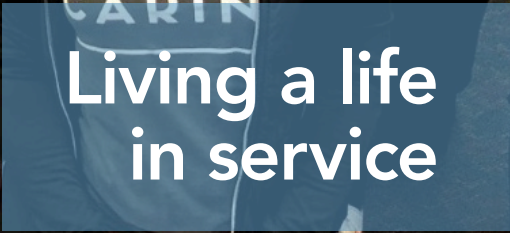


Spring
2021 Issue

Alumni Times

Clarkson College Alumni Magazine



Living a life
in service

Mission

Preparing students to professionally provide high quality, ethical and compassionate health care services.

Values

Caring

An empowering relationship through an attitude of empathy, compassion and respect for those with whom we interact and serve.

Excellence

A level of performance in which all individuals strive for extraordinary quality.

Learning

The lifelong process of education through both structured and unstructured experiences.

Commitment

Dedication to the shared mission of Clarkson College.

Integrity

Adherence to moral and ethical standards in personal, professional and organizational actions.



Alumni News

- 4 **Save the Date for Alumni Weekend**
- 5 **Alumni Board Changes**
- 6 **Alumni Spotlight with Nancy Theis**
- 7 **Tuition Reimbursement**
Alumna Shanda Ross shares her story
- 8 **Called to Duty**
Nursing student finds calling in AFROTC

Features

- 10 **Reflections**
Retiring colleagues reflect on the institution they helped shape
- 12 **Maltese Mission Week**
Second Maltese Mission Week provides opportunities to serve

Campus News

- 16 **PTA Online Transfer Option**
- 17 **Caryn Vincent**
Faculty member brings perspective to the pandemic
- 18 **Community Health Workers During the Pandemic**
Students and alumni share their stories
- 20 **Health Information Professionals Week**
- 22 **New Leadership**
College appoints new program directors
- 25 **US News & World Report**
Graduate Nursing program earns ranking for 10th year in a row

PUBLICATION EDITORS Trish Weber,
Ann Hagenau, Chris Shives, Rebecca
Van Gundy

DESIGNER Will Fleig

SENIOR WRITER Marie Dahlberg

The Alumni Times is a quarterly publication distributed by the Alumni Association of Clarkson College, 101 South 42nd Street, Omaha, NE 68131. Direct all story and photo submissions, changes of address or publication inquiries to alumni@clarksoncollege.edu.



On the Cover

Employees and students volunteered at the Nearly New Shop during Maltese Mission Week.
Page 12

PHOTOGRAPH BY Clarkson College

Save the Date

Alumni Weekend, Sept. 23-24, 2021

The Clarkson College Alumni Association will host Alumni Weekend on Sept. 23–24, 2021 to honor all Bishop Clarkson Memorial School of Nursing and Clarkson College alumni. This year's event will honor the anniversary classes of 1971 (50 years), 1981 (40 years) and 1996 (25 years), although all graduates are invited to join us for a celebration and the chance to gather and reminisce. We will also host reunions for the classes of 1970, 1980 and 1995 who were unable to join us on campus in 2020.

Alumni Weekend will coincide with Spirit Week from Sept. 20–24, an event that honors our institutional Values of Integrity, Caring, Excellence, Learning and Commitment. More information regarding events and how to register will be provided later this year.

If you have any questions, contact alumni@clarksoncollege.edu.



Dr. Angela Felton-Coleman

View our Gateway to Success Minority Nursing Scholarship recipients share the impact of the award on their academic journeys in honor of the scholarship's 20-year anniversary.

Click **here** to watch the full video.

CLARKSON COLLEGE LEADERSHIP SERIES EVENT: LONG COVID

The COVID-19 impact on human health is just beginning to be understood. For many individuals who test positive for COVID-19, this is not an acute problem. Join Clarkson College in collaboration with the UNMC College of Public Health for a special event educating attendees on identifying the symptoms of and managing the needs for those with Long COVID.

Event for Patients, Families and Community Members

Thursday, May 6, 2021
5:30–7 p.m. CST, Zoom
No cost to attend.

Event for Health Care and Community Professionals

Thursday, May 25, 2021
5:30–7 p.m. CST, Zoom

For participants requesting continuing education credit, registration is \$10. All other participants may register for free.

The following professions have been pre-approved in the state of Nebraska to receive 1.5 contact hours of educational activity: Healthcare Business, Mental Health Practitioners, Nursing, Physical Therapy, Radiologic Technology.

For more information and to register for either event, visit ClarksonCollege.edu/longcovid.

Alumni Association Board Enacts Bylaw Changes

The Alumni Association Board recently voted to enact several changes to the organization's bylaws that will go into effect during 2021. The changes will allow the organization to continue to serve its members as well as Clarkson College students as they pursue their education.

The Board voted to eliminate all dues for Alumni Association membership. Previously, Alumni Association members paid \$25 per year. Now, alumni will no longer be charged to maintain membership and will still have access to benefits such as continuing education events, the Alumni Times publication and academic travel opportunities. With the elimination of dues, all Clarkson College graduates are considered members of the Alumni Association and do not need to take any action following graduation to become members.

"We are proud of every one of our alumni and value each of them for their time and the unique talents they bring to our institution and students," says Trish Weber, MHA, RT (R)(CT) ARRT ('98, '05, '11), President of the Alumni Association. "Eliminating the fee to join our organization will help us ensure that all alumni have equal access to the same benefits."

The Alumni Board also approved changes to the timeframe for Alumni Association Board elections. Board member terms will now align with the calendar year to allow the new board time to plan and enjoy the events they plan throughout the year. Beginning in 2021, nominations for the new board will occur in October and voting will occur in November. The results of the election will be announced in December, and new board members will take their seats starting January 1.

Visit clarksoncollege.edu/alumni or email alumni@clarksoncollege.edu for questions.

Alumni Spotlight:

Nancy Theis

Alumna is new to the bedside, but happy to provide care during COVID-19

She was looking for a way to help.

Nancy Theis, a transplant coordinator who follows patients after their kidney transplant, knew the staffing shortages were adding stress on her friends and colleagues who worked on the Solid Organ Transplant Unit (SOTU), located on level five of Clarkson Tower.

"I talked to Vicki Hunter to see how I could help," Theis says. "It's hard to sit back and watch."

