

ONS Launches Students Virtual Community: <http://students.ons.wego.net/>

In an effort to better prepare future oncology nurses and aid their transition into the workforce, ONS has developed a Students Virtual Community. This site offers a host of resources that are useful to nursing students, including an overview of the oncology nursing profession, cancer basics, scholarship and externship information, and job-hunting avenues. General site content is researched and supplied by ONS staff, but ONS members also contribute by supplying educational material and profiles highlighting their experiences as students, nurses, and members. Through these contributions, students receive a better understanding of the profession and ONS directly from oncology nurses from all walks of life, experience levels, and subspecialties.

Mentoring is a major component of the Students Virtual Community. Students may sign up to be mentored by an oncology nurse from ONS's diverse membership who has expressed interest in helping current and future oncology nurses chart their course as members of the Society and succeed in their chosen professions. These mentors help to groom students by providing invaluable insight and helping them to succeed in the classroom by serving as a resource.

The site offers other features that enhance the overall student experience. For example, students can take a break from their busy schedules and cruise through the virtual "Student Union," where they can purchase needed supplies such as textbooks and other items to keep student life exciting. They also can visit the chat room to informally converse with their peers. If browsers find that their question can be best answered in a more structured, formalized setting, they may opt to participate in the discussion forum, "Discuss It."

The general concept behind ONS virtual communities is to provide quick access to ONS resources and reliable cancer information. This particular virtual community also connects ONS members with each other, local chapters, special interest groups, and the National Office. Browsers can exchange and download information and keep track of important educational events. Those who are not ONS members may join through the site. In addition, students holding a National Student Nurses Association (NSNA) membership may take advantage of the ONS/NSNA dual membership offer.

Please share the Students Virtual Community with all nursing students you encounter. ONS members who would like to volunteer as mentors can do so by downloading the application on the site. For more information, contact Diedrea White at 412-859-6256 (dwhite@ons.org).