



# Honors Program

*... more than just academics.*

"After graduating, I started work in the PICU [pediatric intensive care unit] at Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

The UConn Honors Program not only was a great experience and allowed me to complete research as an undergrad, but it gave me the opportunity to be in an ICU for my senior capstone clinical and helped me to later get hired there.

The honors program was a huge part of my experience at UConn!"

... Jennifer Song '11 BS

# Explore your passion... and discover the tools to become a leading nurse-researcher.

The UConn Honors Program is home to the University's academic stars. A competitive, rigorous, but rewarding track, the Honors Program allows its intellectually gifted and highly motivated students the opportunity to work directly with their professors and mentors doing hands-on research and serious academic investigation. Honors students live, work, and study together, allowing them opportunities to make equally-motivated friends and diversify their academic interests. In the School of Nursing, faculty members pair with students, allowing students a glimpse at professors' latest research into evidence-based care and giving the feedback and guidance into the students own, similar areas of interest. The opportunities offered to these students allow them the freedom to explore their passions and the tools to turn them into leading nurse-researchers.

School of Nursing junior and Honors student Paul Banach works with Professor Colleen Delaney '80, '98 MS, '03 PhD conducting research on heart failure patients, exploring interventions that will prevent being readmitted to the hospital, such as patient education and early symptom detection. "So far with [Professor Delaney], I've been able to take an active role in her research," explains Banach, "visiting patients for the purpose of enrolling them in the study as well as educating them on how to maintain their health given their condition." He describes his work with Delaney to be "enlightening" and is proud to be able to help her. The experience is well-aligned with his own interests, taking the initiative to plan a trip to investigate healthcare in Peru last summer: "[The Honors Program] is a great opportunity to see different ways you can utilize a degree in nursing." Banach has since visited Dr. Delaney's classroom of sophomore nursing students to speak about his experience visiting, working, and learning in Latin America.

While its academic achievement is the face of the Honors Program, it offers students countless other opportunities to develop a personal and professional identity. Their work with School of Nursing faculty gives students guidance and direction. The Honors Program helps to foster the "nursing-scholars of the future," as Professor and Honors Program coordinator Elizabeth Anderson puts it, "the one-on-one with faculty mentors makes a huge difference in their lives and careers."

Laura Foran Lewis '10 enrolled immediately into the School's Bachelor's to PhD program after completing her Honors degree and works full-time as an oncology nurse at the University of Connecticut Health Center. She spent her time as an undergraduate interviewing hospice nurses in America and Ireland. "If not for the opportunities I had through the Honors Program," says Lewis, "I can honestly say that I never would have considered pursuing research, a path that now seems like such a good fit for me."

Opportunities in the Honors Program are unique and lauded across the university. "The Honors Program gave me lifelong friends and mentors and changed my entire perspective on where I was heading in nursing," says Lewis. Banach echoes her praise: "For me, personally, the opportunities I've been exposed to in the Honors Program have been some of the most valuable learning experiences of my undergraduate curriculum. Leading in the classroom and collaborating on research have helped me develop skills I will utilize throughout my professional career."

The Honors Program is one of the many efforts that make UConn into one of the leading Universities in the nation: the research done here is world-class. Honors students not only have their hands directly involved in the work of their mentors and teachers but have the support system in place to make their own contributions to the field of nursing and beyond, all while still undergraduates; the experience sends many Honors graduates to pursue advanced degrees after graduation. By giving academically gifted students the resources they need to excel, the School of Nursing is cultivating the next generation of nurse researchers and advanced practitioners. ■

## *E*xcellence

*After pioneering the first Post MS-DNP program in CT, UConn School of Nursing now offers a new BS-DNP program to prepare advanced practice nursing with a clinical doctoral degree. The program allows nursing students to enter the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, rather than requiring a master's degree.*