Theis has never worked in an inpatient unit. She came to Nebraska Medicine in 2006 to work for Donate Life Services as an organ procurement coordinator. Her training was as a heart and lung perfusionist. During her time at Donate Life, she earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Clarkson College. She left Nebraska Medicine for a brief stint at Children's Hospital & Medical Center before returning in 2018 to work in the Kidney Transplant Program.

Theis knew SOTU nurses were floating to COVID-19 units, and that they were also short patient care technicians. Hunter advised there was a nurse rover position available on SOTU.

"I thought that would be a good fit for me," she says.

In early November, her fellow transplant coordinators assumed care of her patients and Theis began working three 12-hour shifts each week. She's partnered with colleague Wendy Scholl, who is also a transplant coordinator.

Together, the two go to each patient room to help with various tasks, including taking vitals, checking blood sugar levels, performing additional insulin checks, assisting in administration of blood products, transporting patients to procedures and helping with showers.

"It took a couple of weeks to adjust to being on my feet for that long and the physical nature of the job," Theis shares. "It takes your body time."

She says she is inspired by the work of the nurses and the physicians who are also floating and working in different roles.

"Some of the nurses are floating, but SOTU is also caring for patients they don't normally see," she says. "To see them take it all on professionally, and to see your leadership do that, it motivates you to do the same. It just feels so good to contribute."

Hunter, who is the manager of Kidney/Pancreas Transplant and Donate Life Services, has several team members who deployed to the inpatient units.

"As their manager, seeing Nancy Theis, Brianne Clare, Amy Schurke and Jarrod Newlin volunteer to assist their fellow inpatient nurses was powerful," says Hunter. "Nancy, with no inpatient nursing experience, demonstrated the courage to learn a new role during these challenging times. Both of my teams have exemplified the ITEACH values during their inpatient rotation."

"It takes courage to work on an inpatient unit where you may not be as comfortable working," notes Maria Lander, Nurse Manager, SOTU. "These nurses demonstrated teamwork by their willingness to assist the patients, families and their co-workers. Our SOTU team is truly grateful for all of the help they have provided while on the unit. They are a great group of nurses!"

"We are so thankful for all of our colleagues who were asked to leave their home departments to help care for patients in our acute care settings," says Sue Nuss, PhD, Nebraska Medicine Chief Nursing Officer. "We can all empathize with being asked to do something outside our comfort zones. These deployed colleagues did so with grace and professionalism. We could not have gotten through these past few months without them."

Theis plans to continue working on SOTU until February and may stay longer if they need her. She says there's no doubt this experience will change her perspective when she returns to her "day job".

"I've learned so much from the nurses on the floor," she says. "I've seen the struggles they experience. The best way to grow is to get out of your comfort zone."

This story has been reprinted with permission from the Nebraska Medicine Editorial Team.

“ It just feels
so good to
contribute.”



Nancy Theis (center) with her colleagues.

Tuition Reimbursement Offers 'Priceless' Benefit

When you spend more than 20 years working for an organization, you learn how deeply it cares about its employees. Shanda Ross, MSN, RN, Clinic Manager, Internal Medicine Specialties Clinic has 22 years of experience at Nebraska Medicine and firsthand experience of the organization's dedication to its team members.

Ross is one of hundreds of individuals who has taken advantage of the tuition reimbursement benefit that allows employees to advance their education and career, and further support the organization. She used the benefit to earn her Master's degree in Nursing Healthcare Administration from Clarkson College in 2014 and continues to tout the benefits of the reimbursement program to her colleagues.

As a full-time employee, Ross was eligible to receive up to \$5,000 per calendar year to further her education. Part-time colleagues can earn up to \$2,500 per calendar year. The reimbursement, along with the reduced tuition rate she received at Clarkson College, the educational partner of Nebraska Medicine, encouraged Ross to take the next step in her career.

"It was the driving force," she says. "Having a daughter preparing for college in a year from when I would graduate, it was important to have the financial support."

After graduating in 2014, Ross stayed on at Nebraska Medicine as a clinic manager and used her education to further assist her organization and colleagues. "Using this benefit has had a huge, positive impact on me," she says. "Nebraska Medicine allowed me to grow and develop while truly using my education. The ability to partner with Clarkson College, whom our hospital has a partnership with, was important, and the tuition reimbursement and flexible payments as an employee were priceless."

Ross continues to serve both Nebraska Medicine and the community with her education. She is the President of the Omaha Black Nurses Association and recently hosted a virtual seminar to help bring information about the COVID-19 vaccine to people of color within the community. KLKN News shared her story about her dedication to bringing education to the community.

Clarkson College offers advanced degrees as well as certificate options in the areas of Nursing, Physical Therapist Assistant, Radiography and Medical Imaging, Community Health, Healthcare Administration, Health Information Management, and Healthcare Education and Leadership. Along with tuition reimbursement, Nebraska Medicine employees are eligible to receive a reduced tuition rate.

Learn more about our educational partnership with Nebraska Medicine and its benefits on our [website](#).





Called to Duty

The branches of the United States armed forces offer health care professionals multiple opportunities to utilize their skills in service to others. Through Clarkson College, students can pursue options that allow them to serve in the armed forces while earning their health care degree.

Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps

Natalie McConnell is part of the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC), offered to Clarkson College students through the University of Nebraska-Omaha (UNO). The program allows her to attend classes full-time to earn her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree while completing classes in individual training and leadership development that will lead to a commission in the United States Air or Space Forces.

AFROTC participants complete Aerospace Studies classes, Leadership Labs and physical training through UNO along with their Clarkson College courses. Students can adjust their AFROTC requirements to meet the needs of their education and clinical requirements, a factor that helps McConnell as she is a full-time student who works part time in the emergency room at Nebraska Methodist Health System. She plans to graduate in 2023 and work in emergency care before continuing on to become a nurse practitioner.

"I find my work fascinating because emergency medicine is really exciting to me," she says. "This is definitely where I'm meant to be within my profession. I like the constant changing of the ER because you never know what night you're going to get."

McConnell originally thought she would pursue a career in aviation but turned to nursing in order to fulfill her calling of helping others. "I genuinely like helping people," she says. "I enjoy knowing that I had an impact on somebody, whether it be healing them physically or mentally. As a nurse, some situations with patients are a little bit harder because they hit closer to home, but that makes it even more satisfying for me."

