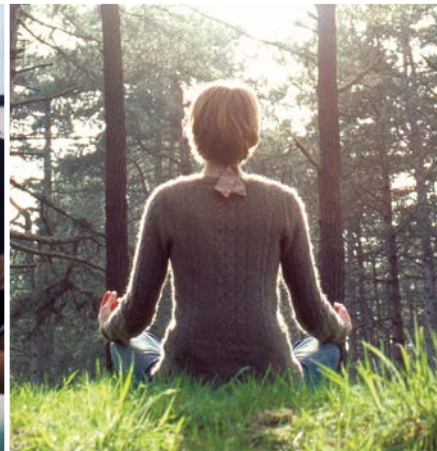
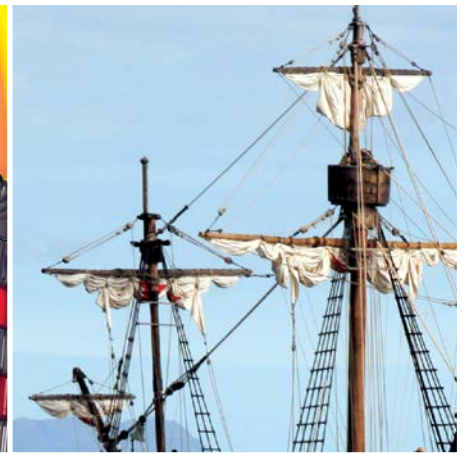


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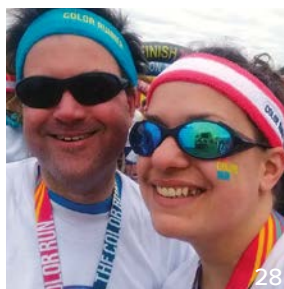
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EXCELSIOR

EXCELSIOR COLLEGE MAGAZINE
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EXCELSIOR.EDU/MAGAZINE

ON THE COVER: James N. Baldwin speaks after his inauguration as the third president of Excelsior College on July 14, 2017.

PHOTO: KRIS QUA





Our Moment of Truth

On July 14, Excelsior College held its annual Commencement in Albany, New York.

The ceremony, in the Empire State Plaza Convention Center, located a stone's throw from the state capitol, was attended by staff, faculty, local dignitaries, and more than 400 graduates from throughout the nation and the world, accompanied and cheered on by family and friends.

The chance to meet each graduate as they walked across the stage—to shake their hand, offer my congratulations, and wish them well on the journey ahead—made for a truly special experience.

At a time when some are questioning the value of higher education, events like this remind us of the importance of Excelsior College and all institutions of learning.

Education creates new opportunities and new pathways to knowledge. It broadens perspectives and facilitates intellectual, emotional, personal, and spiritual development.

Education represents our infinite quest for the truth. And, despite what we read, see, and hear in the news and on social media today, the truth matters.

As educated citizens, it is our responsibility to engage with each other in civic discourse based upon knowledge and facts. Our future depends upon our willingness to demand the facts, insist upon the truth, and hold our leaders accountable for the truth.

Education is vital to our representative democracy, helping to create a better informed, more civically engaged citizenry that applies its knowledge of the facts and habits of mind to advance the human condition.

Some have described our current times as the “post-truth” era. Our response is and should be to affirm our commitment to learning—and to redouble our efforts to seek and uphold the truth.

For 46 years, Excelsior College has been assessing and validating knowledge acquired through military service, professional development, life experiences and course taking, providing adult learners with a tailwind that propels them forward. Our commitment to validating learning and knowledge remains steadfast—as does our resolve that the truth matters. It always matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James N. Baldwin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "J".

JAMES N. BALDWIN, JD, EdD
PRESIDENT



Alumna Karen Cox Addresses Graduates

“I feel at home here at Excelsior with all of you and your stories,” Commencement speaker Karen Cox said, addressing more than 400 Excelsior graduates and their friends and family in July. Cox earned her associate degree in nursing from Excelsior (then Regents College) in 1982 and is president of the American Academy of Nursing.

She relayed her own upbringing in Independence, Missouri, and her journey to become a nurse. She told graduates that receiving their degrees meant they would “learn, grow, and find meaningful ways to contribute and leave the world—whatever your piece of it is—better than you found it.”

Cox shared stories of ordinary people who had a profound impact on the lives of others by “just doing their jobs.” She reminded graduates that they, too, can have

an impact on the lives of others; that they each can and will make a difference. “But most importantly, never lose your voice. Say what needs to be said in the name of what is right, just, and fair,” she said.

Cox ended her address by saying to graduates, “So, ladies and gentlemen, give them Hell and ever upward!” Graduates applauded enthusiastically at these rousing words.

Cox is executive vice president and COO of Children’s Mercy—Kansas City, an independent, academic medical center in Missouri. She also serves as assistant dean for Clinical Partnerships at the University of Missouri—Kansas City (UMKC), and is the inaugural endowed chair for the V. Fred Burry, MD, and Sandra Hobart Burry Chair in Nursing Advocacy and Leadership to recognize her local and national advocacy and leadership work. In addition to her degree from

“But most importantly, never lose your voice. Say what needs to be said in the name of what is right, just, and fair.” —KAREN COX '82

Excelsior College, she earned a BS in Nursing from the University of Kansas, and an MS in Nursing and PhD from UMKC. In 2006, she received the Carrie B. Lenburg Award from the Excelsior College Alumni Association. The award recognizes a nurse who demonstrates commitment to nursing education as well as academic and professional accomplishments in the field of nursing. ■ —J.K.



NEW EXCELSIOR COLLEGE WEBSITE

We are proud to announce our redesigned website. The new site meets the needs of prospective students by providing an easy-to-navigate journey for anyone seeking information about Excelsior or applying to one of our programs. The refreshing look and feel helps to keep Excelsior at the forefront of online learning colleges. ■



Barbara Pieper New Dean of School of Health Sciences

Barbara Pieper, PhD, RN, was appointed dean of the School of Health Sciences, effective July 1. Pieper was previously an associate dean of the School of Nursing since 2013; the principal investigator for the VBSN Mission Transition program, which helps veterans transition from the military into successful nursing careers; and director of the Robert E. Kinsinger Institute for Nursing Excellence.

Pieper comes from a family of nurses but had gone to college with the intention of being a math major. She realized “the further I got away from the arts and humanities, the less happy I became” and decided she needed a career that better married both the sciences and humanities. She became interested in community health and has extensive experience in public health nursing. She earned a BS in nursing from the University at Albany, a master’s of nursing in community health nursing from the University of Kansas,



a PhD in nursing science from Adelphi University, and a post-doctoral certificate in palliative care education and practice from Harvard Medical School.

Pieper taught in the baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral programs at the Sage

Colleges in Troy, New York, and while there also became an item writer for Regents College. She sums up her career journey: “And who knew, here I am, the dean of the School of Health Sciences...what a story, right? From item writer to dean.”

She is working with Health Sciences staff to identify additional certificate programs that can be evaluated for credit, and how to provide students with a career path. “Health Sciences has great programs and my goal is to help grow them and continue to market them,” she says.

“I think it’s really an exciting time to be in health care,” says Pieper. “For me as both an educator and a leader, it’s to really develop and maintain high-quality programs that bring...them [adult learners] along in their careers in the health care field and that open those doors of opportunity for them.... that’s our goal. We’d like to help working adults advance in their fields and find their own passions just like we’ve found ours.” ■ —J.K.

Students Benefit from SEFCU Scholarships for Servicemembers and Veterans

There was a surprise moment at the Partners in Lifelong Learning event in April 2016. Michael J. Castellana, the president and CEO of SEFCU—the upstate New York credit union that was one of the evening’s honorees—momentarily stunned the audience with the announcement of a \$25,000 gift to support students who are military servicemembers and veterans. He designated the funds to be distributed over five years to help meet the financial needs of these students.

In fall 2016, the College awarded SEFCU Partners in Lifelong Learning Scholarships to three students—veterans of the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Navy—who are pursuing degrees to advance in their civilian careers. Additional scholarships will be awarded in fall 2017. The Partners in Lifelong Learning Scholarships provide financial



assistance to students in the Capital Region of New York and neighboring areas.

“There is no proper way to thank members of our armed forces for their service and sacrifice on behalf of our country,” said Castellana. “The very least we can do is help them in their quest for higher

Michael J. Castellana, president and CEO of SEFCU (left) accepts a Partners in Lifelong Learning Award from President James N. Baldwin in 2016. During the event, Castellana announced \$25,000 in scholarship funds designated for military servicemembers and veterans.

education. That's why we support Excelsior College's Center for Military and Veteran Education. These men and women have given their all and it is our responsibility to help them back home."

