

Nursing Panel Transcription (03/17/2020)

Amie: Welcome everyone, this is the first ever pre-nursing panel and we're doing this virtually given the current situation with COVID. So thank you all for coming today, my name is Amie Brady, the Assistant Director of the Student Resource Center for College of Health and Social Sciences. Today we have a panel of 6 nursing students in all different nursing programs here at SF State who will be joining us to share their experiences. We will also offer a Q&A portion to the second half of today's events so the students who are joining us can ask questions. Please make sure you're asking your questions in the chat feature that way we can ask panelist one-by one so just to let you know how today's agenda will go we'll start off with introductions by our 6 panelists, we will moderate a total of 5 questions, these questions will cover a lot of general info that students typically have questions about and then we'll open up the Q&A using the chat feature. During this time I do ask students to please keep mics muted, except for panelists to have as little background noise as possible. We will also be recording this session so that students that cannot attend can still watch at a future date or if there was something that you forgot that one of our panelists discussed you can go back to watch at a later day. So we're going to go ahead and get started. I'm going to ask the panelist to please introduce yourself. Please share your name, what year you are in the program, the type of program you are in and if there's a specialization you have. And we'll start with Mirella.

Mirella: Hi Everyone, my name is Mirella I am a second year ELM student so that's an entry-level masters student and the program is broken up into levels so I'm level 4, which is just the 2nd semester of your second year. My specialization is adults.

Puti: Hi my name is Puti and I am a BSN student I'm second year as well, I'm on my 4th level and I don't have a specialization as a BSN student,

Doug: Hi there, I'm Doug, I'm like Mirella, an ELM student . I'm level 4 and specializing in pediatrics, welcome.

Alana: My name is Alana, I am a BSN student, year 2 so level 4 and we do not specialize in the BSN program.

Kristin: Hi my name is Kristen, I am a level 4 in the accelerated entry-level masters program and my specialty is in women's health.

Kaitlin: My name is Kaitlin Duggan, I am also in the ELM program, entry level master's, and I am year 2 so level 4 and my focus is pediatrics.

Amie: Thank you everyone for sharing that I think personally for myself I don't have a clear understanding of what these levels means would one of you be willing to share what these levels mean so students are aware?

Kaitlin: : I can. So Levels are just the semester you are in. So your very first semester you're in level one, the next semester will now be level 2 and so on. So the BSN program has 4 levels total because it is 2 years long, so two semesters. And then the entry level masters Accelerated one ,because they go over summer, they are also only 2 years but they just do an extra semester in the summer and then the non-accelerated one is over 3 years.

Jessica: Can you guys tell us about your educational path and motivation to pursue your nursing degree. Like did you major in something else before? Did you attend other colleges/universities and what really interested you in pursuing your nursing degree?

Mirella: So in undergrad, I majored in public health and I knew that I liked health related stuff so I did public health and I actually ended up getting into the workforce for that, I started doing some program development, some grant writing. About 2 years into working, I knew that I wasn't really fulfilled in my job and I really wanted something that I could work directly with patients and so my motivation for going into nursing was that it combines my interest in health and education but also allowed me to work directly with patients (inaudible) and they really place an emphasis on the overarching overall patient care and health education is really big in nursing.

Puti: In terms of educational path, I went straight to SFSU after graduating from highschool so I enter SFSU as a pre nursing major and it took me 3 years to finish all the prereqs classes and complete all the requirements like TEAS test and volunteer stuff so I applied to nursing school by the end of my junior year in college and I got in so this is my 5th year in college. My motivation is that since I was little, I like to take care of people, like I'm the oldest sibling in my family. I know that nursing is very fulfilling and rewarding. I just want to work at a job that can really leave an impact on people, like on my patients' life.

Doug: Hey everybody it's Doug. I originally graduated in business administration a while back, several years ago. My motivation for going into it. I was in business in the past, i really didn't have a passion for going to work, then I ended up becoming an EMT,

really loved that, and kind of the next step was nursing, so i did prereqs over several years. Really liked San Francisco's program just because it's a very holistic program and takes into consideration various opportunities to help out the community and if you go here you really will get that opportunity to be really involved with public health and getting out into the community

Alana: My name's Alana, for my education, I did 2 year prereq work at Canada college. I originally went in as a bio major and while i was in community college, i didn't do so well in the math and science parts of bio and so i went to my mentor and i told her i thought i wanted to do bio but i'm not actually good at it and so she listed me out a whole list of majors that are science focused but not so math focused and one of them was nursing and so i picked it and once i started with anatomy and i absolutely feel in love with it. I loved my professors, they are so amazing there. A Lot of them were nursing so they encouraged me to really pursue nursing and I got to do a lot of volunteer hours through my connections with them. I applied to my first nursing school and did not get into SFSU and a lot of other state schools in the area. My second year of applied, I did end up getting in. it was the happiest day ever. So for me nursing was a random draw of the dice and actually fell super in love with it and i can't see myself do anything else because it's such meaningful work and i love going into clinicals and being able to say i have impacted someone's life by my job.

