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– Jessi Fears

Jessi Fears is getting ahead of the game. As a student in Montcalm Community College’s Associate Degree in Nursing program, she expects to earn her degree in December and will be eligible for licensure as a Registered Nurse (RN). A few months later, she plans to complete her bachelor’s degree.

Fears is also enrolled in Davenport University’s Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Concurrent Enrollment program, which allows students to take classes at both institutions, earning credits toward both degrees at the same time. This concurrent program is specially designed for dedicated students who want to earn their Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree in a shorter amount of time.

“I love this program,” Fears said. “It’s wonderful that I’ll have my bachelor’s degree way before my classmates.”

Recently, many hospitals have implemented new standards for nurses based on the requirements to achieve and maintain Magnet status – a recognition granted by the American Nurses’ Credentialing Center to hospitals that satisfy a set of criteria designed to measure nursing excellence and quality patient outcomes.

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Transfer agreements help students advance their credentials

“In order to achieve the correct ratio of bachelor-prepared nurses, many health care institutions are requiring that their nurses have a BSN or earn it within three to five years of being hired,” said Amy Eady, MCC’s Dean of Occupations & Program Assessment.

MCC has partnerships with several colleges and universities, which offer students a seamless transfer into bachelor’s and master’s degree programs in a variety of health careers. Partnering institutions include Bellevue University, Chamberlain College of Nursing, Ferris State University, Kaplan University, Saginaw Valley State University and Western Governors University.

MCC Dean of Nursing & Health Careers Danielle Anderson said these transfer agreements allow students to complete many program requirements at MCC before moving on to another institution, and the credits are guaranteed to transfer.

“Articulation agreements give students a great advantage to acquire needed credentials by offering a seamless process for them as they move through the educational system from one institution to another,” Anderson said. “They also help students control costs through savings in tuition and housing expenses at other institutions.”

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job outlook for registered nurses is expected to increase by 16 percent by 2024 – much faster than average.

Fears said she is excited to earn her credentials and enter the workforce.

“I became interested in this field because I have the passion and drive to be part of the healing process and I want to make a difference in peoples’ lives,” she said.

“I was inspired by my mom, who worked as a medical assistant for many years,” Fears added. “Seeing the satisfaction that she felt every day by helping others inspired my own interest in the field. Her willingness and need to help others taught me that is what life is about – helping others during their most vulnerable time.”

Fears, 26, of Stanton, currently is completing clinicals – on-site, hands-on training – in a long-term care facility.

“During one of my clinical rotations, it was heartwarming to listen to some of the patients reminisce about their life experiences. I was happy to be a listening ear for them, and seeing that it put a smile on their faces made me realize that I am delighted to know that I have found my purpose,” she said.

“I feel a great satisfaction every day when I leave the facility. It truly makes me feel that I am making a difference in the world,” she added.

Fears said the concurrent program fits with her educational goals and her lifestyle.

“The scheduling is convenient. Many classes in Davenport’s concurrent program are taught at MCC, by familiar instructors,” she said. “Those that are not can be taken online.

“The greatest advantage to the concurrent program is that I will earn my bachelor’s degree two semesters after I graduate from MCC’s nursing program,” she said. “It’s a lot of work, but it’s manageable.”

For more information:

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