One of the scholarship recipients, Merri Evans of Clifton Park, New York, earned her Master of Science in Nursing in June 2017. Evans has been a nurse for nearly 30 years, 10 of which she served in the U.S. Air Force. She has cared for children during most of her nursing career and pursued a master's degree to extend her leadership capabilities.

"I had been in leadership positions, and with the big push for nurses to get a bachelor's, I needed a master's to stay in leadership," she said. Financial support kept her consistently taking courses, and receiving the SEFCU scholarship helped her to take the capstone course and obtain her master's degree while she helped to meet the expenses of two children attending college. She began the capstone the same month she started her new position as a nurse manager at St. Peter's Hospital, Albany, New York, in the pediatric medical/surgical inpatient unit.

In honoring SEFCU as a partner in lifelong learning, Excelsior College recognized the credit union's commitment to education. SEFCU's Institute for Financial Well-Being employs full-time staff focused on education within the community to help teach courses in understanding and building credit, budgeting, and more. SEFCU also shares Excelsior's commitment to the military and veterans in our community, and supporting veterans and military personnel is one of the focuses of SEFCU's philanthropic giving. ■ –M.S.



NURSING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE FOCUSES ON VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

More than 80 nursing education professionals attended the Annual Educational Institute held by the School of Nursing and Albany Medical Center on June 2. The focus of this year's institute was Lessons from the Field: Innovations in Veteran Education, Transitions, and Care, and speakers presented on such topics as meeting the needs of veteran students, PTSD, risks and prevention of Type 2 diabetes in military families, and designing educational strategies in online programs. Donna Lake (shown at left), a clinical associate professor

at East Carolina University's College of Nursing and Brody School of Medicine—who retired as a colonel in the U.S. Air Force with 25 years of service—was the keynote speaker. The educational institute was also supported by the Veterans Bachelor of Science in Nursing grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Tau Kappa at-Large Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International, and the Robert E. Kinsinger Institute for Nursing Excellence. ■



Magic Man

GRADUATE FINDS REWARDING CAREER BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE SMITHSONIAN

The halls of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History are quiet. Nelson Torres passes by the elephant standing impressive in the rotunda. He glances toward the Hall of Mammals, knowing that Smithsonian staff has made sure each of the exhibits is open and safe; the escalators are in working order; the air conditioning is ready to cool the mass of patrons coming through the doors in a few short hours. He is behind the scenes, in the shadows, but he helps ensure all the Smithsonian museums are accessible and ready for the public.

Torres, a 1997 BS in Liberal Arts graduate, is the associate director of business operations within the Office of Facilities Management and Reliability at the Smithsonian Institution. He oversees the facilities budget and workforce, procurement process, and property management for the Smithsonian's 19 museums, National Zoo, and a handful of research centers across the country—13 million square feet of space.

"I really like business, I really like managing resources and programs, and seeing how those programs work and thrive," says Torres of his position. His interest in business management stems

back to his high school days. He pursued accounting in college, but ended up going into the Marine Corps where he stayed for the next 20 years. He says of his managing experience in the service: "That's where I learned the rudimentary, hands-on, practical business management...." Torres completed his bachelor's degree with Excelsior College and earned a Master in Public Administration from Webster University. After he retired from the service, he went on to earn a PhD in business from Northcentral University.

His team is responsible for providing the human, budgetary, and property resources to facilitate the cleanliness, appearance,



📌 From behind the scenes, Nelson Torres '97 oversees the resources and programs that ensure the Smithsonian Institution's 19 museums, National Zoo, and research centers operate smoothly every day. PHOTO: EIKON PHOTOGRAPHY

and maintenance of the iconic Smithsonian Institution facilities. "It's a lot of the back room, enterprise sort of thing that people don't see and maybe take for granted that will always work," he explains. He may work behind the exhibits, but he enjoys seeing the payoff every day. That's what gets him up in the morning. "Seeing the tangible and almost immediate results of what we do, whether it's getting lighting somewhere or flooring, or making sure things are clean," say Torres. "It just really is seeing that tangible result; that the visitor experience goes on uninterrupted, and that it's a good experience here at the Smithsonian."

In his interview with Candid Career, an organization that provides informational interview videos featuring professionals

in myriad careers, he describes his daily responsibilities to viewers. Torres is one of a dozen Excelsior alumni who have shared their career trajectories through Candid Career. Excelsior's Career Center houses the short videos on its website so that students and others can learn about the various professions of Excelsior graduates. The videos are also shared on the Candid Career site.

Interviewees like Torres are asked to talk about their educational background and work experience, what they do at work, and their loves and challenges of the job. They give guidance on how to prepare to enter the field or obtain a similar position, and also share any final advice. Alumni are also asked about their experience with Excelsior College. Maribeth Gunner Pulliam, the director of career services at the College, said it is beneficial to have alumni featured on the Candid Career website. "Not only do our own students get to see them, but prospective students get to see them, and students across the United States get to know the Excelsior brand," she said.

Torres's video has become popular on the Candid Career site and it's easy to see why. He is dedicated but also credits his staff for making his job so enjoyable. "They are one of the reasons why I come to work. It's a very pleasant, very collegial, very nurturing environment.... I love that my work involves people and budgets and procurements, but it also involves working with the staff of

"I don't have to be out there; I don't have to be in front But I love making magic, and I love making things happen."

—NELSON TORRES '97

different museums and different art galleries or the National Zoo or a research center and possibly finding a common theme that we all can work together toward."

At the end of each day, Torres leaves feeling physically and mentally tired, but more than that, he says he often wonders, "Did I do enough? Did I do enough today to ensure that tomorrow is going to be a great day for not only our staff but for our visiting public?" In his position, he often has to think about the next day; it's important to think strategically about what's next. In this respect, Torres's job is never over.

But that's how he likes it, and even though he admits it'd be interesting to be somebody's chief of staff, he would still enjoy working behind the scenes. I don't have to be out there; I don't have to be in front," he says, "But I love making magic, and I love making things happen." ■ —J.K.

CANDID CAREER

What's it like to be a trade policy director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture or a clinical operating room nurse? Find out by viewing the Candid Career videos of Excelsior graduates at the Career Center website. Informational interviews with thousands of other professionals are available through Candid Career's site. Explore careers through industries, college majors, titles, and more.



CAREER.EXCELSIOR.EDU



...We promise you this:

We will be relentless in providing access, affordability, and an exceptional student experience.

We will reclaim our place as a leader and innovator in higher education based on Excelsior's mission and Excelsior's values.

And we will do it all with good and faithful stewardship of this institution and its mission, one day handing it off to our successors stronger and even better.

James N. Baldwin, JD, EdD
President of Excelsior College
Inaugural Address, July 14, 2017

PHOTO: MIKE HEMBERGER

Now at Excelsior Life

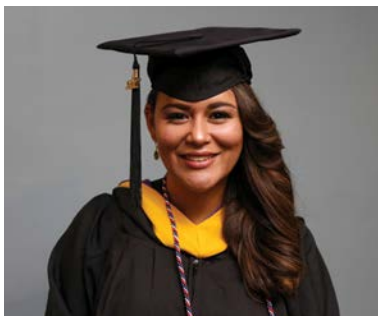
news.excelsior.edu

EXCELLENCE → DISTINGUISHED FACULTY MEMBERS



Excelsior College honored six faculty members for their excellence in teaching and enhancing the student experience. Shown above are two of the Distinguished Faculty Award recipients, Dawn E. Wright and James V. Holton, with Provost Debbie Sopczyk and Associate Provost Joan Mikalson. excelsior.edu/distinguishedfaculty

SUCCESS → AIR FORCE VETERAN SOARS TOWARD SUCCESS



Desiree Guzman, who earned a BA in Liberal Arts in 2017, shares the story of her educational journey, one of triumph and persistence. excelsior.edu/airforcegrad

PRIDE → ALL-FEMALE ROSTER OF EMPLOYEE GRADUATES



Out of the 5,069 graduates from this year's class, 13 employees are among those celebrating. excelsior.edu/employeegrads

INNOVATION → DIGITAL BADGING SHOWS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT



Scott Dolan, associate dean of business in the School of Business & Technology, explains the emerging trend of digital badge acquisition to support academic and professional achievements. excelsior.edu/digitalbadges

FOLLOW → ON TWITTER?

Stay up to date on College news and events: [@ExcelsiorColl](https://twitter.com/ExcelsiorColl)

Update Your Outdated Resume

MAKE SIMPLE IMPROVEMENTS TO SHOWCASE YOUR UNIQUE VALUE

By Maribeth Gunner Pulliam



Although some basics remain the same, resume trends change and you need to change with them to remain competitive. Dusting off your resume and adding the most recent employment experiences will not suffice. To open doors in the workforce today, resumes should reflect a fresh, modern look with certain contemporary elements. Try these suggestions to rejuvenate your resume.