Kristin: This is Kristin speaking, I originally got my B.S. in microbiology from UCSB and then i realized i didn't want to spend the rest of my life in a lab or anything of that nature. So I took some time after I graduated. I worked for home health and then I worked as a ER scribe and I saw a lot of what the nurses were doing and my family has always had a background in health care and that's when I decided to apply back into school, and I got accepted into SFSU's accelerated entry level program. I got into nursing because in the work experience that I got post grad...it was like I was health care related but it wasn't as fulfilling. I wanted to be in a position where I could work closer with the patients and I guess that's why nursing struck me as something I wanted to do and I felt that as my calling.

Kaitlin: Hey so my trajectory was a little unconventional. I actually started undergrad in a nursing program in Chicago and I did it the first semester and it was pretty intense and I just had a gut feeling that I wasn't ready for it or it just wasn't the time for me. So I switched all over the place. I did philosophy for a while, loved that and then I eventually transferred to USF where I got an environmental science degree. I kind of chose that because I knew for sure that I wanted to do something that benefited society and I like science, so those were the only two things that were helpful to me in figuring out what I

wanted to do. After I graduated i worked a bit in the field but then i missed that person to person connection so i eventually got a job at this company called one medical group where I become a phlebotomist and then a phlebotomy manager of 15 people for 4 years and it was there where i learned interacting with different nurse practitioner and doctors and physician assistant and RN's where i was able to experience working with them and figuring out what i wanted to do. So that's where I decided for sure that nursing was my path and kind of my decision because i really connected with the holistic approach that the nurses had in interacting with their patients. So I applied to SFSU, it was the only school I applied to, and got in which I'm so happy about because I know it's really hard. I had the same process of elimination going with my gut throughout the program. I switched my major from public health, which was what I originally started the program with, to pediatrics because I found that I really just connected with the pediatric experience, particularly the little tiny babies, they're so cute.

Amie: What is the most rewarding thing about your specific nursing program?

Mirella: It's hard to choose just one but if i had to choose something i would say that, I think SFSU does a really great job with making sure that during the program, we are working with diverse populations and really have a strong social justice focus, so for me, it was important to make sure that i chose a school that that was something they values, because that's something that i value as well. I think it's just nice that the way that our learning is structured really has that social justice thread throughout.

Puti: So I feel like one of the most rewarding moments is when you try to start studying so hard for a test, and you're studying for weeks, so many nights, you put all night studying for a test and you finally get an A on it. It was one of the most rewarding moments for me. Another would be whenever i go to clinicals, and i really help out all those patients and they compliment me. I remember there was one time, a patient said to me "i could tell that nursing was your calling" and she said that i have a nice heart and a warm heart and spirit and it just made my day and it felt like at that moment it was worth it and it was a perfectly right career job for me to do.

Doug: So I would definitely say the most rewarding part of this program is the clinical experience. Every single "experience" has been good for me. Things have been cut short because of the COVID intervention but this last...in level 4 you do community help and i was in tenderloin and basically right in the heart of everything that was going on with the IV drug needle use and you're just basically seeing it from a public health perspective and its pretty amazing and there's such a level of trust among nurses that everyone is willing to talk to you and it's just really a rewarding experience overall. And

the clinicals are really good, and there's a little bit of street-cred with SFSU in the hospitals, they like students from our school .

Alana: I would say that the most rewarding part of being at sf state BSN program would be the fact that we have small class settings. We have 20 people in our BSN cohort and 20 people in our elm-cohort and just being able to just really know our professors on a very intimate level and being able to get really close with the people in our cohort . I feel like I wouldn't be able to do clinicals without them and without their support. And I'm really grateful to have so little people that we're able to get to know everyone and it's a little family.

Kristin: I think the most rewarding part of this nursing program is helping me to understand how health is a very holistic concept. I think the sooner you realize how health is connected in its social aspects/political aspects, you start to understand people better. And through this nursing program I think it's helped me to be able to connect with people better, and understand what makes people tick and how to overall empower people.

