Nursing School and COVID-19

Bailey Stedman, Junior, Nursing BSN

Being in the William Jewell nursing program has been nothing but fun, filled with so many different learning opportunities and experiences. Everything seemed to be going so smoothly and normally, then March 2020 hit. Something so unexpected and life-altering occurred. You know what I am talking about…COVID-19. If you were like me, you assumed it wasn’t anything to be too worried about, and we would be back on campus in no time. Well, that wasn’t the case. And let’s be honest, being in nursing school is a time-consuming and challenging thing, but now adding a global pandemic onto that makes it even more weird and tough. I mean, virtual simulations instead of real-life patients were so unrealistic, but we had to make the most of it. We had to adapt just like everyone else who now went to class virtually, learning through a screen, with very little social interaction. I never pictured something like this happening, and I don’t think anyone did. Yet, here we are, over a year from when the world literally shut down, and humanity was frightened and didn’t know what to believe.

As a student nurse, I think the pressure is even heavier on us now. The pandemic opened my eyes to how fast a virus could spread and the measures we have to be ready to take to save patients’ lives. We have to act fast and do the best interventions for the greater good. Even if that means wearing a mask and temporarily shutting down institutions. But what makes all of this even worse was (continued on page 2)

Honoring Healthcare Heroes at Sequence Climb

Gabrielle Miranda, Senior, Nursing BSN-AT

The pandemic has been a defining time for the entire world, but it has especially highlighted the bravery and selflessness that healthcare workers bring to their workplace every day. From frontline workers in ICUs to the administrative personnel who have been instrumental in organizing patients to the transport teams, everyone in healthcare has shown up to serve and protect their community. Marc, Suleman and I felt compelled to share our gratitude to these people who have made many sacrifices and continue to do so. By offering this free indoor climbing adventure, we hoped healthcare workers could step away from the heightened stressors and stakes at work and engage in something fun and active. While society has responded wonderfully by providing many free and discounted items, we thought an experience would be a really nice tribute so that they could physically participate in something unique while mentally finding some peace and reprieve. As nursing students, we have seen firsthand what it is like for these healthcare workers, and what I have personally witnessed is nothing short of heroic. Soon we will stand alongside them as registered nurses, and we felt it was important to acknowledge the high standard of unconditional beneficence they have set. Getting the opportunity to give back to these healthcare workers has been both humbling and inspiring. We hope that healthcare heroes of today realize our endless appreciation.
Nursing School and COVID-19  (continued from page 1)

going the virus yourself and having to deal with that on top of nursing school. And, yes, I was one who fell victim to the virus. Boy was it awful, to say the least. However, I will be honest that before getting sick, I had my doubts about how COVID actually impacted an individual. Which is pretty insane, considering I am a nursing student and immunocompromised due to a chronic illness. The virus hit me pretty badly. So bad that I had to do an experimental infusion with the antibodies for COVID so I wouldn’t end up in the hospital with a secondary infection. It was crazy. Being a nursing student and a student-athlete made me question everything. I was scared I wouldn’t be able to return to school. I was scared I would get behind in my cohort and have to take a leave of absence. I was scared I would have to opt out of soccer. So many things filled my head. Luckily, the infusion benefited me, and I was able to return to school, soccer and all other activities COVID kept me from.

At the end of the day, COVID just stinks. It messed A LOT of things up. It altered social interactions, how we view/attend school, planned events like weddings, family dynamics, literally so many things. But the virus also created some positives, believe it or not, like, another way to learn, a more serious take on hygiene, it drew families closer together in quarantine, increased church attendance online, and many other things had a benefit. Again, we adapted, we got tough, and we got through it. As a nurse, you have to be ready to act fast, adjust and perform with what you have. Nursing school certainly changed from what was once expected. I never thought this is how it would be whatsoever. But with everything each of us goes through daily and then the pandemic, it will prepare us and transform us into the nurses we are made to be. And at the end of all this, whenever that may be, we can proudly say we survived it, it being a global pandemic and nursing school.