OPTIMIZE THE TOP: The top portion of your resume is prime real estate. A hiring manager will scan this first, allotting only about 6–8 seconds for reading, so the content must count. Include your complete contact information. Your full name should be set apart in a large readable font. In addition to your name, email, phone, and address, add your LinkedIn profile, online portfolio, or personal website address if you have one. Most employers will screen candidates on social media, so be a step ahead: maintain a polished, professional account, and provide the URL. If you are still holding onto an AOL, Hotmail, or Yahoo email account, consider acquiring a more widely accepted Gmail account. The others are often viewed as dated, and do not lend a tech-savvy impression. Finally, if you have an email address that is quirky or unprofessional, change it to convey a business tone.

REPLACE YOUR OBJECTIVE: Rather than using an aspirational career objective at the top of your resume, focus on what you can do for an organization. A succinct Summary of Qualifications offers a more eclectic overview of your strengths, highlighting

areas of expertise, experience, and core skills in several brief bullets. Not only does this approach pinpoint your specific qualifications that align with the needs of the organization, it also provides more latitude to showcase your personal brand.

CUSTOMIZE FOR THE JOB: Avoid using the “one-size-fits-most” approach and tailor your resume to each job you’re applying for so there is a clear match between your qualifications and the position requirements. Read the job posting carefully to identify unique phrasing, key terms, and skill sets that are being sought. Include these key words in your resume by integrating them within the professional summary and the work experience section. Key words are also necessary to get past the applicant tracking software many companies use to weed out unqualified applicants. If enough correct words are detected, the system sends on those who qualify for staff review. Without the right key words, your resume may be rejected before human eyes ever see it.

INCLUDE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Simply listing your duties and responsibilities will not effectively reflect your past performance. Accomplishment statements capture your unique contributions and underscore your positive impact in the workplace. Quantify your information whenever possible with results-oriented statements. Describe how you applied your skills and achieved goals.

Did you improve an office process? Were you a team leader? Did you reduce costs for the company? Replace those drab descriptors with accomplishment statements that highlight your achievements, and don’t forget to weave in those important key words along the way.

MAKE YOUR EDUCATION WORK FOR YOU: The education section on your resume can be an advantageous way to outshine your competitors. Placement of your educational credentials depends on your current career status and what you want to emphasize. If you’re a recent graduate, or a career changer with a more current credential that supports your transition, lead with education at the top. If you have had a steady career path, place the education closer to the bottom of your resume. Graduation dates are not necessary unless you are a recent college graduate with no professional experience. Unfortunately, listing the dates can work against you as you progress in your career. Ideally, the employer is most concerned about the degree, not the date.

PAY ATTENTION TO FORMATS AND FONTS: Employers will give less than 20 seconds to review your resume, so keep it organized, legible, and easy to navigate. Stay away from densely packed text, too many mixed font types and sizes, and lengthy paragraphs. Make sure there are no typos. Use bullets and proper spacing. The goal is to create an aesthetically attractive, uncluttered, formatted resume with easy readability.

With these few revisions, you can easily transform your resume into a more modern, well-crafted resume that will clearly illustrate your value, bring you to the forefront, and increase your employability. ■

Maribeth Gunner Pulliam, MS Ed, is the director of career services at Excelsior College. She can be reached at careerinfo@excelsior.edu.



CAREER.EXCELSIOR.EDU



CHECK IT OFF!

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS AND TRICKS TO REACH YOUR GOAL

By Hannah Lynch and Raven Short

People are consumed and busy with so many things, from kids, work, and personal responsibilities to military life, school, and more. It is honestly hard to juggle it all. As student success coaches, we talk to students daily about how to manage their time effectively to complete their degrees. We know they are more than just students; they are people with busy lives, too.

One of the questions we ask students is, “How do you manage your time?” Sometimes the answer we hear—after a chuckle—is, “I just do it.” We wish it was as simple as that. Time management is key to achieving any goal, whether it be earning your degree or meeting a professional goal at work. You might have a system in place to manage your time. If that’s you, great! Read on to enhance what you are already doing. On the flip side, if you get to the end of your day or week and feel like you haven’t accomplished much, read on to learn some tips and tricks on how to manage your time better.

1. PRIORITIZE: There can be a lot of items to check off your list. Ask yourself these questions: Are they worthy to make the cut on my to-do list? Am I checking things off my list for the sake of checking things off a list? Am I completing tasks that will help me reach my end goal? Am I being effective with my time? What is the urgency?

Once you answer these questions, you will have a clearer picture of what your priorities are and can adjust your to-do list accordingly.

2. SET GOALS: Your goal may be to complete your degree, get a new job or even purchase a home. How do you make sure you get there? Make the goal SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely. You want your short-term goals to build up to your long-term goals. One approach to use is to set mini goals. A mini

goal may sound funny, but the small goals will lead to the larger end goal. If you make your goal specific, you are more likely to achieve it!

3. MOTIVATION: What is the motivation behind pursuing your goal? Take time to answer this question. Once you have captured this, write it down, tell a friend, share it with the world! When you have a hard day and don’t feel motivated, this will serve as an excellent reminder as to why you are working toward this goal.

4. SUPPORT: Who is encouraging you in your life to achieve your goal? It is important to be surrounded by people who can cheer you on along your journey and celebrate your progress. Whether it’s a coworker, family member, or neighbor, these people are there to support you! Tell someone—anyone—now. It feels good when people take interest and ask, “Hey, how is it going with your goal?” or “How can I help?” These supporters can provide help when you need it.

5. FIND UNINTERRUPTED TIME: Try to find free, uninterrupted time in your schedule to concentrate on making progress toward your goal. For a week, keep a log each day and write down when you have free time when you can work uninterrupted. Also, write down how your energy level is. Does it make sense to study or write cover letters at 10 pm when you are tuckered out? Take note of these times and adjust your schedule accordingly.

By following these helpful tips and tricks, you can make your time management more effective and make progress toward your goals. Remember this is a process; it may not be perfected overnight. But with some changes to your daily or weekly schedule, you can do it! ■

Hannah Lynch and Raven Short are student success coaches at Excelsior College. In this role, they help students stay on track to degree completion.



LEARN IN 3D

A GRANT FROM THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION FUNDS SIMULATIONS TO TEACH WORK-READY SKILLS FOR ELECTRICAL CAREERS

How can students enrolled in an online technology program gain the hands-on experience they need to be job ready in the energy industry? Michael Johnson, associate dean of technology in the School of Business & Technology, believes 3D educational simulations can prepare students with the skills they need.

The National Science Foundation agrees.

In June, the NSF awarded Excelsior College and Polk State College, a multi-campus institution in Florida, a three-year grant of more than \$860,000 to develop 3D simulations to teach and assess key skills in power generation and advanced manufacturing. The simulations would prepare technicians for skilled positions in the energy and manufacturing industries. This is Excelsior's first-ever NSF grant.

The simulations will be incorporated into the associate degree in technology program, in the nuclear/power plant, electronic/instrumentation, and electromechanical concentrations. Through the simulations, students would learn safety techniques; gain the experience of using electrical tools to do a job task, such as troubleshooting an electrical component; and reading a blueprint.

With simulations in the program, students would gain workforce readiness skills along with industry certification to support their electrical careers. Students who earn a grade B or higher earn the Center for Workforce Development's Energy Industry Fundamentals certificate acknowledging their competencies and foundational knowledge of electrical work.

"Research has shown that simulations are an effective method to reinforce concepts and enhance students' learning experience," says Johnson, the principal investigator on the grant. "Simulations provide students an opportunity to repeat the scenario several times such that they have a better understanding of the content. Additionally, simulations allow students to perform the activities in a safe environment and learn from their mistakes."

Johnson explains the simulations will give students immediate feedback as they progress through the scenario. For example, if the student selects the wrong tool or equipment, they will receive feedback with an explanation of why it was incorrect. Conversely, when the student does the simulation exercises correctly, text pops up to explain why the choices were correct and reinforces the learning.

"The final scenario will be a graded exercise that compiles all competencies required to perform an electrical job task," says Johnson, and adds that the student will receive a final grade with any relative feedback.

Students who earn the Energy Industry Fundamentals certificate are better prepared for electrician careers in the energy industry, and electricians are in high demand. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects job opportunities to expand by 14 percent between 2014 and 2024, a rate that's much faster than average.

The 3D simulations are on schedule for completion in early 2018, and a firm has been hired to assess their impact on how students achieve course outcomes. The simulations eventually will be offered as open educational resources. ■ —M.S.



BUS 323

BUSINESS ETHICS

Students explore the nature of ethical business environments, from ethics theory and personal values to the impacts of organizational culture within the private and public sector. Students gain a deeper understanding of how ethical principles relate to the organizations in which people function, and the effects of the organization's ethics on its reputation, functioning, and performance.

