

Beginning The Journey



The New Year allows us a perfect opportunity to establish new goals for ourselves and our careers. Throughout your nursing school experience, remember to seek to expand your knowledge of nursing, and begin to learn about the wonderful opportunities that await graduate nurses. Never before has professional nursing been as diversified as it is today.

Career opportunities can be discovered with the click of a mouse, or by perusing one of the many nursing journals. While in school, every effort should be made to participate in as many different clinical areas as possible. Whether it is nephrology, oncology, mental health, medical-surgical, periOperative, geriatric, obstetrics, missionary, or critical care nursing that sparks your interest, the doors are wide open to students investigating potential career paths.

As each semester passes, you are probably more aware that a mere fraction of your learning will take place in the classroom. Moreover, an immense amount of your “true learning” will take place in the clinical setting with clinical instructors and preceptors guiding the way. Seek every opportunity to learn new things as a student nurse. Ask questions when possible to help the “puzzle pieces” come together more readily. Observe expert nurses at every possible opportunity. We often observe techniques and procedures with expert nurses in an effort to polish our own skills; however, the opportunities to quietly observe the art of therapeutic communication are often neglected. Seize every opportunity to observe these nurses’ communication skills.

Many professors say that the first year after graduation will be the most difficult. They explain that the

novice nurse often experiences a great deal of stress from his or her efforts to learn new things in the clinical setting. Remaining mindful of both long and short-term goals will allow graduate nurses to benefit from prioritization. The skills that allowed students to survive nursing school – remaining organized, disciplined in study, and as my NSNA Board of Director colleagues point out, “taking care of self” – will also assist new graduates in making it through their first year as a professional nurse.

The NSNA Board of Directors has been diligently working to prepare an exciting annual convention in Baltimore, Maryland in April 2006. We eagerly anticipate the new students who will join us in bringing to life this year’s theme: “Setting Sail for a World of Wellness!” New opportunities for leadership and professional growth will be available for students choosing to seek positions on the NSNA Board of Directors and the NEC as well! The members of the board may be contacted by email at www.nсна.org under Elected Officials. I look forward to seeing you all at Convention, and hope to enjoy continued submissions to *Imprint* from students around the country.

Lara Patton