Food Fight

Jennifer Hutton, Senior, Nursing BSN-AT; Cailin Navickas, Senior, Nursing BSN-AT; Alycia Shepherd, Senior, Nursing BSN-AT

One of the founding hallmarks of the William Jewell Nursing program is service to others, and by completing a service project aimed to helping those in need we were able to fulfill this idea outside of school. While coming up with an idea, the three of us, Jennifer Hutton, Cailin Navickas and Alycia Shepherd, wanted to be able to provide to those locally and meet a large population, all while creating a service project that was fun for everyone involved. After researching other ideas, we discovered the true need for food in our community and found ourselves a population that could benefit from our time and devotion to the cause.

We teamed up with Harvesters, who supplies food to 26 different local counties. Of the people benefiting from Harvesters, we found out that 25% are children, 20% are seniors and 29% of each household has someone with poor health, the majority being high blood pressure and diabetes. Harvesters helped us by donating a barrel for us to collect food in for a two-week period that they would pick up when we were done collecting.

Many people do food drives, and we know it can be hard to get people involved sometimes; but what better way to get people involved than with a competition. We divided the department into two teams, faculty/staff vs. students. We allowed two weeks for each team to collect items in different collection areas and urged the importance of the cause by sharing statistics regarding food insecurity. In order to better help those in need, we added point values to various types of products and listed high value items at a higher point value. This allowed us to better help those in need, we added point values to various types of products and listed high value items at a higher point value. This allowed us to add to the competition and be able to donate a variety of items.

At the conclusion of the competition, the department collected a total of 338 items, with many being the high point value items such as soap, toothpaste and deodorant. The faculty/staff won with 321.5 points while the students had 247.7 points. In the end, the real winners were those who benefited from the products we as a department collected. This service project allowed us to truly involve ourselves with the community in an impactful way.
Letter from the Chair

Dear Nursing Alumni and Friends,

I hope you find the stories and notes of this edition of the Vital Signs informative and encouraging. I am grateful to the faculty and students who provide you a glimpse into what is happening on The Hill. I will update you here on classes and clinical while we work through this pandemic.

The College surveyed faculty and students about their preferences for fall 2020. The majority of faculty and students wanted to return to campus and have in-person classes. Although other nursing schools were not able to be in person, our smaller class sizes, opening some additional areas for classroom spaces, splitting lab groups, surveillance testing and meticulous isolation/quarantine of any new or potential cases made this all possible. Above all, students embraced the new normal of social distancing and masking on campus and worked to keep us all safe. With their commitment, we were able to stay in-person for the fall and spring semesters because of this success.

Our clinical partners worked to ensure that students were able to complete most clinical hours. We were asked to provide PPE for some of our clinical sites to help them conserve their supplies. The faculty continued to provide virtual simulations as needed to supplement and promote clinical reasoning. Clinical and capstone continued in the spring. We were happy to work closely with our partners, and we are appreciative of their partnership.

Though the year was challenging, I have every confidence we will continue to provide a high quality of nursing education because of a strong commitment from the students, faculty and staff. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Leesa McBroom, PhD, APRN, FNP-C, Chair/Associate Professor of Nursing

Cards for Hospitalized Kids

Annemarie Boeh, Senior, Nursing BSN

Cards for Hospitalized Kids is an organization in the United States that collects encouraging and cheerful notes to send to kiddos in the hospital. In October, Amanda Erynstmeyer, Cutter Sanders and I worked together to collect as many cards as possible to send to the organization. Our goal was 1,000 cards, and we were so overwhelmed by the participation in the service project as we ended up collecting a total of 1,650 cards. We contacted friends, family and schools in the Liberty area to help out. We were so excited to have the opportunity to cheer up so many kids who were going through a tough time!

The reason we picked this specific community service project was because we felt it would bring positivity in a dark time. We also felt that this service project was super important because after completing our clinical at Children’s Mercy, we realized that not every kid has a support person present. It was important to us to help shine a light in those kiddos’ lives, and we felt that this project would do just that! We noticed that community service really helps the individual receiving the help but is truly rewarding for the individual providing the service. If you would like to get involved with this amazing organization visit www.cardsforhospitalizedkids.com to learn more.