“The course goes into the historical foundations of ethics and builds on how they can be applied to modern situations. Any student in any field can benefit from this knowledge.”

COOL COURSES

A GLIMPSE AT SOME POPULAR COURSE OFFERINGS AND WHAT STUDENTS LIKE ABOUT THEM

BY JENNA KERWIN



SOC 247

SPORTS IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

This course examines the institution of sports from a variety of social science perspectives, including from historical, political, economic, and sociological viewpoints. Students examine how sport reveals and demonstrates various layers of intense power and identity struggle in society, and how it is monetarily valued and compensated. They explore the broader meaning that sports have for those who participate and for those who watch.

“The course is full of enticing knowledge that invites the student as a fan to think outside the box and realize that there is more to sports than food, beverages, and friends.”



HSC 320

HEALTH CARE ISSUES IN CULTURALLY DIVERSE POPULATIONS

Students study religious, racial, ethnic, and other subcultures that exist in our society and examine conflicts that often occur when differing cultures enter the health care arena. Students also discuss the concept of cultural competence and study strategies that health care organizations are using to create more inclusive services.

“ This course has opened my eyes to things that I didn’t know. I am forever grateful that I enrolled in this course. The way I see things after this course is different from the beginning.”



MIL 301

GREAT MILITARY LEADERS

Students examine the qualities of military leaders throughout history and analyze specific traits that contributed to their excellence in leadership. By examining the qualities of military leaders and analyzing specific traits that contributed to a leader’s excellence in leadership, students can isolate leadership traits and qualities that make a great leader and then apply them to new situations.

“ I would definitely recommend this course to others. Military personnel and civilians can learn a lot about leadership from this course...It’s almost like comparing what we already know to the lesson and making it relate to each person.”



TECH 230

TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

This course considers technological change from historical, artistic, and philosophical perspectives and its effect on human needs and concerns. Students explore the causes and consequences of technological change and evaluate the implications of technology.

“ I really enjoyed this class and the ideas that it brought to light. I was/am thinking about technology effects on society from angles I never even thought to consider.”



NS 115

INTRODUCTION TO ASTRONOMY

Students examine the nature of stars, how they are born, live, and die, and how they constitute the fundamental building blocks of the galaxy. The study of galaxy formation and evolution leads to a brief discussion of current research in cosmology, including the as-of-yet undiscovered nature of dark energy and dark matter.

“I would certainly recommend this class to others; it’s instructional and interesting to learn about the stuff that makes the composition and disposition of life in the universe.”

“I think this course is a great introduction to astrophysics and is taught at a decent pace.”



NUR 340

CARING FOR OUR NATION’S HEROES AND THEIR FAMILIES

Students gain skills and an understanding of the unique health care needs of military servicemembers, veterans, and their families. The course includes an overview of the military and veteran population, military culture, military and veteran health care systems, veteran health care resources, and the military family. Students explore topics such as post-traumatic stress disorder, transition issues, poly-trauma, homelessness, women veteran health issues, and applicable theories.

“It was great. The instructor was a veteran herself and had firsthand experience in dealing with many of the issues being discussed in this course.”



PSY 362

PSYCHOLOGY OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

This course is a comprehensive view of the psychosocial and physiological aspects of sexuality and the role it plays in each individual life. Topics include the psychology of love, intimacy and relationships, sexual diseases, sexual abuse, gender identity, gender identification, and socio-cultural influences in decision making about sexuality.

“It requires you to think about yourself and your beliefs...It allows you to understand what your position is on several controversial topics and how to voice your opinion.”

“This course highlights real-world events that are questioned in society. Taking this course will help in self-development and acceptance of others.”



HIS 290
PIRATES ON THE
HIGH SEAS

Explore buccaneers, privateers, and sea dogs often associated with piracy and the actual movement of piracy in the years 1690–1739. Students examine the role of pirates in the construction of empires in the Early Modern Era, but also piracy in other times. The course also investigates the popular depiction of pirates versus the historical reality.

“I would recommend this course to others, because in this course the student meets historic figures as individuals. They gain knowledge of who made history, not just lived in the time studied.”



MUS 210
HISTORY OF ROCK
AND ROLL

Students explore the genre of rock and roll, its form and derivations, and rock and roll artists spanning the years 1955 to 1970. Through readings and audio examples, students look at the state of American popular music after World War II, the inception of rock and roll in the 1950s, the growth of youth culture in America, and the growing popularity of rock and roll through radio, film, and television.

“This class taught me stuff about music that I did not even know existed. It helped me appreciate music on a deeper level than I did before.”



HSC 402
MANAGING STRESS

This course focuses on the nature of stress and the connection between mind, body, and spirit. Students study the different theoretical models of stress from a variety of theorists while exploring coping strategies and relaxation techniques for healthy living in today's changing world. Students also create an individualized stress management program plan.

“I think that every student should be required to take this course! It has assisted me so much outside of the classroom.”



CJ 315

GANGS IN AMERICA

Students learn about the various types of American gangs, histories, main objectives or enterprise, membership, and potential international ties and activities. Learners also study the response by law enforcement, proactive interdiction, and criminal justice policy development and implementation.

“The teacher asked hard questions in order to make me think about what I was doing, which enhanced my understanding of what I was learning.”



HUM 230

THE ETHICS OF FRIENDSHIP

Students explore the nature, meaning, and theories of friendship, tracing how friendship has evolved throughout history, and discuss how social media affects our understanding of friendship. Special topics include the intersection of friendship with marriage/partnership, work, disabilities, sexuality, and religion.

“This course should be a required class because it is so instrumental in how people interact with one another and these interactions can impact our lives tremendously.”

“The topic was very thought-provoking.”



SOC 221

WHY WE OVEREAT: PERSPECTIVES ON NUTRITION

This course examines the obesity epidemic and why our nutritional needs no longer drive our dietary habits. Students explore societal and individual factors that have resulted in the obesity epidemic and discover helpful tools to find a solution.

“I would recommend this course as I learned quite a bit about myself, my eating habits and the food industry. It was a very informative and helpful class.”



HEARD
IT FROM
A FRIEND
WHO

Oftentimes the link between a student and Excelsior is a friend, co-worker, brother, sister, advisor in a military education office or at a community college, supervisor, spouse, or even a parent who earned a degree from the College and suggested their offspring do the same.

EMILY RILEY '16

When Emily Riley was preparing to attend Commencement in 2016, she shared her experiences for the blog Excelsior Life. What did earning her Bachelor of Science in Business mean to her? "A lot of pride," she said. "It took me a long time to get here. I'm really proud that I succeeded and I can say that I now have a bachelor's degree." Riley had learned about Excelsior as a student at SUNY Broome, a community college in Binghamton, New York. SUNY Broome has a 3 + 1 program with Excelsior (students take up to 90 credits toward their bachelor's degree at their community college and the final 30 credits with Excelsior), so Riley moved from her associate degree directly to her bachelor's degree program.

DAVID WALDORF '15

"My sister had graduated from Excelsior so she knew all about it and kind of could help with guiding me ... it really made signing up and all of that painless without question. She had already been through it all, so I went right to her and talked to her."

LISA RAPPLE '86

School of Health Sciences Faculty Program Director Lisa Rapple may now be working for the College, but at one time, she didn't know what it was. She earned her associate degree in respiratory therapy from SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, New York, before becoming the clinical coordinator for the respiratory care program at Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, New York, and then moving on to teach in North Carolina. She was determined to pursue her education and so while working, she took courses at Syracuse University, UAlbany, and East Carolina University.

Upon returning to New York, she heard talk of Excelsior. She explains, "What managers were doing was typically getting a degree with Empire State [College] or Excelsior College, which I knew little to nothing about either one of them." Her boss had been attending Empire State College and had been struggling to complete his degree. Rapple wanted to pursue her graduate degree and recalls thinking, "I have not got that time...I want to

get my bachelor's!" Thus, she decided to look into the other college she was hearing about.

Excelsior took much of Rapple's credits and she received her bachelor's degree in 1986. She went on to receive her master's degree in education with SUNY Buffalo and then worked for Empire State College as an instructional designer for its online RN to BSN program. In 2013, she joined Excelsior College as the faculty program director for health care management.

Rapple's connection to Excelsior doesn't stop there. Her son, Jonathan, recently received his associate degree in liberal arts from the College. Excelsior accepted the majority of the credits he earned during his previous two years at Siena College, so he only needed to complete a math class and capstone. Finishing his associate degree was a dream come true. Rapple remembers Commencement: "When he walked across the stage [to get his degree], he was walking on air." He has told his friends about his experience with Excelsior, and he has begun pursuing his bachelor's with the College. — J.K.



CAROLINE METZGER '17

Caroline Metzger, a 2017 graduate, says it was a natural decision for her to choose Excelsior College. She had watched as her older sister Katherine Metzger and brother Peter Metzger took courses at the College and had good experiences.