Following the completion of her course of study, McConnell will have a four-year commitment to the Air Force. According to Ryan Bird, Lt Col, USAF, the Chair of Aerospace Studies at UNO, the length of a student's commitment following graduation is dependent upon their course of study. Most graduates have a four-year commitment, while individuals with more specialized education, such as pilots, have a longer commitment. Students also receive a rank upon graduation depending on their specialization.

"The first couple years of this program are set aside for students to determine

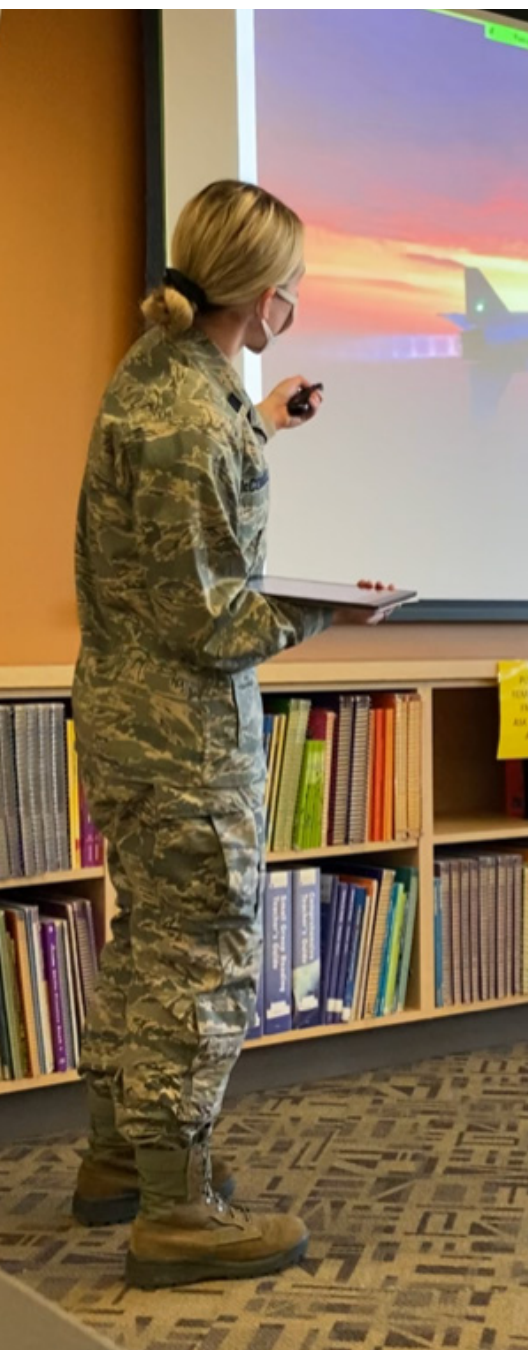
McConnell and members of her detachment following their victory in a physical competition against other ROTC groups.

whether or not entering the USAF is something they want to do," he says. "We spend those years understanding what AFROTC is, and then we transition to learning about leadership."

Leadership development is a primary focus of AFROTC training, he says. "As students progress through the program, we put them in training situations that are stressful, because we are asking them to serve in leadership positions that can be inherently stressful. They are able to learn about themselves and practice their leadership skills."

McConnell has already had opportunities to practice her leadership skills as a supervisor of others in her program. She helps ensure that students are able to meet deadlines and stay on track within the program. She also volunteers to help train cadets who will complete their upcoming field training exercises.

"Right now, that is one of my favorite parts of AFROTC," she says. "I am able to give them insight into what I learned about myself as a leader during my field training. It's really rewarding to have an impact on them and see them grow into professional leaders who are going to go get evaluated and take mine and my



McConnell briefs her classmates on the F-16 Fighting Falcon Air Force fighter jet.

One area McConnell finds extremely important in her own journey through AFROTC, as well as when she trains other cadets, is focusing on mental health. She says that being a full-time student and completing ROTC training, along with other professional and family obligations cadets have, can take a toll on a person's mental well-being and be intimidating to students who are considering the program.

"Mental health has a big impact on how successful you can be in the program," she says. "If your mental health is not where it needs to be, your grades are going to suffer as well as your standing in the program. I make sure to tell others and new recruits that it's okay to take a break and take time for yourself because we want you to be successful."

Lt. Col. Bird says it's this support that cadets build with one another that makes the AFROTC program so special. "What's great about our program is you've got all of these cadets in different majors and who come from different backgrounds and locations," he says. "Seeing the camaraderie and fellowship that develops here among cadets demonstrates one of our greatest strength and shows what this program has to offer."

"AFROTC has impacted my life more than just as a future career," says McConnell. "I've made lifelong friends and connections for my future career. The Air Force is a big family, and most likely, you will work with everybody eventually!"

To learn more about AFROTC, visit the Clarkson College website.

Memorial Scholarship Honors Veteran and Assists Students

Gina Dixon ('08) was a true representation of the Clarkson College Values of Caring, Integrity, Learning, Excellence and Commitment. A graduate of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) option, she joined the United States military following graduation and completed two tours in Afghanistan in service to her country. Gina passed away in 2015 in a car accident, and her parents Bill and Mary Jo are ensuring that her legacy lives on at Clarkson College.

In 2021, the Dixons funded a memorial scholarship in Gina's name to assist students in the BSN option in paying for their education. The annual scholarship gives special consideration to those who are serving or entering the armed forces because that is where Gina found her true calling to care for others. "She really enjoyed helping people," says Bill. "Now more than ever, we need people who can step forward like her."

Bill often recalls a particular event that highlights Gina's dedication. While working as an ICU nurse in California, Gina met a retired Air Force veteran who was at the hospital and near the end of his life. Even though she had just worked a 12-hour shift, Gina sat with the man, who did not have any friends or family present, and stayed with him during the final moments of his life.

The Dixons believe the scholarship will honor Gina's memory and help students in need. "There are people out there like Gina who just want to help others, but they need a little extra help paying for school," says Bill. "That's really why we wanted to do this."

If you are interested in helping Clarkson College with scholarship efforts, contact Chris Shives, Director of Advancement & Alumni Engagement at shiveschris@clarksoncollege.edu.



Retired colleagues reflect on the institution they helped shape

In 2020 and 2021, several long-standing employees retired from the College after years of dedicated service to students. Their reflections on the changes the institution has gone through offer insights into its past, and hope for its future.