Student Nursing Association Update

Sabra Hasek, Senior, Nursing BSN and Elise LaDue, Senior, Nursing BSN

Student Nurses Association, more commonly referred to as SNA, is just what it sounds like! We are a student organization on campus for any and all nursing majors. Official membership is open to any nursing major when they begin the nursing program. Our mission is to advocate for the personal and professional growth of Jewell nursing students. We are dedicated to promoting professional advancement and providing educational and service opportunities, thus supporting the development of the whole person and bettering each individual and the community. Our vision is to inspire Jewell nursing students in their growth and development to become future leaders of the nursing profession. We foster leadership with our student-led board, composed of co-presidents, secretary, co-treasurers, co-fundraising, public relations, and January and May AT representatives. Applications for new board members open in the fall; then we prepare our elects to take over for the graduating seniors from November to May. As a board, we meet twice a month to plan events and discuss ideas and upcoming opportunities.

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Throughout the year, SNA has hosted monthly membership meetings. These membership meetings consisted of a panel discussion over selected topics including L&D/NICU/Peds, graduate level nursing as an MSN and DNP, Life Flight Eagle and OR/CRNA experiences. These meetings are the core way SNA offers educational and professional opportunities to our fellow nursing students, with the added bonus of connecting students to alumni and other nurse professionals.

We also held numerous fundraisers through the year, which helped to raise funds for us to pursue our mission. Fundraisers this past year have included restaurant takeovers at Yogurtini and McAlister’s, holiday-themed bake sales and nursing themed T-shirt sales. The majority of funds go towards our biggest educational opportunity all year, the National SNA Convention. At convention this year, students were able to partake in morning yoga, participate in Lippincott NCLEX review, attend numerous educational sessions on a variety of topics, network with other students and nursing professionals, listen to keynote speakers and view inspirational documentaries.

We have so missed in-person gatherings and long for the time we can once again meet in person! COVID-19 has put a particular damper on our typical end-of-the-year fundraiser, Pie-A-Professor, but with the vaccine rollout there is reason for hope! There is light at the end of the tunnel.

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**Care Packages**

The Jewell Department of Nursing assembled care packages for Liberty Hospital ICU staff and educators.
Finding My Direction
Meredith Scarborough, Senior, Nursing BSN

Throughout my nursing career at William Jewell College, I have used thousands of flashcards, spent at least 40 hours each week hitting the books, fostered close relationships with every member of my cohort who I am glad to call my friends, and gained many lifelong mentors in the nursing faculty. I have loved walking the halls of the nursing department each day and seeing my best friend’s picture watching over me. On campus, I serve as a Cardinal Blazer, and my absolute favorite part is showing off the nursing department. I love walking with students who share my passion for nursing and introducing them to the incredible nursing faculty. This past school year has been physically and mentally challenging and emotionally draining. I faced many unforeseen challenges, one being COVID-19. I felt safe returning to school in the fall. The nursing department clearly outlined their rules and expectations for our return. Because of these rules, I was able to have the majority of my classes meet in-person and make the most of my last year at Jewell.

I started my role as a nurse tech at the beginning of the pandemic. Seeing the front-line heroes on the news drew me to help. I saw many changes in the field of nursing within a short time. Cases of COVID-19 went from just a few hospital-wide to more than half my patients infected. Even with the PRN shifts I worked, I felt the nurse burnout firsthand. I felt anxious and unprepared for the shifts to come, because this pandemic required each member of the medical team to step-up and fulfill roles not within our job descriptions. I remember many times crying before these shifts and feeling completely inadequate after my shift. The thing that scared me most was knowing how easily I could spread COVID-19 to my grandma who lived with me, and it could have life threatening effects on her. There are so many little things like handwashing, touching a computer and contact with other staff that could spread this virus. I had to remind myself that I was being careful and doing everything I could. The unknown was very scary to me, not knowing the cause or right course of treatment. I had to step into the unknown because I had patients depending on me. My source of strength came from the perseverance and dedication that was fostered in my nursing courses. Each course I have taken has challenged my thinking, and the tests I spent countless hours studying for prepared me to get back up and try again with more power and strength. Dec. 18, 2020, was the day I received my first COVID-19 vaccine. This was the first week the vaccine was available in Missouri. The amount of gratitude and thankfulness I felt this day was indescribable. I felt proud of the hard work of others within my field in developing this vaccine. I felt thankful to feel protected for the sake of every patient I serve and for the ability to protect my family.