She had watched, too, when Peter graduated in 2016 with a Bachelor of Science in Business. Caroline was already a student and had only the capstone course remaining when she viewed the webcast of Commencement from abroad, where she was pursuing volunteer work. "I was in another country in another time zone, and I was able to watch him graduate."

To her, that was yet another Excelsior experience that did not disappoint. The "efficiency and effectiveness" of the

College made a difference for her. She benefited from the ability to determine the number of courses to take during a trimester and the ease of transition when returning to school after taking some time off to pursue a personal interest. For her and her siblings, Excelsior College provides the flexibility they're looking for when combining school, volunteer work, and full-time jobs. "As a college, typically the focus is on the student, but it's difficult to negotiate through particular hurdles," says Caroline, who earned a Bachelor of Science in Business. "Excelsior is flexible."

Word of that flexibility is passed down sibling to sibling in this family. Caroline's younger brother John is already enrolled, and, as Caroline says, there are "two more kids to follow." – M.S.

STEPHEN HANERFELD '15

"A number of years ago I realized that there was something missing in my life and a goal I hadn't achieved yet. I had just gotten out of the Navy. I had served for about 9 and a half years ... and I realized that it was the fact that I had never completed a college degree.

I had started when I was younger, I joined the military, and I never finished it. However, not knowing how to go about it, I ended up enrolling in a local community college. And for those of you who have done that, it's really difficult to balance a degree or courses while having a life and work and everything that goes along with that.

Sitting in a classroom for three-and-a-half hours, three nights a week, and trying to find time to sleep wasn't really working for me.

I thought it wasn't going to happen, until I met a co-worker who told me about some courses he was taking though an online college called Excelsior."

**How did you hear
about Excelsior?
Join the conversation**



[Facebook.com/ExcelsiorCollege](https://www.facebook.com/ExcelsiorCollege)

AN ONGOING CONNECTION



PHOTO: EIKON PHOTOGRAPHY

Mary O'Connor '94 became acquainted with Excelsior College the way many others do. A mentor at work—in her case, a nurse manager at a hospital in Brookline, Massachusetts—told her about the College, then known as Regents. As a nurse manager without an advanced degree, O'Connor wanted to earn a bachelor's degree and progress in her nursing career. Nearly three decades later, the two remain friends and O'Connor, an associate professor of nursing at Notre Dame of Maryland University, remains connected with the College.

In December 2017, she completes her second three-year term as an Excelsior College trustee. She joined the board of trustees as an ex-officio member in 2005 when she was elected president of the Alumni Leadership Council. In that role, she remained on the board for two, two-year consecutive terms. As a trustee, O'Connor observes Excelsior College from a different perspective, more behind-the-scenes. "I can see how the mission is lived," she says, and adds, "The people who are working at Excelsior are really dedicated to their craft in whatever they are doing ... and it's obvious they care about the students."

O'Connor cares, too, and recently designated Excelsior College as a beneficiary of a portion of her estate. The decision to do so came easily. Her employer was changing retirement plan vendors, which is a natural time to review beneficiary designations. Her designated beneficiaries were now established adults, so that left her with some flexibility for allocating funds. "I felt I could spread it around a little bit more, and Excelsior has always been one of my top two giving priorities: church and Excelsior," explains O'Connor. Her gift qualifies her as a member of the Nyquist Legacy Society.

Excelsior provided O'Connor with a springboard to further education and opportunities. After earning her bachelor's degree, she earned a Master of Science in Nursing from Northeastern University in 1997 and a PhD from George Mason University in 2005. She has published widely on nursing leadership, and applies this interest to her teaching of population health. She asks of her students, "As nurse leaders, how are we impacting the health of the communities we serve?"

The same could be asked about her impact as an alumna. Through her many contributions, O'Connor positively affects the health and well-being of the Excelsior community she serves. ■ —M.S.



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Alumni Achievers

AWARD RECIPIENTS
STAND OUT FOR
THEIR INSPIRING
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

To see the Awards Convocation, go to
excelsior.edu/gradawards2017

CHANGING THE WORLD ONE DIVE AT A TIME: TIMOTHY CARLISLE '86, '03

C. Wayne Williams Award Recipient

Timothy Carlisle doesn't let stumbling blocks keep him from his goals or from helping others. He says, "As the Japanese proverb says: fall down seven times, get back up seven. My translation: may your surfaces match your dives." The former submariner may have had many dives, but he's always resurfaced better than before.

Carlisle, who has earned an associate degree and two bachelor's degrees from Excelsior College, is the project director of cybersecurity at SFO International Airport in San Francisco. His job includes project management, technical expertise, awareness training, remediation of audits, and working with third-party penetration testers and assessors, among other responsibilities. His interest in the field stems back to his time in the U.S. Navy, which he joined in 1980. "Since I started in the Navy as a data systems technician, computers and I have been intertwined," says Carlisle. "I worked with computers as we started putting them on submarines, and wrote a lot of policies, procedures, and operating manuals."

His current work, like his time in the Navy, requires hard work and dedication. His



Navy and submarine background is helpful, says Carlisle, especially when it comes to mechanical trades and fields. "I mean think about: how many computer folks understand how hydraulics work?"

He has also learned to respond to any problem that arises. "When I find a challenge, whether it is my job or not, I find a way to fix it," explains Carlisle. "Strangely enough, the CISO [Chief Information Security Officer] jokingly refers to me as a Swiss Army Knife, because he knows he can drop me into almost any situation, and I will come out with the answers and a plan of action."

Carlisle's strong work ethic and dedication led him to furthering his education in the early 1980s. He came across Excelsior and worked to earn an associate degree in 1986. "If you really care about your education, you will make it happen, even if it takes you several years while living 800 feet underwater," says Carlisle of the at-a-distance experience. He later earned two bachelor's degrees with the College in 2003 and has since used his education to give back to others. Carlisle gives credit to Excelsior and says, "I will be eternally grateful...for the founders who had the wisdom and foresight

↑ The Alumni Association recognized the accomplishments of four individuals at the annual Awards Convocation on July 13. Award recipients are (left to right) Leona Konieczny '82, Timothy Carlisle '86, '03, Jessica Cheverie '02, '17, and Meghan Cook '94. PHOTO: MIKE HEMBERGER

to create such a program so that people like me could have a chance to change themselves and by definition, change the world."

Carlisle has received several awards and recognition for his time volunteering for various non-profit organizations. His volunteer work includes working with Opportunity Junction, a nonprofit organization that teaches technology and life skills to women; serving as president of U.S. Submarine Veterans Inc. Mare Island Chapter; teaching cybersecurity safety to seniors and children ages 8–14, and co-leading a military team that was recognized by the receipt of California's first National PTA award. Despite the accolades, the most enjoyable part to him, he says, is simply helping people. "I feel I have been given much," he says, "and believe that my primary mission in life is to make the world a better place, hence being involved with my family and the communities in which I live."

DEDICATION TO OTHERS: JESSICA CHEVERIE '02, '17

Alumni Service Award Recipient

Jessica Cheverie knew she wanted to be a nurse when she was 16 years old. Her interest in nursing began when she was hospitalized as a teenager. Seeing the nurses in action first-hand inspired her to follow the same path. Cheverie grew up in Connecticut and in high school, she volunteered at St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport. After high school, she attended St. Vincent's College of Nursing in Connecticut, and worked as a home health aide and in hospice care for United Home Care in Fairfield. Cheverie then moved to San Diego and earned her licensed vocational nursing degree from Maric College in Vista, California, in 1999. She earned her associate degree in nursing from Excelsior College in 2002, her certification in case management from the University of California San Diego in 2014, and a bachelor's in nursing from Excelsior in 2017.

Cheverie has dedicated her life to teaching others to be patient advocates and to give exceptional patient care. Currently, she is part of Scripps Health RN Prescription Refill Team in San Diego, and started Excelsior's Master of Science in Nursing program with a specialization in informatics this fall. She volunteers with Third Avenue Charitable Organization, feeding the homeless and supplying them with toiletries, clothes, blankets, and other necessities. Alongside Alumni Leadership Council Secretary Sandra Butterfield '86, Cheverie co-hosts the Shift Report, a quarterly webinar series presented by Excelsior's Office of Alumni Affairs that explores issues nurses and healthcare workers face in the workplace [see p.30].

Cheverie suggests that people who are looking to enter the nursing field should shadow somebody in the field and volunteer at a hospital in the type of unit they'd like to work in someday. She says of nursing: "I like the challenges. I've dealt all the way from death and birth...I really got see quite a bit over the years. The biggest thing is

really helping other people when they're not able to help themselves." For 12 years, she worked in a busy labor and delivery unit at Naval Medical Center San Diego where she was a neonatal resuscitation instructor, bereavement counselor and instructor, one of the leads in the operating room, and a charge nurse.