Dr. Aubray Orduna, Dean of Nursing

Aubray Orduna, MSN, Ed.D., dedicated more than 40 years of her career to the Clarkson College community. Each role she took on, from adjunct faculty member to Interim President, was met with a humble dedication to service and a passion for care that spread to each of her students and colleagues.

Dr. Orduna earned her Bachelor's degree in Nursing from Murray State University and after working at a hospital in Pittsburgh, returned to Omaha in 1975 to work in the float pool at Clarkson Hospital. In 1978, she became a faculty member at the Bishop Memorial School of Nursing while continuing to provide patient care.

During the early days of her career, Dr. Orduna had the opportunity to work with Dr. Patricia Book Perry, who was named the first President of the College in 1987. It was during this time, that the Bishop Clarkson Memorial School of Nursing transitioned from a diploma program to a four-year institution known as Bishop Clarkson College. Dr. Orduna remembers this time as one of the most significant periods of change for the institution.

"Dr. Perry was a visionary and a very good leader, and she recognized that nursing education was moving toward requiring a Bachelor's degree," she says. "She traveled and completed research at other institutions and encouraged our faculty to start working on a BSN curriculum. It was a very exciting time to be part of the institution when we were finally able to transition to a four-year college."

After working as a clinical specialist and earning her Master's degree in Nursing from Creighton University, Dr. Orduna eventually went on to be named the Director of Diversity Services at the College. During this time, she was integral in

creating the Gateway to Success Minority Nursing Scholarship, which launched in 2001. The program continues to graduate successful minority nursing students today and stands out as one of her most significant accomplishments.

"The scholarship was born out of a meeting with leadership at Nebraska Medicine who determined that they had very few minorities in nursing and management positions and were looking for ways to fix that," she says. "So, we worked to develop the Gateway Scholarship program that included an internship with Nebraska Medicine."

While its dedication to creating a diverse health care workforce is a great accomplishment, Dr. Orduna believes that employees' and students' dedication to excellence and a culture of caring are the true hallmarks of Clarkson College. "Even if you have excellent skills in health care, there can often times still be something lacking," she says. "When you combine that excellence with caring, however, is when you get extraordinary results."

"Here we have faculty and staff who focus on both caring and excellence in students and in themselves. I look at the way the College has grown since I started, and how we've added graduate and doctoral programs, transitioned to online learning, and added to our campus, and it's something I am very proud of and find truly amazing."



Aubray Orduna, Ed.D., MSN

Ellen Collins, Director of Radiography and Medical Imaging

Ellen Collins, MS, RT, (R)(M) ARRT, retired in January 2021 after 22 years at Clarkson College, most of which she spent as the Director of the Radiography and Medical Imaging programs. After earning her Bachelor's degree in Education and teaching for several years, Ms. Collins returned to school to earn her degree in Radiologic Technology. When she saw an opening for a Clinical Coordinator position at the College, she jumped at the chance to apply.

"The position was really the best of both worlds," she says. "I could work with patients and provide patient care but also continue to teach. It was the best decision I have ever made."

Ms. Collins has watched the Radiography and Medical Imaging programs grow and expand alongside the institution during her tenure. The boom in students as well as the growth of faculty were the result of the high caliber curriculum and facilities the College offered students. "Our program achieved significant growth by keeping up to date with on-campus equipment to ensure that our students were practicing with state-of-the-art equipment that would prepare them upon graduation," she says.

The Success Center, Residence Hall, Interprofessional Learning Center, and Clarkson Commons and Education building all took shape while Ms. Collins was at the College. Each new space offered students updated areas where they could achieve their goal of becoming qualified health care professionals. According to her, however, it's not just the campus that made an impact on students.

"I have been blessed to work with an amazing team that shares the same passion as I do," she says.

"Our program would not be where it is today without them. I am very proud to say I have been part of a team that has graduated strong working professionals who are well educated and truly believe in providing their patients with the best possible care they can."

It's this passion shared by all faculty and staff members that sets the institution apart from others, and Ms. Collins is proud to have been part of an organization that draws dedicated people to it. "I love this profession today as much as I did the first day I started," she says. "I believe that enthusiasm carried over to prospective and current students as well as to the College."



Top: Ellen Collins, MS, RT, (R)(M) ARRT

Bottom: Ellen Collins (center) received the Alumni Association Honorary Alumni Award in 2018





Open Door Mission

On March 6, volunteers spent time at Open Door Mission, an organization that seeks to break the cycles of homelessness and poverty through services. Clarkson College volunteers helped sort and organize items at the Open Door Mission donation center, where community members can come to find clothes, household items and other essentials.



All Saints Episcopal Church

The All Saints Episcopal Church Pantry on Blondo provides food, diapers and clothing for children and adults in the Omaha area. On March 8, a group of volunteers from Clarkson College spent time organizing items at the pantry and creating pre-bagged food that community members could stop by and pick up.



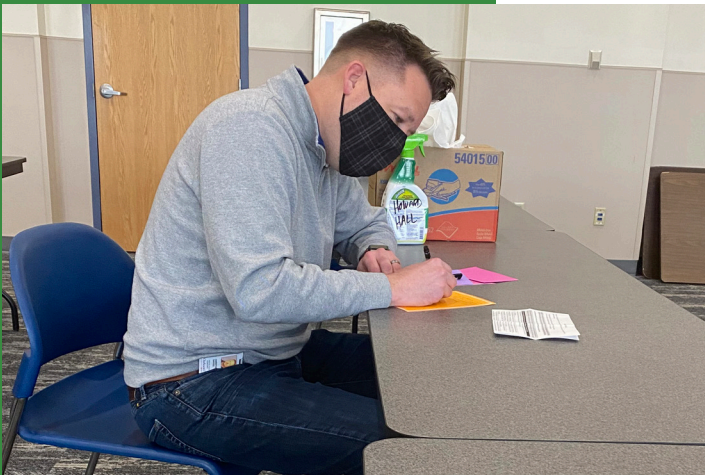
St. Andrews Episcopal Church

On March 9, students and employees volunteered at the St. Andrews Episcopal Church Nearly New Shop, a not-for-profit resale and consignment store. Proceeds from the organization support a number of local charities and outreach programs. During their time at the organization, volunteers helped sort and organize items for sale in the shop and helped with spring cleaning activities.