Another obstacle I was faced with this year was not receiving my dream job. This was a huge rude awakening for me. For the past four years I had my mindset on this one job. I was completely heartbroken and devastated. For the first time in my life, I did not know my next step. I was very lost. The faculty of the nursing department were instrumental in helping me find my direction again. I found a new direction and passion that I did not know I had. I have decided that I will obtain my Doctor of Nursing Practice. Coming 2025, my goal is to become a Family Nurse Practitioner achieving my original dream of working with children but aiming even higher. The job I have accepted will provide the critical care training I was seeking, as well as more flexible hours to go back to school. Through the experience of feeling so lost, I learned how much the field of nursing meant to me and not to ever give up on my dreams. Although my dreams may look a little different now, I know this is for the better. I now have higher hopes and dreams because I know what I can accomplish, and I know I can take on anything because of the education I have received at William Jewell.

Through the challenges I have faced this year, I have gained so much strength and more knowledge than I could ever imagine. This year I have seen the worst and best in nursing, which has made me love this field even more. I am thankful to the William Jewell Department of Nursing for the knowledge, guidance, love and support I have received.
Working Through Nursing School

Sharra Williams, Senior, Nursing BSN

When I started the nursing program at Jewell, I was never expecting it to be ending with a pandemic. This pandemic seems to have prepared me to be able to adapt and change and learn to go with the flow. Alterations in class and clinical changed at the last minute, and we had to be able to go with it. I thought I knew exactly how my four years would go structurally, but going virtual was quite a change for me. I am so happy to end my final semester of nursing school on campus with all of the professors who have supported us during the last four years. I have worked in the Emergency Room (ER) at the University of Kansas Hospital (KU) for four years now. It was great to see and experience things while I went to school. It was eye-opening to see things firsthand in conjunction to learning them in the classroom. Working at KU when the pandemic started was quite scary. There were a lot of unknowns and not only was staff scared, but the patients were scared as well. We heard horror stories of people leaving the ER and not ever getting to go home. It was not only long hours with new processes and rules, but most of all, it was emotionally exhausting. It was one of the first times that I had really seen an unknown in a place I felt so comfortable. It has improved so much over the last year, and I can’t wait to see where we are in another year.

Nursing school is rigorous, but from comparing other schools and locations, William Jewell has really been great support. I couldn’t have asked for a better nursing experience. I love all of the connections and relationships that I have formed while here. I will be excited for the new opportunities as a graduate nurse, but I sure will also miss the safeness of the Nursing Department that I called home for so long.

Developing Resilience

Mona Akbarnia, Senior, Nursing BSN-AT

When I started the BSN-AT program in January 2020, I expected to be challenged. Lengthy study sessions and a non-stop chaotic schedule were obstacles that I had readied myself to confront to achieve my goal of becoming a nurse. What I had not anticipated, though, was a pandemic that would completely change the way we learn, interact, and even live our lives off-campus. While the experience of this pandemic is something I hope to never experience again, I can’t help but note some valuable lessons it has helped me learn along the way — lessons that I believe will be essential for myself and other nurses as we complete our programs and begin to practice in the care for others.