Katlin: I think I'll just reiterate what everyone else said. SF state's program definitely has the program in a way that you are able to reach a lot of underserved communities which I think is really cool and definitely a lot of other programs don't do that quite as much and as holistically this program does. I love the small class sizes as well and this is a really big thing because you get to know everyone and you get to know your teachers and that, for like forward thinking, it's a lot easier to plan for when you're applying for jobs and you're able to get those letters of recommendations which is a really big thing you should always be thinking about. I think like Doug said, we have a pretty good reputation in a lot of the hospitals, and I think that the hospitals and the nurses that we are shadowing do have off the bat respect for you. The other thing that I would add is I have had amazing clinical instructors and I think this really makes your experience in nursing school. You can go to them during your clinicals when you have questions or having a tough time, they push you to learn and push you to become the best version of yourself in the hospitals which has been really amazing.

Amie: on the flip side, what have you found to be the most challenging?

Mirella: For me, because I work part time, so it's been hard especially as clinicals get a bit harder throughout the program to just juggle everything because you do have all your classes which is where you get your lectures and do all your tests and then on top of that, you have to do your clinicals at the same time during the semester. You usually

have 2 clinicals going for each semester so if each one is a full day, you really have maybe like one free day during the week to try to fit in all your school work and then you probably do stuff on the weekends. So it is hard to juggle everything to start with but once you get a couple of weeks into the semester, i think you find your groove and find out what you can do and when you can be the most productive but i think that's sort of a big learning curve, at least for me and the classmates that i've talked with. That can be a challenge. To see what your schedule is going to look like and then it changes every semester so just have to reorient yourself each time.

Puti: Hello so I think my personal challenges in this program will be language barrier because I'm an immigrant from China and my English is not my first language so it was really challenging for me to learn English and at the same time learning all the medical terms study for all the tests like Anatomy that was really difficult and I was very stressed but in the end I made it so I was thinking like if you were an immigrant and or like a English is not your first language and if I can make it then you can make it so I said it was really difficult and challenging but in the end it was all worth it and just use all the resources you can get with your professors, your classmate, and use the Advising Center.

Doug: For me definitely I'm going to reiterate with Mirella talked about which is time management and I think you know we all have things going on in our lives and really basically prioritizing what you need to do and it is really about prioritization so if I could give any advice it's like at the beginning of semester you really want to come map out what projects you have going on and make sure you put away the right amount of time for it and not being said triple whatever your estimate is and you're probably pretty dead-on. Some things take more time than others but definitely the most challenging thing is just your time-management. The content is difficult but it's not super difficult there's a lot.

Alana: I would say that for me the most challenging part of this program and I think any nursing program goes for the same is just being able to be persistently studying because it is a two-year program and there's no, other than Summers, except for the BSN's, there's really no time for downtime like once you're done with your test there's always have to study for another assignment that you have to do something else that you could be studying for should be looking at and so sometimes that real grit to keep moving and keep moving forward can be challenging to start and have on your own and be able to go through the whole program

Kristin: So for me the most challenging part about this nursing program is that one it is accelerated its full-time which means that if any of you are planning to work during nursing school first props, it is difficult but it is possible I think just with that with being an accelerated full-time nursing program it's it's a balancing act and that should include self care and I think because of nursing is a very intensive physical and emotional job it's always hard to for me at least it's hard for me to remember like okay you know what sometimes I just need to take a step back and I think that's been hard to juggle nursing school so always self care and time management

Kaitlin: My challenges are pretty similar going from full-time work into full-time school was also an adjustment because it's just totally different parts of the brain you are using and I think with that to just the amount of work that we are kind of were supposed to all at once was pretty overwhelming you just have to be quick on your feet and prioritize much as possible and do time management but then also you know like Kristen said always make sure you make time for yourself that's huge. we also do a lot of group work which I hadn't experienced in my undergrad, lot of group papers and things like that and it was challenging I'd say because everyone has different scheduled and different voices when they're writing so just you know having to kind of navigate that and make sure everyone felt heard and it really teaches you how I work with the team and making sure that you're not leaving anyone out and everyone is being addressed.

Amie: If you can talk to the Freshman version of yourself. What advice would you give yourself?

Mirella: I think one of the things that I think about that I wish I had done when I was younger was some like shadowing or informational interview just so that I could start to get an idea of like what are the different types of nursing professions out there because there's so many specialties and you can take nursing a million different ways you don't have to work with patient you can do administration you could do program development so I just wish that I had done a little bit more research so that I could have a better idea of things. The second piece of advice I would say is if you're even considering doing nursing just a little bit, get some of your pre reqs out the way like Anatomy and physiology because you're going to find them useful for a lot of different Health Professions so even if you don't end up going with nursing, it'll be helpful and it's also kind of a good way for you to see if you're interested in the subject matter because you'll get a lot of anatomy and physiology and a lot of what you and nursing schools but you can be a hell of a way to to try to test the waters on like if you are comfortable with the material.

