

CSM Inducts 13 Nursing Students into Alpha Omega Honor Society

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Nursing student Katie Klotz, of Pomfret, addressed her fellow inductees as the student speaker at CSM's Alpha Omega Honor Society induction ceremony last week.

LA PLATA, Md. - The College of Southern Maryland (CSM) inducted 13 nursing students into Alpha Omega, CSM's chapter of the Organization for Associate Degree Nursing (OADN) Alpha Delta Nu Honor Society on Sept. 30. It was a virtual celebration that not only highlighted the students' perseverance in their pursuit of academic excellence, but also put them on notice.

"Those of us being inducted tonight not only 'survived' CSM's rigorous nursing program, but we are getting ready to graduate at the top of our class, during a global pandemic, under unprecedented circumstances," shared student speaker Katie Klotz. "Being inducted into this honor society, especially in 2020, is an amazing accomplishment and shows just how much we can achieve if we just keep working hard and encourage each other along the way."

To be inducted into CSM's Alpha Omega Chapter, nursing students must first become provisional members in their third semester of the program. The student must maintain a 3.0 GPA, earn a B or higher in all courses required for the nursing program with no previous nursing course failures and reflect sound moral and ethical values with professionalism and integrity of the highest caliber. Additionally, the new inductees complete a scholarly learning project and reflect on that project.

Klotz went on to point out to her fellow inductees that "maybe Florence Nightingale was onto something" when she said in 1870 that it would take 150 years for nursing to become all she [Nightingale] envisioned it to be.

"For those a little slow on math, like myself – that would be 2020," laughed Klotz. "So, here we are. The nurses of 2020: Those envisioned by Ms. Nightingale, herself. We are the future of nursing. We are intelligent, compassionate, honorable students who persevered when it would have been so easy to quit. As Florence Nightingale said, 'I attribute my success to this – I never gave or took an excuse.' Neither did we."

During closing remarks, Acting Dean of the School of Science and Health Dr. Laura Polk shared a timeline of important legal decisions that led to the significant academic and professional gains for nursing students.

"In the 1970's, a simple lawyer named Ruth Bader Ginsburg argued a series of cases before the Supreme Court that focused on the issue of equity," Polk began. "Jump forward with me a few years to 1982 when Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote the Supreme Court's majority opinion on a case that resulted in an order for an all-female nursing school to admit men. Jump forward with me again to 1996 when Ruth Bader Ginsburg, now a Supreme Court Justice herself wrote the majority opinion on another college case, this time the result was an order that women be admitted to an all-male school, Virginia Military Institute."

Polk then explained that these historical moments were examples of how "top individuals in their field built upon each other's work over time for the good of their profession, but more importantly for the good of public." Justice O'Connor used Ruth Bader Ginsburg's work from the 1970's to support her opinion in the nursing school case, Polk pointed out. And then Justice Ginsburg used Justice O'Connor's work from the 1980's to formulate her opinion in the 1990's VMI case.

"As the brightest we have at CSM, and as future leaders in nursing, I hope you'll use this as an example throughout your career," Polk said. "Look at the nursing role models from Florence Nightingale to current leaders. And build on their work as you create your own future in profession."

And then Polk put the college's top nursing students on notice.

"The second reason I wanted to share this story with you this evening is because of the concept of equity," she said. "The 1982 nursing school case emphasized access to nursing education for men and women. For the nursing profession, this is especially important. Research tells us that our patient's health outcomes are impacted by the diversity of the nursing profession. The more diverse we are as a profession (not just with gender, but with other attributes as well) and the more that the members of our profession mirror the diversity of the population as a whole, the better the health outcomes for the public.

"I want to put you on notice tonight as future nursing leaders," Polk continued. "We know there is an equity problem in health care. We are seeing it daily in the data on the effects of COVID-19 on people of color. As future leaders in nursing, you have an obligation to position yourself to promote access to nursing education for all, to challenge stereotyped beliefs about abilities, and to work diligently to decrease the impact of inequity on the health of the population."

Nursing students inducted into CSM's Alpha Omega Chapter of Alpha Delta Nu include:

- Faidat Yetunde Amolegbe
- Brian Ansell
- April Ann Bautista
- Charlene English
- Grace Kim
- Katie Klotz

- Tamara Magda
- C'Jia Mayfield
- Michelle Mejias
- Sarah Miller
- Alexandra Myers
- Brianna Reid
- Kaitlyn Willoughby

For more information on CSM's nursing program, visit www.csmd.edu/nursing.

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