Every day in labor and delivery was unpredictable, she says, and so it was critical to work cooperatively with others. "You can't save people or help people without working together as a team because especially in labor and delivery or in life or death situations, you can't do it by yourself," she explains. "When you have a good team, it works out." Cheverie describes how she collaborated with her peers to determine what they did correct that day, what they could do better, and how they could help each other in the future.

Cheverie's passion for nursing shows in her dedication to her patients. She believes in "treating patients as if they're your own family members and to truly listen to them and how they're feeling and what's going on with them instead of being biased or judgmental or jumping to conclusions." Cheverie has taught many new nurses during her time at Naval Medical Center and shares that the most important thing she has told people is to put themselves in their patient's positions; to think about how they'd like to be treated. Being a patient advocate, she says, is the most important thing.

DEVOTED TO PUBLIC SERVICE: MEGHAN COOK '94

Alumni Achievement Award Recipient

Meghan Cook is passionate about public service. As the program director at the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) within the University at Albany, she works side-by-side with government officials, helping them identify new ways for their governments to work together through technology. She knew this work was meant for

her early on. "A calling to the public sector felt stronger to me than a calling to private sector type of work," she says.

She had earned an associate degree in broadcast communications from SUNY Adirondack in 1992 and a bachelor's in liberal studies from Excelsior College in 1994. She immediately went on to earn a Master of Public Administration (1996) and Master of Science (2002) from the University at Albany.

Cook never thought she would work in the area of IT. But through her courses in public management and through working in internships in government, she realized technology and information play a critical role in delivering public services. At CTG, Cook works with people in all levels of government in the U.S. and all over the world, from top executives and elected officials to those who carry out the day-to-day operations.

Much of her time is spent facilitating meetings, workshops, and delivering presentations. As a master facilitator, she leads groups from as few as 10 people to as many as 70 people. Most times it is to explore an issue(s) within their organization and develop a plan, solution, or an agreement. "Many times, I'm getting people to understand each other's viewpoints," Cook says. To address the common criticism about the lack of communication between government departments, she helps leaders better understand what each other does and that the information they use could be valuable somewhere else. "I like running the sessions that help people to leave with more understanding and clarity and sometimes even an agreement," says Cook.

One of her most memorable achievements, she says, was being recognized by the State University of New York (SUNY) with the Chancellor's Award and also by the New York State Local Government IT Directors Association. Cook says, "These are the people I work to support every day and for them to recognize me and welcome me as part of their community...it means so much."

Currently, Cook is working on a project with the cities of Schenectady, Amsterdam, Gloversville, and Troy, New York, to help

them develop a way to share information across jurisdictions around code enforcement and problem properties and owners. Out of this project came the idea for the joint course between the University at Albany and Albany Law School called Urban Innovation and Creative Problem Solving. Cook co-leads this experiential learning course where public policy graduate students and law students work to address the problems of blight and vacant housing in those cities.

Cook has lectured for undergraduate and graduate classes for 15 years, but this is the first time she is teaching a class. She says, “I’m giving them tools; I’m giving access to city government; and I’m giving them support and coaching along the way. So maybe [with] all those things together I am teaching them, but really I am creating the environment where they can learn, and that is just what they do.”

“I can’t say that I’ve ever set out to be inspirational. I’ve tried to set a good example,” Cook says, though her students have often written her back saying they have learned so much. In both her class with students and her workshops with government officials, she brings groups together to help them learn, make decisions, solve problems, and achieve their vision. In both situations, it’s rewarding to see them succeed. “They are proud, too, of what they’re able to accomplish,” she says.

THIS NURSE’S LIFE: LEONA KONIECZNY ’82

Carrie B. Lenburg Award Recipient

Leona Konieczny has been in nursing for 43 years. During that time, she has worked in a variety of positions, and no matter what, she’s never let anything get in her way. She has kept learning, kept moving forward, kept getting better.

Konieczny, a 1982 graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, initially wanted to be a teacher, but at the end of high school, she began working as a nursing assistant in long-term care. Over the years, she has held management positions in both

long-term and acute care. In the 1980s, she began teaching, first as a lab teacher, then a tutor, then a clinical instructor, then as full-time nurse faculty. Konieczny says of the two disciplines, “Nursing and teaching are very purposeful careers. They both offer the option of making a positive difference in someone’s life.”

Konieczny has a real love for travel and a strong belief that people have a responsibility to share their knowledge and resources. Her first foray into travel was on a nursing delegation to South Africa to interact with nurses at clinics and assist with community health care. She describes her time abroad: “It reinforced to me the commonalities that all people have. They have the needs of access to food, housing, love of family, and what I call the pull of the known. People want what is familiar, usually...On the other hand, it showed me that there are many different ways that people achieve those goals.”

She has led middle school, high school, and university students across the world, to places in Europe, Australia, Costa Rica, and Canada. “It gives me a chance to expose them to global interests—what’s different and how that impacts health,” she says. For example, there is no indoor plumbing in parts of South Africa, which can impact the water supply, sanitation, and thus public health.

Konieczny works at Central Connecticut State University as an assistant professor and RN to BSN coordinator. Two years ago, she came up with the idea to start a Master’s of Nursing in Nursing Hospice and Palliative Care program, and in the fall 2017 semester, it saw its first students. “It has been a labor of love for me to see now what started as an idea in 2015 come about to accept students in 2017. That’s very exciting for me,” she says of the experience.

She has worked not only to further the lives of her students, but also to further her own. Despite work and family responsibilities, she has had the persistence and resilience to reach her goals. She is a prime example of a lifelong learner, having earned her associate degree in the ’70s, bachelor’s in the ’80s, master’s in the ’90s, and doctorate in 2013. “Like many women,

I think it’s an accomplishment to maintain a career and also to have a focus on family,” says Konieczny, who notes her pride in her children, a son who is a lieutenant in the Coast Guard and a daughter who is a hearing specialist.

She recommends students interested in nursing shadow a nurse and be aware of what is required. “Television and movies do not portray nurses accurately at all. We’re not ‘Nurse Jackie’ and it’s not like ‘Grey’s Anatomy,’” she says. But she emphasizes the range of opportunity inherent in nursing. “With nursing, sky’s the limit in terms of varied options and working hours and it just offers so many possibilities.” In her own career, her continued learning led to a string of new opportunities. As she puts it, “Success breeds success. If I’ve been successful in this, let me expand and try something else.” ■ —J.K.



Call for Award Nominations

The Excelsior College Alumni Association presents awards to accomplished alumni each year to recognize outstanding graduates whose achievements are considered by the Alumni Leadership Council to be inspiring to other alumni and students. Nominations for awards can be submitted at any time, though the deadline for the current award year is January 15, 2018. Award recipients are required to attend the College’s annual Commencement festivities held on July 13, 2018, in Albany, New York, where they will be presented with their awards at the Awards Convocation (a travel stipend is provided). To read about previous award recipients, or learn about award criteria, visit www.excelsior.edu/alumni.

Questions

WITH NEW MEMBERS OF THE ALUMNI LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

JONATHAN GREEN '09, '12



Q: You're an experienced hospital administrator. What would you say is the most important quality employers should look for when they hire for any position?

A: I think personality is the most important element to consider when interviewing for any position. Of course,

education, training, and experience play a role in selecting the right person, but the most successful candidates are motivated, confident, and respectful of themselves and those around them.

Q: What advice would you give to Excelsior's students?

A: For the current Excelsior students, I would say when life happens, do everything you can to stay the course, stick with it, be persistent, and graduate. When interviewing candidates, I rate personality above education, training, and experience, but earning a degree—especially in a non-traditional program like Excelsior—demonstrates motivation and commitment that can drive success in the workplace.

Q: What's the best advice you've ever been given?

A: When I was in the Army Reserve, my mentor told me "you are your own best career manager." The best way to advance a career is to identify what is important and where you want to be, and then take the steps necessary to get there. In practice, decide where you want your career to go, identify and pursue the education and experience you need to get there, and when the time is right, be bold and ask for what you want.

Q: What advice would you give your 20-year-old self?

A: I would give my 20-year-old self the same advice I would give to Excelsior's students: when life happens, do everything you can to stay the course, stick with it, be persistent, and accomplish your goals.

Q: Do you have a favorite quote? What is it?

A: Leadership is about driving change. We need to encourage change in our teams to foster growth and development. We need to promote change in the workplace to drive performance improvement. We need to be willing to change ourselves. With this in mind, my favorite quote is by Rear Admiral Grace Hopper, who said, "the most dangerous phrase in the language is 'We've always done it this way.'"

MICHAEL GONZALES '04



Q: You're very involved in service to the community. Tell us a little about that.