Puti: For me, it would be more proactive and just talk to more people because I was really introverted so I really need it to step out of my comfort zone and just get the connections you need with either professors or the nursing staff or just with your classmates too so just plan ahead and if you're pretty sure that you want to do nursing and just don't give up on yourself like there are many ways to get there like it is not just SFSU there are many other schools like private or public or even Community College and there's many ways to go there so if you're really sure that you want to do this and just don't give up and keep trying and believe in yourself.

Doug: The advice that I would give a freshman is make sure you prioritize your workload as far as like classes grades are super important in getting into nursing school and so if you carry a heavy caseload of classes you're going to be struggling to keep good grades so make sure you balance it out I would say if you're taking anatomy take some easier classes along you know that so you can so you can keep your GPA up because you have to I mean it's just it's pretty difficult to get into a school unless you have the proper grades and I'd also say make sure you volunteer and get that experience to make sure you want to go into nursing because you might find yourself in the hospital and decide that you don't like it at all so or it may reinforce the fact that you want to get into nursing so definitely keep your grades up for sure.

Alana: A piece of advice that I would have liked to receive when I was a freshman was the importance of each clinical that you have, each hospital setting or community setting that you're in and the importance of coming at it as if it is already a job interview and already trying to make connections and just when you're at your clinicals just being your best, always willing to help, willing to learn even asking questions even if you don't think that they're smart questions just asking any questions to show general interest and bringing food to the nurses on the unit, that goes along way.

Kristin: My first piece of advice for a freshman would be to whatever material or whatever information you are learning learn like someone's life depends on it because when you do get into the work field the info that you learned will it does matter I will admit when I was an undergrad student I would learn enough to be like you know I'm familiar with material if I saw it on an exam I can probably make it but when you learn like that it doesn't stick and so I've changed the way that I study material or my whatever nursing classes that I am and it's really made a difference in how I can be a better advocate for my patients and it's a way that I'm genuinely and truly learning and the second piece of advice I would give to a freshman is don't be afraid to explore different options in terms of the volunteer opportunities or different school courses . When I initially got accepted into SF state's Masters program I started in public health

but it wasn't until I explored our OB rotation that I fell in love with Women's Health and so it's just take different chances and just seek out different opportunities you'll never will never know until you just try new things.

Kaitlin: Some recommendations I would have given to myself when I was younger I have a few, so one is definitely just trust your gut if you aren't sure what you want to do figure out generally what it is you want to do and definitely figure out what it is you don't want to do and when you do that it kind of starts to point towards certain direction and that's how it happened for me and then in the program I trust my gut when I switched to Pediatrics because that's where i felt most drawn to. definitely take any opportunity for any leadership that you could possibly do this is so important for I mean your interview process for them to even look at your applications for any of these programs so even if you know any organization if you're a manager at your work and it doesn't have anything to do with health care that definitely put it on there and really play up any kind of leadership opportunity you have and definitely volunteer like we said I think a one advantage that i had coming into it is because I was a phlebotomist for so long I was very comfortable interacting with patients not to mention poking them but just kind of learned i had already learned how to approach a patient let them know what I'm doing as I'm doing it and not freaking them out and it made me less nervous when I was in these rotations doing like more intense stuff that I haven't done before so any opportunity to experience that patient one on one care is super important and could be very helpful as well in your personal statement as well and then let's see...practice your interview skills I wish I knew this when I was younger it is so important you know just do mock interviews all the time because that's the only way you're going to improve and it's hugely important and really nail down the reason you want to be a nurse I think for my interview that's the heart in all interviews for nursing school that's the hardest one to really capture but it's the essence of why you like or why do you wouldn't want to be going to school so definitely put pen to paper and really think about your motivation for becoming a nurse and making that clear to the people you're working with.

Amie: Has the current COVID-19 situation made you reconsider either the nursing profession or your specialization in nursing why or why not?

Kaitlin: I would say definitely it does not have me reconsidering my path if anything I think it reiterates the importance of going into a medical career not only is public health such an important thing and it effects every single person in the world but you're also in a position where you can directly help others and help these people that are going into these really tough situations and supporting your team and supporting your patients directly and also I mean if you're looking at the economy too, the medical field is

probably the most stable one that's happening so you can always bounce back and fall back on a nursing careers definitely a very wise decision And also very fulfilling

Doug: I was just going to say that it's kind of your time to step up to the plate I mean you kind of go in this because it's a great profession but most people want to go into it because you want to make a difference in the world and now is a pretty good time to make that happen so yeah if anything it's reinforced the decision I made to become a nurse

Mirella: For me I think it brought to light the risks that does come with working in healthcare especially in situations like now but I think that it also shows like the deep fulfillment that comes from working in nursing and knowing that every time you step on the floor you're making a difference and especially during times when there's a lot of fear around what's going on, the nurses really contribute to help make not just Healthcare continue to go but like can help people feel comfortable and help people get better.