Catholic Charities Juan Diego Center

The Juan Diego Center serves the South Omaha community with emergency and supportive food services, family strengthening, and immigration legal services. Volunteers worked with the organization on March 10 and March 11 to help prepare food boxes for the drive-up pantry. Bilingual Spanish and English speakers also assisted during the drive-up pantry.



Magdalene Omaha

Magdalene Omaha provides recovery, housing, community and economic self-empowerment opportunities for survivors of sex trafficking, prostitution, trauma and addiction. Students and staff stopped by Howard Hall to create “Ray of Light” cards that will be delivered to female survivors.



New PTA Option Meets Students' Needs

Clarkson College launched an online transfer Associate's degree in Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) option in spring 2021. The new option gives students the opportunity to earn their degree online while completing on-campus skills check weekends.

The online transfer program is designed for individuals who have an Associate's degree or higher or have earned at least 35 credit hours from an accredited institution. Students can complete their degree in just 16 months (four semesters) with final clinical rotations arranged near their hometowns.

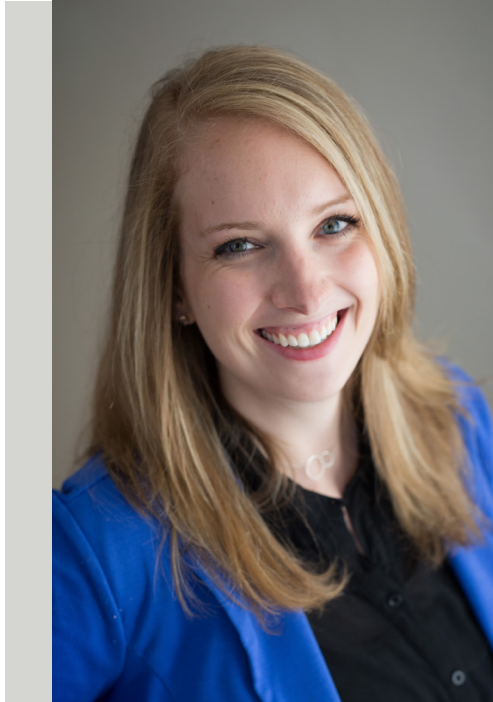
Through distance-learning technologies, students can complete their theory courses online. Students will utilize a learning management system that provides them with opportunities to connect with instructors and classmates. To complete their degree, students must complete hands-on learning experiences with faculty during on-campus skills weekends. These sessions will take place four times per semester for the first three semesters of their program.

The College implemented the new option in response to a needs assessment that revealed many individuals who are interested in becoming PTAs are looking for flexibility when obtaining their degree. The new program option allows individuals in rural areas to earn their degree without having to relocate to campus. This can also help meet the need for health care professionals in rural areas, as individuals can complete clinical requirements in their hometowns. The flexibility also allows students who are currently working as physical therapy technicians to continue working while earning their degree in PTA.

Clarkson College will continue to offer a traditional on-campus option to earn an Associate's degree in PTA designed for first-time college students and those seeking an in-person instructional college experience.

Learn more about our on-campus and online options at ClarksonCollege.edu/physical-therapist-assistant.

Faculty Member Brings Unique Perspective to Community Health Students During the Pandemic



It's important that we have a workforce who understands the basic concepts of community health.



Caryn Vincent, MPH, CPH, is the Interim Deputy Director and Public Health Strategic Advisor in the Division of Public Health for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS) as well as an adjunct faculty member of the Community Health program at Clarkson College. Because of her position at NDHHA, she is able to bring students a unique perspective on community health and public policy aspects of the pandemic. She is using her day-to-day experiences to prepare students for the roles they will face in the community.

As part of the Community Health curriculum, students learn about different aspects of public health, including gaining knowledge about effective practices and disease prevention tactics that benefit entire populations. The coursework prepares students to understand the concepts of disease prevention, health promotion, social and behavioral aspects of disease prevention, emerging issues impacting public health, and how changes in health care systems impact these areas. Each of these topics has become vitally important amid COVID-19, and Vincent is able to call on daily examples from her work while she teaches students.

"The pandemic has consumed so much of my day-to-day, and it is incorporated into my teaching," she says. "I cover a lot of introductory public health concepts, so I've been able to weave it into a lot of my modules from health equity and social determinants of health, to the module on ethics in public health, and certainly the modules on global public health and preparedness."

As part of her professional role, Vincent discusses public health issues affecting residents of Nebraska and helps identify the best approaches to improve health within the state. During a global pandemic, that role has become even more important as she works to help


the residents of Nebraska get accurate information about the virus as well as resources available to them. This type of work she says, is in line with an education in community health where students prepare to deal with public health issues.

"It's important that we have a workforce who understands the basic concepts of community health when they start on the job, especially during a pandemic," she says. "These things can be learned on the job, but I know I prefer to hire people who have that base level of knowledge so they can hit the ground running."

Students in the Clarkson College Community Health program gain not only this base knowledge, which is vital to their roles, but also concentrations in areas such as Public Health, Gerontology, Women's Health, Human Services and Healthcare Business that allow them to customize their coursework and prepare for specific roles they want to fulfill within the community. It's this flexibility and scope that set Clarkson College apart from others.

"I think the Clarkson College program is great because students have an opportunity to learn about so many aspects of the field with all the concentration and certificate options," she says. "The small class sizes are also a benefit because they provide an opportunity for students to really get to know one another and the faculty and have really meaningful discussions about the course concepts."

Students interested in serving their communities during COVID-19 and beyond can learn more about our Bachelor's degree in Community Health as well as Certificate options in Public Health, Gerontology, Women's Health and Human Services.



Community Health Workers Fulfill Vital Needs During COVID-19

Community health workers often cover a variety of job responsibilities, many of which are becoming even more fluid due to COVID-19 and further restrictions on health workers and community members. Hear stories from students and alumni of the Clarkson College Community Health program about how they are using their education during this unprecedented health crisis.

Advocating for patients' rights

Justin Peacock is a patients' rights advocate based in Sacramento, CA. Through his work with the Consumer Self Help Center, he helps present hospitals' patient rights philosophies to patients and ensures that all questions and concerns about hospital stays are answered. He is currently enrolled in the Bachelor's degree option with a concentration in Human Services at Clarkson College and is using his education to gain a better understanding of the challenges that patients face.

