but hopefully this newsletter will help keep you informed and feel more connected. We are proud of our nursing program and are so happy that you all are a part of it! You all are going to be great nurses!

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<th>Upcoming Events</th>
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Compiled and edited by Michelle H. McEvoy, SNA Secretary, Cohort 5

Clinical Diaries

“Thinking I was too cool for our white nursing shoes, I chose to be a rebel and wear my tennis shoes to clinical. After receiving my patient assignment, I immediately checked if any tests/procedures were scheduled. Yes! I would be able to follow my patient down to Interventional Radiology and observe an angioplasty. I was feeling so cool in my magnetic apron, cute hair cover, mask, and especially, my kicks. Standing there with my friend Kellie, we could not get enough of this procedure. Just as we were saying how cool it was, a spray of blood comes rushing towards us in a vertical line and, to my dismay, ran all the way up my shoes, pants and magnetic apron. Moral of the story- no one is too cool for nursing shoes.”

Kellan Clausen  
Cohort 5
Meet your SNA E-Board Members

Elizabeth Demarest - President
I live in Washington, DC, and graduated from Skidmore College in 2010. The Student Nurse Association (SNA) is a national organization that focuses on building school communities, fundraising, volunteer activities, and providing students with support. We act as the student council for the School of Nursing and are always here to listen and help. Nursing wasn’t always something I wanted to pursue, in fact, my Ah-ha! moment happened halfway through my last semester of college! I’m so happy that I discovered this passion when I did! I’ll be working in the Labor & Delivery Department at INOVA Fair Oaks in a few weeks, and I could not be more excited! This last year has flown by, and the progress we’ve made is astonishing. The ABSN program is intense, but with the support of the faculty and wonderful friends, it’s possible to have an extraordinary experience while preparing for this exceptional career. Contact me at edemarest@gwu.edu

Rebecca Zuckerman – Vice President
I am from Los Angeles, CA. My previous Bachelor’s was in Business Administration, Marketing. My passion lies in critical care and emergency preparedness. I am currently in my preceptorship at GWUH in the ED and loving it! I hope to start my career working in the ED and look at receiving a BSN as the first step in an exciting career. This program pushes you in a variety of ways and while some days you would rather forget, it is always followed up with a day to remind you of why you started this program. We will all get through it and become amazing nurses! A fun fact about me is that I am a triplet, yes there are two others that look similar to me running around somewhere. Anyway, good luck everyone and if you have any questions feel free to contact me at rebeccaz3@gwu.edu.

Andrea Thoennes - Historian
I am originally from Cleveland, OH. Currently, I live in Falls Church, VA. As I am ending my last semester here at GW, I have finally found time to enjoy some much needed free time! I really love trying new restaurants around DC with my boyfriend, especially those "greasy spoon" type of places. Recently, I started taking yoga and I only wish I would have started this at the beginning of nursing school…. I wish everyone the best of luck in their semester! You. Will. Get. Through. This. I promise! Contact me at athoennes@gwu.edu

Kellan Clausen – Treasurer
I was born and raised in the DMV area. Currently, I live right over the border of DC in Maryland and commute to school. I graduated from the University of Scranton in 2012 with a Bachelor’s of Science in Community Health, and decided to pursue nursing immediately after. I took a semester off to fulfill my prerequisites, and then jumped right into nursing. I am in my last semester and cannot wait to graduate in May! I am completing my preceptorship in the ED at GWU in DC and couldn’t be more thrilled. I have had my ups and downs in this program, but in the end I am positive this is the right life for me. If anyone needs any advice or tips on the program, please feel free to contact me at kgclausen@gwu.edu

Michelle McEvoy – Secretary
I am from Portland, Oregon and love the Pacific Northwest. My previous Bachelor’s degree was in Psychology so I think nursing fits me very well. I am currently working in the PACU at GWUH and love it! I encourage you all to hang in there. You really will be done before you know it, even though some days and weeks seem to take forever. It seems like we just started! As secretary I want to make your voices heard so if you have any questions, free to contact me at mmcevoy@gwu.edu

Join us as an SNA member at www.nsna.org
In January, your GWU School of Nursing spent six days in the central plateau region of Haiti. This is the first exclusive nursing trip to this first world country. Attending this mission trip were five faculty members (three graduate - Joyce Pulcini (team leader), Arlene Pericak, Mayri Leslie, and myself representing the undergraduate faculty), one staff member – Tamara Helvetius, who is originally from Haiti. The six undergraduates, representing cohort 5 and 6 and one NP graduate student were: Ronni Griffin, Rachel Sajous, Laura Kokosky, Ashley Strasheim, Michelle McEvoy, Nicole McCrory, Olivia Bordiuk and Jennifer Beury. The Haitian mission included working in primary care clinics, visiting homes in the community, group teaching sessions in clinics and schools, participating in clinical research, visiting two local hospitals and a midwifery school, networking with local health care providers, and developing a partnership with local health care providers, laying the foundation for future endeavors.

For two days we set up rural mobile clinics and delivered primary care to 250 local residents including well babies, pregnant women, elderly, and acutely sick people of all ages. We also documented hypertensive risk factors, as part of a school of nursing clinical study. We participated in a community visit and met Haitians in their rural homes and assessed many blood pressures. One local woman asked us to visit her grandchild, who upon assessment was septic from cellulitis and osteomyelitis. We immediately transported her to the hospital, where she received life saving treatment; we were fortunate to visit her on our last day and see her rapid improvement. All students participated in several community teaching sessions offered to patients attending local health clinics and to the community health workers who know the communities the best. The topics covered high risk pregnancy, pediatric hydration, hypertension, and family planning. We also visited an elementary school and taught 120 students proper hand and dental hygiene, demonstrated by Rachel Sajous and Ronnie Griffin. We were fortunate to have two members of our team who were raised in Haiti and are fluent in Creole, Tamara Helvetius and Rachel Sajous. Their presence was extremely valuable, as it fostered a long dialogue with the resident midwife and physician who reside in the housing we shared. This dialogue laid the foundation for a continued partnership in the region.