Jess: Were you ever discouraged from applying within yourself or from others to apply to the nursing program and if so how did you push through and get to where you are today?

Alana: personally this was not my first time applying to the program I had applied before and not gotten in and this wasn't only the SFSU program, this was San Francisco, East Bay and San Jose and Sonoma State. I applied to all four and did not get in immediately after Canada community college and it was incredibly disheartening I definitely had the thoughts of always is not for me am I not smart enough which was really odd because my GPA was a 4.0 and so at this point it was like why aren't I getting in? And then so I took the year off and I did a lot of volunteering a lot soul-searching and upon reapplying again and then one more time again I did get in and I knew that nursing was something that I wanted so I was really passionate and determined to get in and I knew that I belonged in there even though it didn't work out the first or even the second try. Now that I'm in it I was right like it was where I was supposed to be and I have been loving it so just my word of encouragement is if you want to do nursing keep applying keep going after it and you will get it

Puti: I actually applied twice too. the first time I applied with a TEA's score of the 87 or something 85 or 87 so I applied to a few schools but wasn't accepted either so I was like really stressed out like crying in my car I was like this is over am I going to be like homeless and be like you know broke forever but then I did a lot of research though I

talked with the advisors and I kind of research online there's like a website called "allnurses.com" where like a people as a bunch of questions and then other people can't answer so I kind of had an idea to researching for a while like what the school's want us to have like, what do they think it's important for us to have like, what other important in the requirements. For example some people say that some nursing schools the requirement was like your GPA has to be a 3.5 listed as your minimum requirement but then if you're really researched and then for people who got into that school like they all have like 4.0 GPA so sometimes you just need to dig more into the information that you want to get and like know the truth in this nursing program and know what they're looking for, so just do more research and be prepared.

Kristin: I also want to add to that. Applying to nursing schools is it may seem like a very daunting process but these kinds of milestones don't happen overnight so what I would recommend is to take things step-by-step, day-by-day, make a checklist get the prereqs done and just take things one day at a time and it's just small steps that can help ease and make the transition and the whole application process a lot easier and manageable and before you know it you'll have your apps done, you'll get those letters.

Amie: how did you study for the ATI TEAs ? When did you take the TEAs test? Is it after a certain amount of classes or whenever you choose to?

Mirella: So you can take the TEAs anytime and I think it's good for a certain number of years, I actually don't know how many years it's good for but it doesn't have to be all at once. Something that was really helpful for me because the TEAs includes anatomy and physiology also was trying to take it shortly after I took those classes because that material was pretty fresh for me and the rest of test is like some math and reading so you don't feel like you have to take the TEAs right away but it's helpful if you kind of put it together with some of those like science classes so that you can have that you can study for the test without Really realizing or studying for that material.

Doug: I'll just add a little bit to that. I totally agree with what Mirella said and then the other thing is ATI has practice tests that you can pay for and it's definitely worth the extra money to take it just to kind of get a ballpark of where you need to improve. I think I took it twice on the practice test and I was able to like the first time I took it. I saw some of the weaknesses that I had and then I was able to just study those and that was really helpful so it's definitely worth paying that extra money and doing that.

Kristin: Adding onto what Doug said. What I did for the TEAs is if you look on Facebook sometimes there are study groups that have free resources for TEAs just Googling

resources there might be test like testing questions and just the more questions you take the more familiar you'll become with the style of how questions are asked or the type of material and all of that ultimately helps you boost your score for the TEAs.

Mirella: To make sure that you do a search on the program you're applying to because some of them will only take your first exam score so you don't want to take it and he'll not ready and then have to use the rest of your like application so you just want to make sure that like the school allows you maybe like a certain number of times or they'll take your highest attempt before you sign up for it.

Jess: What are some of the hospitals that you guys do your clinical at and then can you explain more like what a day in clinicals is like?

Kaitlin: I can talk about the ones in San Francisco so the clinicals can be all over the Bay Area and they really try hard to match you to a hospital that near your home and we have pretty much in the bay Area, except we don't have much in the North Bay but we have them in SF, all over South Bay as well as the East Bay and so I worked I mean we have SFGH, Kaiser in the city, UCSF, CPMC, you'll be at Laguna Honda at one point I think I listed of all the hospital. so a day in the life of a clinical basically you go in and well depending on if you're in a hospital setting like the bedside your clinical day is you go in and you're paired with one nurse for the entire day and so your day could be 8 hours long, can be 12, it could be on the weekend, it could be on a weekday but that whole time, you're with that one nurse and you, Shadow them through their patients for all the patients and you might keep a log for yourself on one of the patients starting to kind of get an idea of like the full picture and an in-depth review of one patient and the more you do that you kind of add to your repertoire so you're like I can do two patients today and I feel confident going in and working with both of these patients and charting on them but it a little bit depends on the nurse with and how much they'll let you do but you're definitely with that one person the whole time.