"All my course work at Clarkson College has correlated to my current work as an advocate and has equipped me with the knowledge and skills to excel at my job," he says. "Courses have taught me about the vulnerable populations I work with and helped me discover what social detriments might be affecting them."

Like all health care workers, Peacock experienced disruptions and challenges brought on by COVID-19. Rather than having the opportunity to meet with patients in person at the facilities, meetings have gone virtual. "The pandemic has kept us out of the facilities," he says. "We participate in interviews and hearings via Zoom now, and the patients really suffer from us not being in the facilities as many rights are being taken from patients with no oversight."

"The education has fueled my passion to continue a career in human services and pursue more education so that I may be able to help on a grander scale," he says. "Hopefully I can make a real impact in my community's public health."

Bringing Public Health expertise to the lab

Emily Farr graduated with her Bachelor's degree in Community Health in 2016 with a concentration in Public Health. Her education laid the groundwork for her to explore different options in the health care field, and she eventually went on to earn her Associate's degree as a Medical Laboratory Technician. She currently works at Boone County Hospital in Boone, IA, as a lab generalist responsible for running tests across all hospital departments.

It was during her fieldwork while earning her Bachelor's degree where Farr discovered a passion that inspired her current career. "During my time at Clarkson College, I did an internship at my local health department and spent a lot of time shadowing the environmental health team," she says. "They collected various samples to send to the state laboratory for testing and inspected public areas like swimming pools. I think that definitely sparked my interest in lab science."

As a lab technician, Farr and her team had to implement brand new practices and technologies to test for COVID-19 throughout the past year. Throughout the changes, she was able to draw on her education in Public Health for insight into the pandemic. "It's been interesting to reflect upon all of the public health crises of the past that I learned about and how they were handled compared to how the COVID-19 crisis is being handled today," she says. "My background knowledge of epidemiology has been especially helpful to keep in the back of my mind during this pandemic."

Connecting with developmentally delayed students

Susan Riggs is a paraeducator in Lincoln, Neb., who works with developmentally delayed young adults through the special education program. She works as a life and jobs skills coach for individuals between the ages of 18 and 21. The curriculum of the Bachelor's degree option at Clarkson College prepares her to work with this diverse student population.

"What I am learning in my classes at Clarkson College gives me greater insight into my students, their lives, their backgrounds, and their needs," she says. "Armed with that knowledge, I now approach my time with each student a bit differently. I try to dig deeper to see what they are needing; do they need a bit more of a challenge or a bit more focus on the basics because the basics have been lacking in their lives?"

Riggs' interactions with her students look much different in light of COVID-19. One of the biggest challenges she faces is communication. "Some of the students I work with are mask-exempt for many different reasons, so extra precautions are taken," she says. "Others are developmentally delayed, and masks slow all of us down in reading facial expressions. Many also have speech issues or English is not their first language."

These challenges take time to work out, but luckily Riggs' course of study allows for flexibility so she can continue her education through the pandemic. "The instructors are very supportive if I need to take fewer hours a semester or want to switch up my classes," she says. "Plus, with the Community Health program being online, I get to interact with other students from various parts of the country and we can share ideas and information with each other."

Learn more about the Bachelor's degree in Community Health as well as certificate options in Public Health, Women's Health, Gerontology and Human Services at clarksoncollege.edu/community-health.



Justin Peacock utilizes his education to help patients understand their rights.

Celebrating Health Information Professionals

An alumna and student share their stories during Health Information Professionals Week

Health Information Professionals Week is April 18–24, and it's a time to celebrate the individuals who make an impact within this vital field. The award-winning Clarkson College Health Information Management program graduates individuals who are prepared to use their skills to work in a variety of settings. In honor of Health Information Professionals Week, current student Blanca Vasquez, LPN and recent graduate Elizabeth Morgenroth, RHIA, CPC ('20) took a moment to reflect on the journeys they took to enter the field.

Vasquez is currently pursuing an Associate's degree in Health Information Technology, although she has several years of experience within the health care arena. She earned her Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) diploma in 2007 and began working in nursing homes and clinics while attending school. During this time, she was introduced to the billing and coding aspects of the institutions and fell in love with the revenue management side of health care. After completing her diploma, she went on to become a Certified Professional Coder, Certified Professional Medical Auditor and Certified Ambulatory Surgery Center Coder.

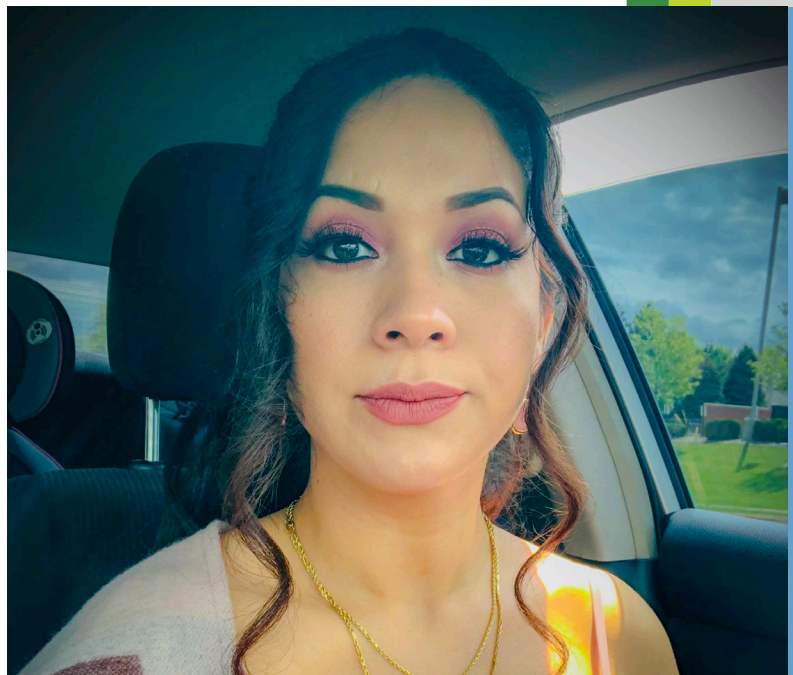
"I always knew I wanted to be in health care, and my original intent was to be a nurse," she says. "When I got a glimpse at billing and coding, however, I realized I had a stronger calling to go this route, which is how I ended up going into the health information field."