The largest takeaway for me in this pandemic is that resiliency is vital in persevering through challenges and adapting to changes. While I may have anticipated more hands-on experience in the lab and at clinicals, as well as more FaceTime with my professors, I have had to adapt my methods of learning in their absence to successfully progress through the program. And while awkward interactions with virtual patients who somewhat inappropriately just say “Okay” to questions I ask may not have the same feel to them as talking with a real person, they do still provide a valuable outlet for practicing. The key to handling all of the unexpected challenges for me was to learn to accept what I had to work with and to adapt my response appropriately. This strikes me as a valuable skill to possess once working full-time as well.

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Developing Resilience
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Another lesson learned from this pandemic is that when things get tough, you cannot neglect self-care, even if you feel you don’t have time for it. The word “challenging” doesn’t begin to touch the difficulty of completing an accelerated program during a pandemic. As the stress of working from home while sharing Wi-Fi with a fiancé and kids, listening to nearby neighborhood dogs obnoxiously bark every time they sense I was trying to focus, staying on top of all my assignments and tests, and adapting to changes to my daily routine took their toll on me, self-care was the solution keeping me from experiencing a melt-down. For me, that involves reading, playing video games, walking outdoors (away from other people), doing something artistic or working out. Experiencing firsthand how self-care can give me the strength to persevere through difficult situations is something I’ll carry with me as a tool against burnout once working professionally. Whatever your self-care activities consist of, don’t neglect to use them whenever you need to recharge!

Finally, this pandemic has driven home how essential our roles as nurses are when things get tough in the world. We carry a heavy burden at times, and people are counting on us to be there for them. Take whatever opportunities you can to develop your resilience, and take care of yourselves in the process.

Simulation Grant
Assistant Professor/NAL Coordinator Kristen Blochlinger, MSN, RN, and Wanda Mickelson, Simulation Technology Specialist

In 2020, the Research Foundation of Kansas City awarded the William Jewell Department of Nursing a grant of $30,000 with the promise that Jewell would match the funds. With this gracious grant, the Department of Nursing purchased a new medium skinned SimMan 3G. This manikin will be used for many of our simulations and gives us the opportunity to continue to expand our diverse selection of simulators. We want all of our students to be reflective as they are preparing to care for people of all races, genders and age in the clinical setting.

SimMan 3G is an advanced patient simulation system that facilitates training of Basic and Advanced Life Support. The system allows the instructor to effectively assess the learner’s individual and team skills based on a realistic clinical situation. Some of the features of the simulator include:

- Eyes that respond to light and react according to the clinical state of the Patient Simulator.
- Simulated Secretions: sweat, tears, froth, urine and ear fluids are released from an internal fluid reservoir. An external fluid fill unit may be connected for extended use.
- Convulsions simulate seizures or small hand movements.
- Vascular Access (intra-osseous) via the tibia.
- An advanced airway comprised of adjustable lung compliance and resistance - allowing simulation of difficult airway management cases.

We are grateful to both the Research Foundation of Kansas City and William Jewell College for their Grant and support of Jewell’s Simulation Center and student learning.
Student and Faculty Accomplishments

Daisy Award Winners 2021
Tiffany Condren, instructor of nursing, Faculty Daisy Award
Ronald James Vergara, ’20, Daisy-In-Training Award

Duke Colloquium Presentations
Mona Akbarnia, ’20, Medication vs Meditation: Mindfulness and Other Non-Pharmacological Approaches to Mental Health Ailments (poster)

Marc Cerda, ’20, Psilocybin as Treatment for Mood Disorders and Demoralization in Individuals with Life-threatening Cancer and AIDS (poster)

Vanessa Chantorn, ’20, Burnout Syndrome in Nurses

Marissa Dillon, ’20, and Mehtap Abdulaziz, ’20, Chimeric Antigen Receptor T cell in the Treatment of Hematologic Cancers (poster)

Edgar Enriquez, ’20, The Use of CPAP and Pharmacologic Therapies in Treatment of Secondary Hypertension for Patients with Sleep Apnea (poster)

Traci Fleming, ’20, In Vitro Fertilization Treatment and Cancer: In-depth Correlation Examination (poster)