Doug: Your first semester, it's your community in your first semester so it eases you in. your first semester, you're just kind of learning the basics of patient care and then at San Francisco State the second semester labor and delivery and psychiatry and so you get a lot more access to patient Care and you're just go on with what Kaitlin was saying you basically shadow a nurse and you're spending the day with them and that's kind of your second semester is where you start to develop your skills and kind of develop more hands-on experience with patients.

Jess: Going off of clinicals, what is one of the most challenging situations that you've been through during your clinicals or with classes or anything in regards to nursing programs?

Puti: I would say the most challenging things during clinical will be sometimes you know like they're good nurses and bad nurses, some nurses are really really nice and they like to teach students, they love students, but there are also bad examples of nurses who are really mean to students and they're just like burnout, they don't want you to be there, they don't like students. and sometimes if you get to follow a nurse like that, it's really challenging like the day it's going to be rough because they don't like, you don't want you to be there and even like if you try to be nice, even though you try to help them but then like sometimes you just can't change the situation and you just need to take it and just don't like don't let the bad nurses discourage you because you don't want to be them, Even If you follow them and you see how they are, they're not nice to patients but advocate for yourself and for your patients and don't be like that. That's what I learned from challenging clinical days.

Kaitlin: I would reiterate that and definitely I think what you learned throughout the clinicals is that you don't take things personally when those things happen to you and try your best to try to get paired with someone who remembers what it's like to be in nursing school because those are the best experiences you will have because they're in that teaching mode and they don't feel super burnt out but also understanding that you know burnout does happen and it's not a personal issue at all. The other hard thing for me was I mean you do see some really tough patient cases and you feel pretty helpless because all you can do is talk to them and you're not doing all of the nursing activities but you see some hard stuff they definitely, some really sick kids or really sick adults who are just kind of towards the end of their life, it's hard. There's no way to prepare for that but I think the more you do it the easier it is.

Jess: What personal experiences impacted your interest in entering the nursing field?

Doug: I'll say it like I said earlier I was in business and really didn't like it and then I becomes an EMT and I felt like I was making a difference pretty much every day, there's some days you don't but you know so it just felt like nursing was a good fit for me and it's just I know I'm right choice.

Kaitlin: Similar to Doug, I was doing a lot of different majors and kind of went back and forth with what I wanted to do but again just making it clear the things I for sure wanted to do which is benefit society and do something science related and the more

experiences you have you kind of add to that list or add to the list of things you don't want do, through phlebotomy I was able to determine that I want to do one-on-one care, I want to work with people, and it kind of checked all the boxes for me with nursing and then having worked with different types of medical providers I was able to really see that nursing was that holistic approach that I wanted to do compared to a physician assistant for instance so process of elimination go with your gut and then straight on till morning.

Jess: Do you think having some sort of medical background like an LVN or CNA is important before jumping into nursing, do you think that plays a role?

Doug: It's definitely helpful for sure you know, you just learn how to talk to patients and you know if I didn't have that experience beforehand I think it would be difficult but the other side of that is you're kind of thrown into it into the fire pretty quickly in nursing school so you adapt relatively quickly so you might be nervous your first few days on clinical but if you're a person that can adjust easily it's not a difficult transition but definitely previous patient care for sure helps.

Alana: Going off of what Doug was saying I did not have much clinical experience prior to coming into nursing but one of my friends in the program she did and often, especially in the first semester we were partnered at the same locations and just being able to see how she would interact with patients taught me a lot on how I should be interacting with patients and a lot of it is just being comfortable being with people because as a nurse, you're really in their space, like you just meet them and then suddenly you're taking a blood pressure, you're touching them, you're all up on them, you're asking them personal questions, so it's really like Doug was saying, you learn it pretty quickly just being comfortable talking to people being up close and personal with them, not having that experience I feel like it would have helped me to have it but I didn't and I feel like I can still go on to be a nurse.