The online, part-time flexibility of the Clarkson College program is ideal for Vasquez who works as a Medical Coder at OrthoNebraska. She hopes to utilize her education to continue with the organization and become a denials coordinator, an area she has a particular interest in exploring.

"I enjoy doing the research to find out why something was denied," she explains. "Was it a coding issue or was it a billing issue? Was it an authorization issue or was the denial based on a payer specific policy, a clinical policy or was

it something else? Every day brings different challenges and new learning opportunities. These learning experiences allow us to improve our processes by creating or restructuring our policies and procedures to be more efficient and more effective in what we do."

Morgenroth also has years of experience in the health care field, and she recently earned her Bachelor's degree in Health Information Administration. While attending school, she worked as a health care consultant and was recently appointed the Director of Ambulatory CDI at Curation Health. Before deciding to earn her Bachelor's degree, Morgenroth worked in a variety of health care roles, her first being a temporary placement at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas. She went on to become a certified coder and worked in provider's offices as well as emergency departments before becoming a consultant.



Bianca Vasquez, LPN

Elizabeth
Morgenroth, RHIA,



To learn more about our Health Information Management program options, visit:

ClarksonCollege.edu/health-information-management

Her decision to return to school after more than 20 years was prompted by a colleague who completed a similar program. "I was blown away by my colleague's professionalism, knowledge, technical skill – everything that she brought to her job," she says. "She blew me away, and I thought 'I want to be like that.' That's what got me started along the path to my education."

Even though she had years of experience in health care, returning to school was not easy for Morgenroth who was working a full-time job and had three children in school. She chose the Clarkson College program because she knew it would offer her the best education for her professional goals. "I wanted to set myself up for success, and I had an idea about the kind of education that I wanted to have," she says. "I didn't want to focus too heavily on one area, and Clarkson College has a fantastic, well-rounded program that doesn't place too much emphasis on any particular area."

Throughout her coursework, Morgenroth had the opportunity to apply what she was learning to her career. "I was applying what I learned in class everyday out in the field," she says. "My finance class allows me to speak to CFOs, my anatomy, physiology and pharmaceutical classes allow me to speak with doctors and nurses, and my strategic management class gives me the ability to think like leaders."

Being able to use her classroom knowledge in her career was just one of the benefits of returning to school after working in the field. Morgenroth encourages people who are considering enrolling at Clarkson College to begin the journey with determination. "The number one thing is to have a strong 'why,'" she says. "It has to be strong enough to overcome the obstacles that will inevitably come your way. When you feel like giving up, you remind yourself of your why you started this journey."

Assistant Director of Nurse Anesthesia Moves into Director Role

Dr. Adrienne Rochleau is named the Director of Nurse Anesthesia

Adrienne Rochleau,
DNP, CRNA
Director of Nurse Anesthesia



Clarkson College named Adrienne Rochleau, DNP, CRNA, as the new Director of its Nurse Anesthesia program option in March 2021. Dr. Rochleau joined the College community in 2014 as the Program Coordinator for Nurse Anesthesia and has served as the Assistant Director of the Nurse Anesthesia program option since 2017.

"I am honored to take on the Director of Nurse Anesthesia role," she says. "It is my goal to continue to produce highly skilled Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA) and grow our program. As I take on the role, I am reminded of a quote from Lou Holtz, who is known for coaching football at Notre Dame, 'ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it.'"

"Dr. Rochleau demonstrates outstanding care and concern for the profession of nursing and is a strong advocate for the profession of nurse anesthesia," says Andreia Nebel, Ed.D., PT, DPT, FNAP, Vice President of Academic Affairs. "As she transitions to the Director role, she will also be an excellent collaborator for the Graduate and Undergraduate Nursing

departments, as well as a strong leader for students, faculty, the department and College as a whole."

Dr. Rochleau earned her Master's degree in Nurse Anesthesia from Mount Marty College and her Doctor of Nursing Practice from Maryville University. She maintains active clinical practice hours as a Certified Nurse Anesthetist at Heartland Center for Reproductive Medicine and Montgomery City Memorial Hospital.

Jayne Cromer, DNP, CRNA, who previously served in the Director role, retired in March 2021 after years of dedicated service to health care and Clarkson College.

// It is my goal to continue to produce highly skilled
Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA)
and grow our program. //

Radiography Program Appoints New Director and Assistant Director

Shelli Weddum, (RT)(R)(VI)(ARRT)
Director of Radiography and
Medical Imaging



In 2020, the College named Shelli Weddum, MHA, RT(R) ('05, '11) as the new Director of the Radiography and Medical Imaging programs. Following her move from the Assistant Director to the Director position, the College named Katie Fulton, M.S., M.A., RT(R)(VI)(ARRT) ('04) as the new Assistant Director in March 2021.

Both faculty members have long careers at the College. Weddum came to the institution in 2002 as an adjunct faculty member. She earned her certificate in Radiologic Technology from Jennie Edmundson School of Radiologic Technology and went on to earn her Bachelor's degree in Medical Imaging and Master's degree in Healthcare Administration from Clarkson College. Since starting at the College, she has also served as an Associate Professor, Clinical Coordinator and Assistant Director of the Radiography and Medical Imaging programs.

As she takes on her new role, Weddum will continue to teach. "I cherish advising and time in classroom and labs, further allowing the opportunity to connect with our students," she says. "My personal mission is to always be growing and

improving. My goals are to continue to give back to the profession that has given me so many career and life opportunities."

Fulton earned her Associate's degree in Radiography and Bachelor's degree in Medical Imaging from Clarkson College. She also holds Masters degrees in Instructional Technology from Fort Hays State University and in Management with a Leadership Emphasis from Doane University. She became a faculty member at the College in 2014 and during her time at the institution served as an Associate Professor and Interim Clinical Coordinator.

// I cherish advising and time in classroom and labs, further allowing the opportunity to connect with our students. //

College Names New Director of Undergraduate Nursing

Dr. Valerie Anderson will carry on the institution's 130-year tradition of graduating the best in nursing

Clarkson College named Valerie Anderson, DNP, MSN-Ed, APRN, FNP-C as the new Director of its Undergraduate Nursing program in March 2021. She takes on the role following the institution's highest spring new student enrollment and plans to continue the program and institution's dedication to excellence.