A: I've been involved in community service for as long as I can remember, through scouting, church, and the military. After my time in the service, I continued to give of myself. Most of what I like to do is for those who

are less fortunate; to make their lives a little happier in what I can give to help them out. I organized a clothing drive to help a Native American community when I lived in Arizona. I also taught cadets aerospace curriculum for the Civil Air Patrol. More recently, I have been active in helping raise funds and awareness for Alzheimer's and cardiac disease.



I found that no matter where you are, there's always some way that you can give to the community. I was utilizing the pay it forward principle long before there was a term for it. Give from the heart and it can go a long way in helping those around you, as well as yourself.

Q: What advice would you give to Excelsior's students?

A: You've started a journey in life that brought you here to Excelsior College. Your faculty, fellow students, mentors, and alumni have been in the same place where you are now. We have all wondered if we were doing the right thing. The answer is a resounding "yes." Never give up on yourself no matter what life throws your way. We are all here to help you because we want you to believe in yourself, your dream, and to succeed in whatever it is that you are pursuing in life.

Q: Name something you've recently taught yourself.

A: I learned some things about hummingbirds. First, I need patience while being still and steady while feeding hummingbirds using

the hand-held feeders. Earning the trust of these fast, yet gentle, creatures just inches away from me is an awesome feeling. When they are feeding, you can feel the thrust from their wings beating so fast. A spider's web can be strong enough to keep a hummer from flying by binding up their wings if they accidentally fly through one. Even though a hummer has legs/feet, they only perch with them; they do not know how to walk on a flat surface.

Q: Is there a story behind your name?

A: Not really; at least not to my knowledge. I do know that my mother still uses my first, middle, and last name when I'm in trouble, so I try to stay out of it as much as I can.

Q: Do you have a favorite quote? What is it?

A: I learned this from a little green Jedi Master who said the following, "No! Try not! DO or DO NOT; there is no try!" It speaks for itself, and reminds me of Excelsior's motto of Ever Upward. If you're going to move upward in anything that you do, there is no try. ■ —R.K.

TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY

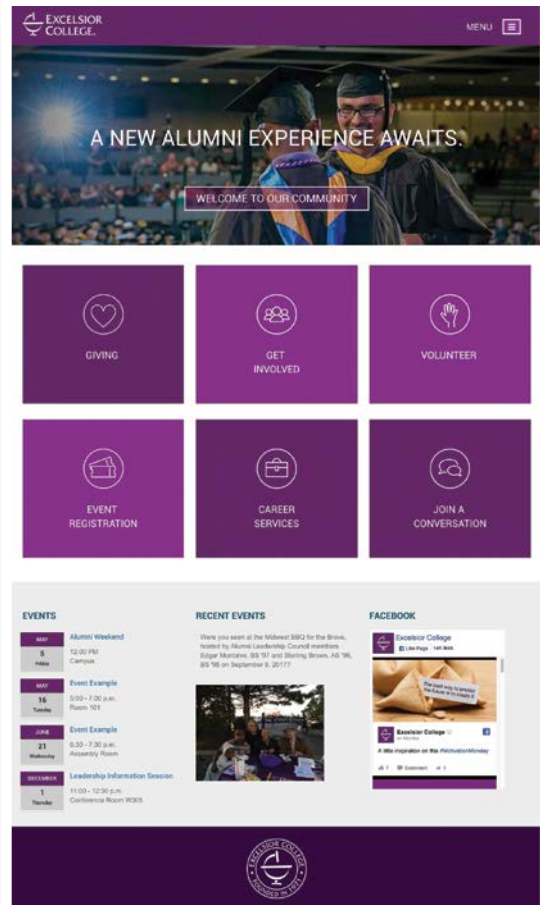
As a graduate of Excelsior, Regents College, or the University of the State of New York, you are a lifetime member of the Excelsior College Alumni Association. To keep you better connected to the College and each other, Excelsior has launched the online Alumni Community.

Unlike social media, the Alumni Community is a private space where content exists behind a log-in and the only members are Excelsior alumni. For your convenience, you'll be able to select your own username and password when you register. When you log in, you can personalize your experience with Excelsior through your profile and preferences. The Alumni Community will serve as your one-stop-shop for services such as updating your contact information when you move or change jobs, submitting an Alumni Note when you have news to share, registering for upcoming events, and volunteering.

We're excited to announce that, through the Alumni Community, we will be able to offer two benefits we've not previously been able to offer alumni: an online alumni directory and alumni groups and discussions.

The alumni directory is a fast, simple way to search for a former classmate, someone you met at Commencement, or graduates in your area. The groups and discussions feature will allow you to tap into affinity networks and communicate with others in this wonderful community of lifelong learners. Imagine being able to: request advice on changing careers; search for a mentor in your field; find out who will be attending a professional conference in your area; find other alumni who already live in an area you are moving to; and seek out others who have the same hobbies or interests as you.

 ALUMNI.EXCELSIOR.EDU



ALUMNI EVENT RECAPS



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Springfield, VA
Serving 2012–2017
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CAPITAL REGION CUATRO DE MAYO ALUMNI EVENT

WHO: Alumni and guests, Director of Alumni Affairs Renee Kelly, and Assistant Director of Career Services Alicia Audino
WHAT: Networking reception with information about career services
WHERE: Mexican Radio Restaurant, Schenectady, NY
WHEN: May 4, 2017

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING AND NEW GRADUATE BREAKFAST

WHO: New graduates attending Commencement
WHAT: Breakfast and sharing of stories
WHERE: Albany, NY
WHEN: July 14, 2017

MIDWEST BBQ FOR THE BRAVE

WHO: Alumni Leadership Council members Edgar Montalvo, BS '97 and Sterling Brown, AS '96, BS '98 and their fellow Chicago alumni
WHAT: A local fundraiser to support wounded veterans
WHERE: Frankfort, IL
WHEN: September 8, 2017

COMING ATTRACTIONS

JOB SEARCH TIPS & TECHNIQUES (CAREER SERVICES WEBINAR)

Registration required at career.excelsior.edu/webchats

DECEMBER

6

7–8 pm ET

EVER UP DAYS

Registration required at alumni.excelsior.edu

April

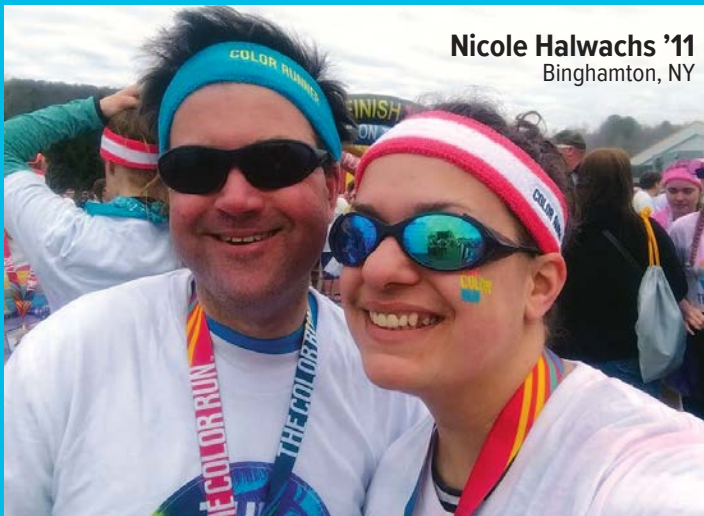
1–30 2018

MAKE AN IMPACT WITH EVER UP DAYS

Ever Up Days connects alumni through service to their communities. This first-ever alumni service experience, held in April 2017, gave graduates an opportunity to make a difference in their hometowns, and possibly meet other alumni, while contributing to the total impact made by their peers. Why April? It's the month that Excelsior College was granted its charter to operate as an independent, not-for-profit college, and that makes it a good time to bring graduates of USNY, Regents, and Excelsior together.

Three Ways to Participate

- 1. Lead a project.** Recruit alumni to join you in your current volunteer work or for a specially planned project.
- 2. Join a project.** Connect with a project leader in your community and join a planned project.
- 3. Do your own project.** If you're already a volunteer in our community, report your activity done in the month of April.



Nicole Halwachs '11
Binghamton, NY

Nicole Halwachs and her husband Craig volunteered for the Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier and helped with the Color Run. She helped check in the runners, and Craig distributed t-shirts.



WHAT'S NEXT? Stay tuned for details about Ever Up Days 2018 or send an email to Renee Kelly, director of alumni affairs, at rkelly@excelsior.edu with Ever Up Days in the subject line.



Excelsior College pride
Immeasurable

SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

David L. Matlack, BS '13, of Williamsburg, Virginia, was recently promoted to program analyst within the Department of the Navy. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies from Excelsior College.

Mark Stonesifer, BS '90, of Tucson, Arizona, self-published his first collection of poetry, "Mighty Like the River," in May 2017. Stonesifer calls poetry both his hobby and vocation, and he draws from his childhood, time in the military, and landscape

in his hometown of Putnam County, New York, among other themes, for his poems. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies from Excelsior College.