Kaitlin: To add to that, I think that if you're on the fence about nursing, you should definitely try to get clinical experience because I think doing that one-on-one care is a really good way to tell you if this is for you or not before you make the big commitment of the time and tuition. I don't think it's necessary to get into the program I think that what they look for more is your volunteer experience I think it's really helpful and also again I really want to stress any leadership you can possibly do I know that some of my old coworkers who are phlebotomist much longer than me did not become managers and they did not get into the program and the only people I know that did make it in the program did have that managerial experience so really try to get some leadership experience, get some volunteer experience. Anything that is kind of unique about you

makes use of that in your interviews and in your personal statement. an example I have is one of our colleagues is an EMT, She didn't have manager leadership experience but she was the only woman on the team so often she was at these 911 dispatch emergencies, being the only woman in that scenario she was able to kind of use that as like her leadership and you know where she overcame some difficulties that happen when you're kind of a minority in those group so you know there's a totally different ways to work it, you just have to be really creative and when you're doing your application.

Jess: Do you guys have any top volunteer recommendations or were there a certain amount of hours you did or are there any advice on volunteering before applying to the program?

Puti: I would say just go to...like depending on where you live, check out the nearest hospital's website and they have the volunteer page for you to connect to their volunteer department. And sometimes, they're hiring volunteers all year round. You can just like call them, emailed them or just even like go to the hospital and check with them like whether they're hiring volunteers and I did my volunteer hours at Saint Francis memorial hospital its a hospital in downtown San Francisco so what I did basically I just applied a bunch of hospitals for volunteering opportunities and I chose that one over the other one and then they just had me for an interview and then they took me into their hospital. I did over a hundred hours volunteer hours so I think that's the minimum requirement. It also depends on which program you're trying to apply by I think in general the minimum requirement was 100 hours.

Kaitlin: I have a plug for one, San Francisco General if you are interested in postpartum care or women health, you can be a postpartum doula there and it's a wonderful program I have been doing it for about a year now and highly recommended there's a really thorough training and it's a minimum commitment of 8 hours a month and you obviously can do more if you have free time. I started while I was in school because I was on the fence about women's health and pediatrics but I still do it, well not now because of covid-19, but I highly recommend it and any in general any volunteers experience, you should get one where you're communicating with patients or physically interacting with them. Communication is probably easier to get and I highly recommend it. That is really what all nursing is about, is being able to communicate with the patients and you can totally use that in your application.

Mirella: I agree with Puti to try to get at least a hundred and it's helpful to have one that's health-related and then also feel like you can balance it out with doing something

that you really like that can also make you stand out because there's going to be hundreds of applicants who all have very similar volunteer experience in the hospital so if you can try to get something that's a little different that speak to your interest in like what makes you unique in the application pool. I think that's also really helpful. I also have another plug for volunteer experience that's healthcare-related; you don't have to have prior healthcare experience over at Highland Hospital and it's called Health Advocate. You can google it. I think they accept students year-round it's kind of based like in the school year but what you do is that you help to connect patients from the clinic to different resources they need to sort of help out like around out their needs in health so it could be connecting on the like a food support application or housing application and I think it also will give you an idea of the way healthcare intersects with all of those things.

Alana: So two other things that I did in terms of volunteering was I went to the local homeless shelter near where I live and I just I went on their website and there's no clear volunteering application so I just kind of went and I went to the front desk area and asked if I could speak with the nurse they just let me speak with the nurse and I told the nurse that I was interested in becoming a nurse and if I could kind of shadow her or work with her or do some things and she just kind of offered me a full-time volunteering position and essentially she taught me how to do blood pressures and take glucose checks and that's what we were doing it was very hands-on volunteering or kind of just went in and asked if I can do it but the other thing I did was also get scribe trained, I never worked as a scribe but I did the whole training for it and just in case I wouldn't get into nursing school again so I have the Scribe training and I also have that volunteering at the hospitals.

Doug: I did a couple of different volunteer opportunities but the one that made a big difference, I was in the...and I think a lot of hospitals are getting this too is the NODA program, it "no one dies alone". So when people are going through death in the hospitals and they don't have any relatives or their relatives can't make it to the hospitals, you would sit with the person while they're passing and it's very rewarding for you and you're getting the experience of being with someone when they're dying. And I think that would definitely set you apart. I also had a therapy dog but that was kind of more fun for me than anything so I was going to the hospital and visiting patients with my dog but really I think what would make you stand out is if you try to do the NODA program.

Jess: If any of you did your pre-reqs at SF State, do you have any suggestions for students regarding classes that are hard to get into? How was managing pre-reqs? Did you take them all at once or did you spread them out or just any advice on pre-reqs?

Puti: I could never get any classes at SF State. I took all my science classes at city college because I just can't get in. So especially their lab they only have one lap session for each class I believe maybe a little bit more than that but they won't take more than like 60 people for one semester for that class and we have so many pre nursing students at SFSU so it was like, I didn't know what to do and then someone advice me to take classes in other colleges in which count the same as if you were taking them at SF State so like it's the same credits, same class and when you apply to nursing programs they count as the same thing so I took all of them at city college and took one at Evergreen Valley College in San Jose near my house and I took them separately I took like each science class in one semester like I remember I took one chemistry in the first semester and then microbiology the second and like physio third and anatomy fourth because If you were to take two classes together that will be lecture plus lab, that's too much for one semester so I separate them. So I highly recommend taking them at city college if you live in San Francisco and the professors at city college, they're really great too, they're really knowledgeable and they're really encouraging students and students there are nice too, so try City College or other community colleges that you can find.

