

BREAKING THE MOLD

March 2015

Part 12

NORTHERN MAINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE RECOGNIZES STUDENTS IN NON-TRADITIONAL PROGRAMS

Adam Murchison of Presque Isle has always had a passion for helping others. In fact, much of Adam's education, training, and work experiences have involved helping people. Several years ago, Adam worked with children at the local recreation department and also coached a variety of athletic teams, including soccer, baseball, basketball, wrestling, and track and field. He has worked for the Aroostook Mental Health Center at the Adult Crisis Stabilization Unit for two years as an emergency services specialist, completing emergency evaluations and operating the Helpline, assisting people who need immediate care. In this role, Adam has also worked closely with hospitals both locally and statewide to ensure proper patient care.

Prior to entering the nursing program at NMCC, Adam attended the University of Maine at Presque Isle, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in athletic training. Wanting a career change, Adam decided to return to college. Adam has three cousins (two of whom are male) who completed the nursing program at NMCC and encouraged Adam to apply. After observing all of the opportunities his cousins have had as nurses, Adam decided to pursue a career in nursing. With his desire to help others, nursing just seemed like the perfect career choice for Adam.

Adam chose NMCC not only because it is local and affordable, but also because of the institution's notable reputation. "Because nursing is an accelerated program, you get the hands-on skills you need, more so than other nursing programs."

With his background in athletic training and mental health, Adam has transferable skills that will benefit him in the nursing field. As a Certified Residential Medication Aide (CRMA), he has become knowledgeable about the various psychotropic medications that are prescribed to

patients with physical and mental health conditions. Adam is also certified in first aid and CPR.

At times, Adam has to differentiate his roles. Adam states that from a nursing standpoint, he needs to approach certain situations differently than he would in his other roles. "You need to have different points of view when considering how to assess a situation." For example, instead of pursuing a situation from an athletic trainer's perspective, he needs to consider what he would do from a nurse's point of view.

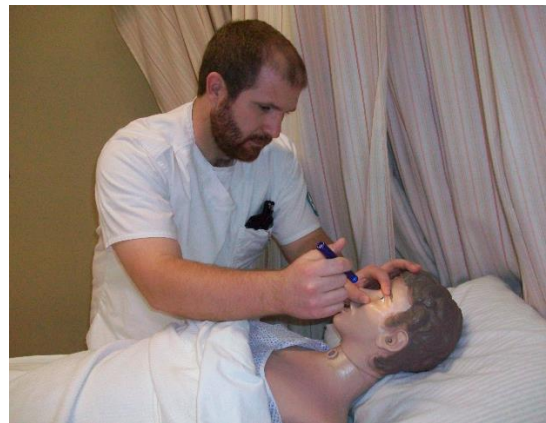


Photo: Adam Murchison, Nursing Student at NMCC

When Adam first entered the nursing program, which is predominately female, he questioned how he was being viewed by his female peers. As he has acclimated into the program, he has noticed that all of the students work together and that gender is not an issue. "We are all one team. Everyone is willing to share knowledge because that will provide the best care. It's a team atmosphere here."

Adam enjoys the educational opportunities he is experiencing in the program. "I'm learning a lot. Every day, I am learning something different. Every application is different, depending on the person. It's a lot of information all at once, but the faculty will work with you and make accommodations if needed."

Because nurses often have to move patients, physical strength is a quality that can benefit men in the nursing field. Adam recognizes his own personal strengths that would help him as a nurse, including his ability to develop a positive rapport with children and the level of comfort he brings to his male patients when he interacts with them. Because some females may not feel comfortable having a male perform certain procedures, Adam sees this as a challenge for males when working in the field.

As a first-year nursing student, Adam has earned remarkable grades. He offers ways that other students can be successful, including paying attention in class, being a diligent note taker, and asking questions. “The only bad question is the one that goes unasked.” Reading the textbook before the lecture and developing a schedule to effectively manage his time are also techniques that have helped Adam succeed. Adam also emphasizes the importance of being a self-advocate and speaking up for yourself if you need help.

Adam is contemplating what he would like to do with his nursing degree when he graduates next year. “The possibilities are endless. That is what pulled me to this career.” He is interested in traveling to gain more experience in different areas of nursing. Given his experience and training in mental health, he may pursue psychiatric nursing. “Because I have strong interpersonal skills, I may work in the ICU or in pediatrics. I am good at calming people down and describing procedures to them.”

Adam offers advice for males considering a career in nursing. “If you’re interested in it, go for it. You are only limited by the parameters of what you set for yourself because there are so many avenues to explore.” He also urges males to overcome misconceptions that nursing is only for women. “Do what makes you happy.”



Quick Facts: Registered Nurse

Job Duties: Prepare patients for and assist with examinations, maintain accurate, detailed reports and records, administer medications to patients, and monitor all aspects of patient care.

Skills Needed: Active listening, social perceptiveness, reading comprehension, critical thinking, and customer-service skills.

2013 National Average Pay: \$31.84/hour; \$66,220/year

Job Outlook: Projected to grow 19% between 2012-2022

NMCC 2013 Nursing Graduate Success Rate (Employed, Cont. Education, or both): **92%**

For more information about non-traditional programs available at NMCC, please contact Lori Smith, Student Support Career Specialist at 768-2793 or nlosmith@nmcc.edu



Cited by the Aspen Institute as one of the nation's top 150 community colleges for commitment to student success and educational excellence.