SCHOOL OF NURSING

Jennifer Laper-Ifferte, MS '17, of Ridge, New York, is a case manager with Coram/ CVS Infusion Services, and recently completed Excelsior's Master of Science in Nursing program with a specialization in Nursing Education. She also has a Bachelor of Science from Saint Joseph's College (2003)

and an associate degree in nursing from Excelsior (2007). She presented her e-poster, based on her thesis abstract, "Peripheral Infusion Access & Management: An Asynchronous Module," at the Infusion Nurses Society 2017 annual convention last spring in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Dennis Mitterer, AAS '04, of New Holland, Pennsylvania, is a clinical educator at Lancaster General Hospital. He and his wife recently published their first book, "Nursing to Wellness," which discusses how caregivers can care for themselves through the "seven dimensions of wellness" (occupational, environmental, social, intellectual,

emotional, physical, and spiritual). Mitterer also has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Penn State University (2010).

Joyce Webb, AAS '86, of Green Valley, Arizona, received the Sheriff's Commendation Certificate for her contributions to the Pima County Sheriff's Auxiliary Volunteer Program. She has been a Sheriff's Auxiliary Volunteer since 2010. Webb writes two columns a week

about current scams for the Green Valley News and shares warnings about scams on local radio stations. Webb had a 45-year nursing career, retiring as a labor and delivery nurse. "The caregiver now wears another uniform, volunteering to continue to help others," she writes. "The writing skills I obtained prepared me for this noble cause ... I thank Excelsior College for the preparation for my continued future."

SHARE YOUR NEWS
Excelsior.edu/AlumniNotes

CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2017

➔ Graduates represent the 50 U.S. states, District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and 20 other nations.

➔ The graduating class comprises 5,069 adult learners, with an average age of 37.

➔ Thirty-three percent of the graduates are members of the U.S. military; an additional 827 are veterans.

➔ Sixty-eight graduates earned more than one degree during the past academic year.

➔ The oldest graduate is 73 years old. The youngest graduate is 16.

➔ Most graduates earned a bachelor's degree. Over the past year, Excelsior conferred 1,555 associate degrees, 3,001 bachelor's degrees, and 566 master's degrees.





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Allied Alumni

SAN DIEGO ALUMNI CONNECT AND COLLABORATE

Sandra Butterfield '86 describes meeting Jessica Cheverie '02, '17 at the San Diego alumni event in February 2016 as something akin to “love at first sight.” The nursing graduates got along immediately and before the event was over, were planning to co-host the Shift Report webinar series. Since then, they have worked together on the quarterly webinar and volunteered around their home city—all while sharing a few good laughs.

Butterfield, a member of the Alumni Leadership Council, works in the psychiatric unit at Pomerado Hospital in San Diego. She is also an adjunct professor at Brightwood College and National University where she teaches psych-mental health nursing to students in the clinical setting. Though a lifelong nurse, she was not immediately interested in the field.

When she was young, Butterfield’s friend convinced her to volunteer at a hospital in their home Chicago area. “I volunteered in Central Supply and the Pharmacy because I did not want to be a nurse. Then several years in, I decided to volunteer in the patient care units,” she explains. By the end of their senior year in high school, the two young women had both changed their minds about nursing: “[My friend] said, ‘I am so glad I volunteered because I don’t want to be a nurse anymore,’ and I said, ‘I am glad I volunteered because I do!’”

Cheverie knew she wanted to be a nurse since she was 16 when she was hospitalized. Seeing the nurses in action first-hand inspired her to follow the same path. Cheverie grew up in Connecticut and in high school, she volunteered at St. Vincent’s Medical Center in Bridgeport. After earning her nursing degree, for 12 years, she worked in a busy labor and delivery unit at Naval Medical Center San Diego where she was a neonatal resuscitation instructor, bereavement counselor and instructor, one of the leads in the operating room, and a charge nurse. Currently she is part of Scripps Health RN Prescription Refill Team in San Diego, and is working toward her master’s degree in nursing with a specialization in nursing informatics at Excelsior.

Both Butterfield and Cheverie agree that teamwork is essential in nursing, and it’s easy to see that their relationship is a prime example of teamwork done right. “When you have a good team, it works out,” says



Cheverie, describing how important it is to collaborate and share knowledge with peers. “If you have a team that you can joke and laugh and work with, the time just whizzes by and you leave with laugh lines!” adds Butterfield. Since teaming up at the alumni event, it’s been one good thing after another.

Butterfield recalls discussing the Shift Report webinar series with Cheverie, saying, “I told her about this idea for a Shift Report and how I wanted to do it once a quarter, teach it webinar style for our Excelsior alumni and students...and right then and there, she volunteered and wanted to be a part of it!”

The Shift Report, presented by the Office of Alumni Affairs as part of the Alumni Speaker Series, explores issues that nurses and health-care workers face in the workplace. So far, the pair has co-hosted webinars on topics including PTSD, dementia, and violence in the workplace, and more are in the works. Their August webinar on suicide and depression was postponed so that Butterfield could assist in disaster relief efforts for Hurricane Harvey.

The two alumni run the Shift Report webinars from Cheverie’s kitchen, where they share knowledge and enjoy each other’s company. Describing Butterfield as “amazing,” Cheverie says, “She wears so many hats. I’ve learned so much from her.” She adds that working with Butterfield is always a learning experience and always filled with laughs. Butterfield also comments on their rapport. “It’s nice to bounce ideas off each other, she says, and adds, “We bounce around ideas constantly and add and delete ideas...I learn so much from the people I do the webinars with and also from the audience... The vast knowledge and experience of our alumni and our students is very exciting!”

📌 Sandy Butterfield '86 and Jessica Cheverie '02, '17 first met in 2016 at an alumni event in San Diego. Their collaboration on the Shift Report webinar led, in part, to Butterfield nominating Cheverie for the Alumni Service Award. When Cheverie received the award at the Awards Convocation on July 13, it was Butterfield who introduced her. PHOTO: MIKE HEMBERGER

In addition to the Shift Report, Cheverie and Butterfield volunteer together at Third Avenue Charitable Organization, feeding the homeless and supplying them with toiletries, clothes, blankets, and other necessities. Assisting others in this way is not new to these alumni. During college, Cheverie volunteered her time as an EMT. Butterfield has visited countries to volunteer at medical clinics. “I always wanted to travel and use my nursing skills to help underserved populations around the world,” she says. In Mexico, she has assisted with surgeries on children with cleft lips and cleft palates.

In addition to their interests in serving the community, Butterfield and Cheverie share a passion for caring for their patients and a passion for teaching others. Cheverie says the most important thing she has taught people is to put themselves in their patient’s positions and to think about how they’d like to be treated. Butterfield believes in helping to create well-rounded, patient-oriented professionals, as well. She says, “I think the greatest thing we can do is teach others how to do what we are doing, and teach them well.”

The pair live close to each other and see each other several times a month, be it volunteering, co-hosting the Shift Report, or just grabbing lunch. “Because of Excelsior, I have met a wonderful person (personally and professionally),” says Butterfield of her Shift Report co-host. Cheverie says they’re having a lot of fun doing the webinars, but the future is wide open: “I don’t really know what’s going to be in store. We’re just kinda going with the flow.” ■ —J.K.



The number of technology-related societies and clubs available to students. The American Nuclear Society student section, Cybersecurity Club, and IEEE student branch provide avenues for students to develop professionally and connect with peers and professionals within their fields.



In June 2017, Excelsior received a one-year extension on its Veterans Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program (VBSN) grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration. The grant funds an effort called Mission Transition that assists veterans pursuing a bachelor's in nursing.



Excelsior was recently ranked No. 10 for the best online bachelor's in cybersecurity program by bestcolleges.com. The organization provides impartial college guides and reviews, and ranked institutions' cybersecurity programs on a 100-point scale, based on academic outcomes, affordability, and variety of learning opportunities.

The number of students who were admitted to Excelsior through partnership programs during the 12 months ending June 2017. Excelsior's corporate, academic, military, and veteran partnerships provide the opportunity to complete a degree through reduced tuition and fees.



The total number of degrees awarded to the Class of 2017. The degree most often earned was the Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts, followed by the associate degrees in nursing.



Excelsior College has once again been ranked No. 1 among the Best Colleges for Returning Adults, in a study by the research company College Factual. The College also achieved this ranking in 2016.



Your support helps students stay

on the path, earn their degrees, and

achieve their dreams.



EXCELSIOR COLLEGE ANNUAL FUND

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📍 Marine Gunnery Sgt.
Bruce Villasenor '17 and his
family, of Washington, DC,
capture the celebratory
feeling of Commencement.

PHOTO: KRIS QUA