Dr. Anderson joined the College community in 2020 and for the past year served as the Assistant Director of the Graduate Nursing program.

"I am humbled, honored and blessed to be given the opportunity to serve as the Director of Undergraduate Nursing at Clarkson College," she says. "I feel fortunate to be surrounded by a community dedicated to student success at every turn. I am inspired each day by the success of our programs, which are made possible by the tireless contributions of our students and faculty. As stewards of our Mission, Vision and Values, I see no limits on where we can go and the potential impact we can make together on the future of nursing."

"Dr. Anderson's passion for nursing education and the importance of

creating students who want to serve their communities and develop their professional skills for a lifetime is to be commended," says Andreia Nebel, Ed.D., PT, DPT, FNAP, Vice President of Academic Affairs. "She will make an excellent addition to the undergraduate nursing team and be a strong advocate for students, faculty, the department, and the College as a whole."

Dr. Anderson is a graduate of Nebraska Methodist College where she earned her Bachelor's degree in Nursing, Master's degree in Nursing Education and Doctor of Nursing Practice in Family Nurse Practitioner. She brings X# of years of education and clinical experience in the areas of urgent care, labor and delivery, and home health.

Marsha Cravens, M.Ed., MSN, RN, who previously served in the role, will remain part of the administrative team as Assistant Director of Undergraduate Nursing. "I look forward to working with Dr. Anderson and our administrative team as we plan for the future and affirm our commitment to excellence in nursing education," she says.

Valerie Anderson

DNP, MSN-Ed, APRN, FNP-C
Director of Undergraduate Nursing



As stewards of our Mission, Vision and Values, I see no limits on where we can go and the potential impact we can make together on the future of nursing."

10 Years and Running

Graduate Nursing program ranked in the top 100 online programs for the tenth consecutive year

U.S. News & World Report ranked Clarkson College in the top 100 Best Online Graduate Nursing Programs in the nation for the tenth year in a row.

The institution's long-standing recognition continues a tradition of excellence and cements the College as a leader in online nursing education. "Our continued ranking by U.S. News & World Report is a testament to our dedicated program faculty and College leadership who are committed to providing high quality education," says Director of Graduate Nursing Layna Himmelberg, Ed.D., RN, CNE.

The ranking by U.S. News & World Report is driven by data collection through statistical questionnaires sent to institutions offering online master's degree programs. Programs must be accredited by either the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and offer all required non-clinical coursework through internet-based distance education courses. The rankings recognize the best online graduate nursing programs based on five factors: engagement (30%), faculty credentials and training (20%), expert opinion (20%), services and technology (20%) and student excellence (10%).

The report comes at a timely moment when more individuals are searching for ways to continue their education online in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A longtime leader in online learning, Clarkson College continues to offer students resources, flexibility and support.

"We understand the challenges facing our students, many of whom are working full-time and taking care of their families," says Dr. Himmelberg. "Our program is known for its high proficiency in online learning and flexibility as it prepares students to become leaders in the nursing field."

The Graduate Nursing program continues to make strides in nursing education. In 2020, the College added two new specialty options in Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner and Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner to meet the need for educated practitioners in these two critical areas. Students can also enroll in Nursing Education, Nursing Health Care Administration and Family Nurse Practitioner options as well as post-MSN certificate options.

BSN Student Elected President of NSSNA

The Nebraska State Student Nurses Association (NSSNA) held their annual conference virtually this year, and five Clarkson College students attended. Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) student Mariah Orduna was elected President of the state board during the event on February 6, and she will spend the next year helping the organization continue to support student nurses across the state of Nebraska.

Orduna has been a member of the Student Nurses Association (SNA) at the College for three years and served as the Breakthrough to Nursing Director for the NSSNA last year. "After being a part of the board as the Breakthrough to Nursing Director during the 2020-2021 academic year, I knew that I wanted to continue being a part of this nursing organization," she says. "I wanted to have an even greater role in leadership, so I decided to run for president. I actually made the decision to run the day of the election, because I realized what a great opportunity it would be to lead and serve the nursing community."

In her role, Orduna will oversee the 2021-22 NSSNA board including administering meetings and serving as a resource for NSSNA members. She will also have the opportunity to serve as the Nebraska delegate for the SNA national convention.

Orduna and her fellow nursing students who attended the NSSNA conference this year were able to participate in panel events and breakout sessions covering a variety of subjects including oncology research, psychiatric care and COVID-19. Attendees also had the opportunity to hear from State Forensic Nursing Coordinator Anne Boatright MSN, RN, SANE who works with anti-trafficking efforts in Nebraska.

"I really enjoyed hearing from Anne Boatright, who was the keynote speaker this year," says Orduna. "She is an amazing speaker and one of the many highlights of the conference."

The annual conference is just one of the ways SNA helps students who are entering the nursing profession. Their mission is to promote an atmosphere that encourages the unique development of a nursing student into a nursing professional by providing guidance, support and diverse learning opportunities.

**I realized
what a great
opportunity it
would be to lead
and serve the
nursing community.**



Healthcare Business and Health Information Programs Receive National Ranking

Clarkson College has been awarded top ranking status for multiple degree options by Intelligent, an educational consultant organization. Both the Associate of Science in Health Information Technology and Master of Science in Healthcare Administration options were named as one of the top five choices in the nation.

The College was listed among thousands of public institutions in the nation, and the comprehensive research guide is based on an assessment of 2,277 accredited colleges and universities. Each program is evaluated based on curriculum quality, graduation rate, reputation, and post-graduate employment.

The 2021 rankings are calculated through a unique scoring system which includes student engagement, potential return on investment, and leading third-party evaluations. Intelligent analyzed thousands of schools with comparable programs on a scale of 0 to 100, with Clarkson College making it to the final list for 7 Degree Programs.

The methodology uses an algorithm that collects and analyzes multiple rankings into one score to easily compare each university's degree program.

Clarkson College has been recognized for the following degree programs:

About Intelligent

Intelligent provides unbiased research to help students make informed decisions about higher education programs. The organization offers curated guides which include the best degree programs as well as information about financial aid, internships and even study strategies. With comprehensive, user-friendly guides and hundreds of program rankings, Intelligent.com is a trusted source among students and prospective students. To learn more, please visit: www.intelligent.com.

#5
nationwide

Associate of Science in Health
Information Technology

#5
nationwide

Master of Science in
Healthcare Administration