The students were true professionals and excellent representatives of GWU. They demonstrated compassion, teamwork, outstanding nursing assessments, and quick and accurate critical thinking skills in acute situations. Their teaching sessions were creative and demonstrated their hard work in learning basic Creole. The spontaneity they demonstrated during the on-the-spot teaching sessions-at local clinics, schools and an evening with the community health workers demonstrated the depth of their nursing knowledge. Please share in my pride with these outstanding students, who are superb ambassadors of our school and profession.

Written by Karen Dawn, MSN, RN, PHCNS-BC, CDE
How To Handle The Stress of Nursing School

Written by Dr. Carol Lang DHScN, MScN., RN

Being a nursing student can be some of the best times and also the most challenging times of your life. Meeting new people, learning new subjects, participating in lab and clinical activities and learning new ways of thinking so you can “think like a nurse,” learning to live, work and communicate with people different from yourself can be a very exciting and energizing experiences. However, all of that newness can also be a time of enormous adjustment and stress.

While you are adjusting to life as a nursing student, you are also having to manage your time more effectively, deal with large amounts of reading, homework and more complex assignments than you may have had in your previous degree. You may also feel the pressure of wanting to get good grades, wanting to feel like you belong and feeling connected. Finding time to sleep, eat, exercise, study and spend time with family and friends can lead to more stress and a feeling of being overwhelmed. The bottom line... stress comes in many forms and everyone feels stress, so you are not alone!

“I try to take one day at a time, but sometimes several days attack me at once”

Jennifer Yane

Here are a few tips to help you handle nursing school stress:

1. Organize: Use a planner, include all classes, clinical dates. Highlight assignments and exam due dates and organize a study area. Purchase plastic crates in different colors and assign a crate to each course. Keep only the materials related to that course in each crate.

2. Don’t procrastinate: Don’t put off until tomorrow what you can do today.

3. Eliminate negative self-talk: "I’m not good enough…” this is self-destructive. You are good enough, you earned your place at GW – we believe in you and we believe you can be successful.

4. Practice deep breathing: Close your eyes, take a deep breath (fill lungs to capacity) and SLOWLY exhale over 10-15 seconds. Can’t breathe slowly…? lay down flat, close eyes, place your pharmacology textbook on your abdomen to slow your breathing – watch it rise and fall. Do this 10 times at night to help you relax.

5. Eat right: Start your day right with breakfast. Six small meals each day is better than 3 larger meals and snacking. Take time to pack your own food the night before – make a sandwich, fruit, 2 protein bars and a bottle of water. Remember: high protein, low carbs. Reduce snacking, sugar, fat, caffeine, drugs and alcohol.

6. Stay active: At a minimum walk every single day. Practice your deep breathing exercises as you walk – you will saturate your brain with oxygen and calm yourself, don’t think about school, give your brain a break - focus on the sights, smells and sounds in the environment. Walk with a buddy, but don’t talk about school!

7.Assert yourself: Express your feelings, don’t bottle them up. Seek help when you need it - faculty, advisor etc. Don’t over extend yourself, learn to say “no” or try a compromise – “I can’t go to the movies now, I want to get ahead with my reading assignment, maybe I can join you afterwards.”

8. Connect with others. A support system is essential. Make at least 1-2 friends and surround yourself with positive people, not worriers. Join a study group.

9. Do something you enjoy every day. Make time for leisure activities that bring you joy, whether it be stargazing, playing the piano, or working on your bike.

10. Keep your sense of humor. Don’t take everything too seriously, nursing school can be fun!

SNA Committee Members

There are several people that make SNA possible at GWU. They volunteer on 5 different committees that serve our nursing school: volunteer, social, communication, student affairs and public relations. Contact any of the following people with question, comments, concerns, or if you are interested in joining a committee.

Adam Harnden: Jr E-board President, Student Affairs Committee
Amy McMillan: Jr E-board Vice President
Stephanie Keeling: Jr E-board Secretary
Maria Lyles: Jr E-board Treasurer
Jillian Castor: Jr E-board Historian, Public Relations Committee
Ama Cunigwe: Public Relations Committee Chair
Stephanie Keeling: Jr E-board Secretary
Maria Lyles: Jr E-board Treasurer
Jillian Castor: Jr E-board Historian, Public Relations Committee
Ama Cunigwe: Public Relations Committee Chair
Kellie Ketelsen: Social Committee Chair
Nicole Esposito: Social Committee member
Pippa Morse: Communications Committee Chair
Beth Matusiewicz: Communications Committee member
Ms. Mance: SNA Faculty Advisor

Volunteer Opportunity

Park Plex Full Scale Exercise

As part of regional emergency preparedness efforts, Montgomery County is preparing mock mass casualty incidents at South Germantown Recreational Park and needs volunteers! Police, fire, EMS and other agencies will coordinate the response. Each volunteer will receive free Six Flags tickets for your time!

When: Tuesday March 18th - 6:30am-3:00pm
Registration Information:
http://mdchhs.com/forms/park-plex-full-scale-exercise-volunteer-registration
Volunteer Coordinator: Marie Warner
Email: mwarner@miemss.org

SNA Committee Members