

CHRISTOPHER CELA INTERVIEW

How was your graduation?

It was a lot of fun and a very eventful week. Since graduation, I've just been decompressing from the last four years. I'm currently preparing for my licensure exam to become a registered nurse. I'm hoping to take it in July.

It sounds like you're on to the next plan and ready to move on to the next project.

Well, I gave myself a week off and I said it's back to the books!

Did you feel a little nervous about what would come after graduation?

I actually felt confident graduating and I was prepared for my next step and being a part of the Honors College helped me feel ready to take on my career and be as open minded as I am.

What edge do you think the Honors College gave you as a student?

I believe that the extra classes helped me to think outside the box and on a higher level that translated into helping me think critically about the research which I wanted to do.

What was the most challenging experience you had as an Honors student?

That would be deciding on one research project that I would spend the next year conducting and refining. That whole thesis project was the most challenging part. The extra classes pushed me as a student, but they were not nearly as challenging as the thesis.

How did you manage to complete your thesis in spite of the pressure you describe?

Being in the Nursing major was especially hard because we have a lot of work and on top of that, the thesis that was difficult. But, I kind of relied on the other Honors College students in my track to bounce ideas off of and help me when I was feeling doubtful about my research.

Also, I would go to Dr. Andrew and Jan Pinkston as well as the other Honors College faculty and advisors, as well as Nursing faculty who specialized in the area that I was doing my research.

What advice do you have for incoming students to begin their journey, as Honors college students in such a way that they manage and maximize the process?

If I could do it all over again, I would start thinking and brainstorming about my Honors thesis much sooner and begin forming the relationships with the faculty earlier. They were a lot of help throughout the research process, because they understand how stressful the process is.

I would also make friends with Upper Class Honors College students and be a part of the mentoring program at the Honors College, because they can guide you and certainly know what you're feeling.

What was your most memorable experience as an Honors College student?

I actually have two!

The first was during the research process. I cherish the opportunity I had to sit down and interview people about my study. To be able to sit down with the nurses and see how my topic related to them was really memorable for me.

Also, getting to go to the Pittsburgh Regional Honors Conference and presenting was amazing. That had been a personal goal of mine since I got into college, to be able to create a poster and present it!

If there was something you could change about the Honors College, what would that be?

I would like to see more of the alumni come back and talk about their experience and presenting their research again to incoming students before they actually begin their school year. It would motivate them to know that they can do it!

What resource do you think is most underutilized by Honors College students?

I would say each other. I feel that Honors students are very close in the first two years due to the clusters and the Honors classes. But as we get to junior and senior year, there is less collaboration and we potentially come across each other during Honors week, two years later!

Where do you see yourself in a decade?

In the next two years, I hope to work in an emergency room as an emergency room nurse, but in ten years, I would hope to be a nurse practitioner or an advanced health care professional, so I can treat patients and pursue my passion of helping people.