Amanda Gardner, ’20, Determining patient outcomes for COVID-19 patients who receive Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) (poster)

Alana Givens, ’20, Prevention of Hospital Acquired Pneumonia in Ventilated Patients (poster)

Jennifer Hutton, ’20, Ketamine and Electroconvulsive Therapy Use in Treatment Resistant Depression (poster podium)

Alice Kirsch, ’20, Symphony in Surgery: The Impact of Musical Interventions on Perioperative Patient and Provider Outcomes (poster podium)

Angela Lenhardt, ’20, Importance of Early Diagnosis in Turner Syndrome Patients (poster)

Gabrielle Miranda, ’20, Implications of Physical Activity on Subclinical Atherosclerosis (oral)

Anjeli Ravi, ’20, Stuck in Limbo: The Impact of Boarding Pediatric Psychiatric Patients in the Emergency (poster)

Alycia Shepherd, ’20, Relationship of Atrial Fibrillation and Cognitive Decline (oral)

Craig Ssesanga, ’20, Ultraviolet Light: An Effective Solution to Hospital Associated Infection (poster)

Ronald James Vergara, ’20, The Benefits of Implementing Artificial Intelligence/ Deep Learning Programs in Critical Care Settings (poster)

Dr. Leesa McBroom, professor of nursing and chair, was elected president of the Greater Kansas City Collegiate Nurse Educators. She will serve from 2021-2023. She was an invited panelist for “Nursing Education in the Time of COVID” by Children’s Mercy Hospital Patient Care Services.

Patty Richter, assistant professor of nursing, was named 2020 Outstanding Community Service Award recipient for demonstrating service and encouraging others to provide leadership and service that fosters community growth.

Melissa Timmons, associate professor of nursing, received the 2020 Kansas City Research Foundation Teaching Excellence Award for making a positive difference in her student’s teaching and learning. She presented her collaboration on the creation and implementation of a second victim/trauma program developed at St. Luke’s North Hospital in a virtual conference for both the Missouri Hospital Association and the Show Me Zero Suicide Collaborative in November.

Honors Convocation Awards
Awards for Integrity: A’Leiya Sha’Ree Clark, Jennifer Erin Hutton

Awards for Compassion: Abigail Noele Rand, Traci L. Fleming

Awards for Scholarship: Meredith A. Scarborough, Alice Anne Kirsch
Student and Faculty Accomplishments (continued from page 8)

Anne Bax Ozbolt Awards for Servant Leadership:
Halie Michele Juarez, Bailey Susanne Brockley

Awards for Excellence in Practice:
Cutter C. Sanders, Gabrielle Elizabeth Miranda

Mary Seacole Awards for Service:
Cody James Lampe, Marissa Jewell Dillon

Outstanding Academic Achievement:
Kaitlyn Pohl, Mona Laden Akbarnia

Outstanding Nursing Student:
Annemarie Christine Boeh, Manuel Macias Arciniega

Leesa A. McBroom Spirit of Nursing Book Award:
Anjeli Ravi

Mind and Heart Undergraduate Symposium 2020 Presenters (virtual event)
Mona Akbarnia, '20, Medication vs Meditation: Mindfulness and Other Non-Pharmacological Approaches to Mental Health Ailments (poster)

A’Leiya Clark, '20, How Health Disparities Effect Maternal Mortality Rate of African American Women (poster)

Edgar Enriquez, '20, The Use of CPAP and Pharmacologic Therapies in Treatment of Secondary Hypertension for Patients with Sleep Apnea (poster)

Traci Fleming, '20, In Vitro Fertilization Treatment and Cancer: In-depth Correlation Examination (poster)

Alana Givens, '20, Prevention of Hospital Acquired Pneumonia in Ventilated Patients (poster)

Sabra Hasek, '20, Omega 3 Fatty Acids: A Treatment for Major Depressive Disorder (poster)

Halie Juarez, '20, How Negative Psychosocial, Environment and Lifestyle Factors are Associated with Childhood Obesity (poster)

Angela Lenhardt, '20, Importance of Early Diagnosis in Turner Syndrome Patients (poster)

Kristen Lewis, '20, The Effects of Postpartum Depression on Mother/Baby Bonding (poster)

Haylee Moore, '20, How Vaping Affects Adolescents’ Lungs- E-Cigarette and Vaping Associated Lung Injury (EVALI): Diagnostic Criteria and Treatments (poster)

Meredith Scarborough, '20, The Use of TRIKAFTA in Treating the F508del Mutation Causing Cystic Fibrosis (poster)

Ali Shappell, '20, The importance of Organ Donation, Podium Presentation (oral)

Craig Ssesanga, '20, Ultraviolet Light: An Effective Solution to Hospital Associated Infection (poster)

Mortar Board
Brianna Francis

Phi Epsilon Honor Society
Lacy Albers
Kaitlyn Pohl

Mu Mu Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International honor society inductees: Erin Albach, Lacey Albers, Vanessa Chantorn, Madissyn Cook, Amanda Ernstmeyer, Amanda Gardner, Sabra Hasek, Jennifer Hutton, Suleman Lawal, Manny Macias, Abbie Milheiser, Gabrielle Miranda, Haylee Moore, Cailin Navickas, Jordan Ray, Meredith Scarborough, Alycia Shepherd, Jessica Steinbach, Ronald James Vergara and Hattie Woodfin, in addition to Professor Anna Kaaiakamanu
The Mu Mu Chapter had a different look to our year as most did for 2020-2021. While our May 2020 Induction Ceremony was completed through an online induction, we were excited to welcome 21 more high-achieving candidates in our in-person May 2021 Induction Ceremony with precautions in place. We can’t wait to see what these amazing nurses will do in their service to others and the community.

While the Mu Mu Chapter did not need to provide financial support in printing nursing students’ research posters due to its virtual format this year, the chapter did enjoy seeing the joy on a raffle winner’s face for our donation of a QT gift card during Jewell’s fall 2020 Mind and Heart Symposium. We saw this as one way our chapter acted on Sigma’s Presidential Call to Action to infuse joy.

On March 5, 2021, the Mu Mu Chapter again co-hosted the Annual Kansas City Sigma Collaborative Conference, titled “Embracing Excellence: COVID19 Perspectives – Personally, Locally, and Globally.” This conference was held virtually through the support of North Kansas City Hospital and was a meaningful opportunity for our chapter to support local and international educational needs. We were particularly proud to support the learning, knowledge and professional development of nurses committed to making a difference in healthcare and education throughout Greater Kansas City. Please contact us if you are interested in participating in next year’s upcoming conference, as the conference planning committee is a great way to network and meet other nurses and Sigma members in the Kansas City area. You can find our Sigma KC Collaborative via Nursing Network at www.nursingnetwork.com.

The Mu Mu Chapter was blessed to serve in a community vaccine clinic held on campus in partnership with the Department of Nursing and Cobblestone Family Health Clinic in Liberty with Sadia Ali, DNP, AT Class of 2012. Hundreds of vaccines were administered, supporting the health and wellness of many. We saw this as another way our chapter acted on Sigma’s Presidential Call to Action to infuse joy.

We are looking forward to many more activities this coming year! In particular, the Mu Mu Chapter is inspired by our attendance in this year’s Biennial Convention in Indianapolis where we can represent our chapter and use our voice for Sigma initiatives. Please contact any Board member if you are interested in joining for the first time or reactivating your membership. If you are already a member, we encourage you to browse the Chapter website and ensure that your contact information is up-to-date so that you can stay in the know. The Mu Mu Chapter Circle website: mumu.sigmanursing.org/home.
Unexpected
Ronald James Tupaz Vergara, Senior, Nursing BSN-AT

After a year and a half trying to get into local California schools, I decided to branch out to the entire country, making a vow that the first school that gives me a shot, I’d attend their institution. That’s when I saw a notification from Jewell. I flew from Sacramento to visit Jewell in December of 2019 for an in-person interview. I figured if I was going to attend college across the country, I should set foot on campus and take a tour of the city. I got my acceptance notice in January 2020 and was overjoyed; I could not wait until May came around to start the program. I remember thinking 2020 was going to be a great year!

March rolled around, COVID-19 numbers started trickling in and California mandated a shut-down of the state. After the initial worry about relatives including my father, due to his health conditions, I had the dreaded thought that my nursing program may be delayed. Already working as an LPN at a local hospital, it was a scary time that March, as my hospital, as well as everywhere else, seemed to be scrambling to come up with protocols; no one seemed to have a definitive answer of how to deal with this situation. Home life was nerve wracking, too, as communities were panic buying. You could feel the tension walking into the markets. “Hope for the best, prepare for the worst” was being more real by the day.

An email in mid-March popped up from Jewell letting us know that the cohort would still proceed as scheduled. I remember being in a “believe it when I see it mindset” as I tried to balance out what life had become. In May, I packed up everything I could stuff into my sedan and left home with my good friend and began our drive across country to Kansas City.

After a week of getting myself together with my air mattress and cardboard box furniture (my furniture came sporadically, taking a total of six weeks before everything finally came due to delays!), I set up my first Zoom class. I remember thinking how convenient; I could just roll out of bed, throw a shirt on and be in class! I am an independent studier but glad we still had the interaction of Zoom, and we still came to campus for lab. The huge worry I had for the program was whether or not we would be completing clinical rotations. We all heard what happened to the previous cohort and how their clinicals were affected, and I was nervous we would have the same fate.

The program rolled with the punches and made every effort it could to give us a pristine nursing education. We were given a variety of learning opportunities, virtual simulations, in-person simulations and yes, clinical rotations were still on! We eventually transitioned to being in-person during the fall, and the campus gave us a sense of safety with constant updates of protocols and what the College was doing for safety. Never once did I fear that the school wasn’t doing enough for our protection, and this made it that much easier to feel a semblance of “normal college life”.

Unfortunately, after winter break, I tested positive for COVID-19, and I’m glad the school offered free testing. I showed no symptoms other than a minor cough and achy joints that lasted no longer than a day if it wasn’t for the test, I would have thought nothing more of it and potentially have given it to someone else who may not be as fortunate with symptoms. I was in quarantine for two weeks, but the school was very accommodating. I had alternative assignments and was given the opportunity to be in class virtually. After a check-up by our campus nurse practitioner, I was cleared to return to campus and to finish up my last semester.

I sit here typing this out, one month from graduating and reflecting on my personal journey to completing my BSN. Despite it being 10 years from when I earned my first bachelor’s degree and believing I had my life planned out, I have come to terms with the fact that life is unpredictable. Never would I have believed that the last 10 years would have gone the way they did, but I took lessons from each experience, which led me to this point. I am thankful for the love and support from my cohort, the hospitals that allowed us to perfect our skills during our clinicals and the faculty/staff at William Jewell College. I am confident that I am leaving here with a quality education that gave me the foundation to build on to achieve anything I set my mind to.

Cheers to us and the incoming cohorts. May all of us continue to strive for excellence in all aspects of our lives and to continue to express our compassion to our fellow human beings.

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Facts at a Glance

- Dr. Elizabeth MacLeod Walls, President, William Jewell College
- Leesa A. McBroom PhD, APRN-C, Department of Nursing Chair
- Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education accreditation
- Missouri State Board of Nursing approval
- Department of Nursing: Over 1,725 graduates
- BSN program began 1970, first graduating class 1974
- BSN-AT 12-month track began 2003
- BSN-AT 16-month track began 2011
- Simulation Lab opened 2011
- BSN 3-year track began fall 2014
- National Student Nursing Association members since Fall 2015
- Program is total credit hours 124
- Bright Flight Scholarships (up to $3,000/year and matched for students from Missouri)

Keep in Touch

We’d love to hear about your education beyond Jewell, new job, publications, research, honors, etc. Email us at nursing@william.jewell.edu or mail your update to:

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