Kaitlin: Just wanted to reiterate that the teachers at city college are absolutely wonderful and that's why I did all my pre-reqs for night class and I also did it at Skyline that also had some great classes but city colleges are free during regular sessions as if you live in the city.

Doug: College of Marin has the same thing and I don't think you pay for tuition either and it's pretty easy too. I guess I shouldn't say easy. I think it's harder now to get classes there but you can get classes there. So I had some classmates that came in from San Francisco to take classes there.

Kristen: The thing about pre-reqs I would also recommend is for a specific nursing program just I would recommend looking for online programs as well and just double check with admissions if a curriculum from an online course does count for the pre-req you're trying to take, there are a lot of online class catalog so just do your research.

Jess: When you guys apply to the program like how is your academic standing like where you mentally and academically prepared for it, was there something you would have done differently when you applied?

Kaitlin: I would have done everything a little bit sooner I was pretty late on the job so prepare ahead of time is my best advice and just do one step at a time like it was said earlier make small little tasks for you in the days you can get them all done and also get your letter of recs early, its very rude to approach them last minute and ask for letters of recommendation I did that but they're my friends are so they were fine but any other circumstance would have been totally awful so ask like a month or two ahead of time to give them time and if you are asking them give them a resume so they have something to work with that's also really important.

Doug: The other thing is that and I don't know maybe they changed the application but I think we did nursing cast and Cal State apply which are two totally separate application and for me Nursing cast took forever because I had schooling from several different schools so definitely is a lot sometimes to put into that so it was super time consuming, I don't know if its still like that but it was a couple years ago.

Kaitlin: In terms of the Academic standing part, I'm pretty sure it will take your best grade so if you feel you didn't do well in a certain class you can retake it in order to get a higher grade and I don't think this particular program does the average or the more recent one I think it's whatever the better grade is so I highly recommend, I don't think that should deter you from applying if your GPA isn't as high as you would like it because you should always apply, you can also apply again but in the interim if you don't get in the first time you could try retaking a course to increase the GPA.

Dough: Another great thing about the ELM program is that they only count the last 60 units which totally worked to my advantage because I really screwed up in undergrad. So I got a bit of redemption, taking the classes when I'm older, more mature.

Puti: Adding to Doug and Kaitlin, for BSN program two years ago though I'm not sure how is it right now but two years ago their requirement was that we were only allowed to take one repeat class like for example I got a C in microbiology I'm only allowed to take that one class if I decide to so if you have more than two C's I'm not saying like you should give up or you're dumb but like it's going to be really difficult though like I had a B in microbial and I had to retake it because I just really need to get that 4.0 GPA and it is very hard and with the TEA's score I got a 93 I remember and then I have like 150

volunteer hours and I have some like overseas volunteer experience too so they interviewed me and they put me on the waitlist so very very competitive.

Kaitlin: And if your GPA is lower and you have already exhausted that option I would say really increasing all the other parts of that resume so really get much more hours of volunteer service, get the leadership experience and really beef up their resume so that it counteracts your GPA is important and also there are other great programs all over the city so definitely do a wide cast to where you're applying to because everyone has different requirements.

Mirella: And along with that too, you can have a couple of different plans for how you want to get into nursing school so maybe you don't do a BSN direct transfer but if you just get your Bachelors, a lot of times there's a lot more positions open and entry-level Master programs and they tend to be around the same length if not just a little longer but you would still get an entry into like the nursing profession and you'd also have a little bit more experience.

Kristen: GPA is only one of the part of criteria in order to apply there are so I'm just seconding what kaitlin had mentioned, there are so many more ways that you can shine on your application other than that's your personal statement what leadership did you hold in volunteer how many hours did you volunteer and most importantly, what does the volunteer experience mean to you because I think truly what they're looking for is passion and like why you want to be a nurse and when you write your applications when you have like a space specific your personal statement like this is your place to shine so make sure that you do elaborate on those passions.

Jess: What do you all do to prevent burnout now or during finals or just in general like how do you prevent burnout and how have you taken care of yourself while you're nursing school?

Kristen: So becoming nursing school you come in cohorts. Lucky for SF State, our cohorts typically come in about 20 students and no one will understand your nursing school struggles go more than your cohort and each other so one of the great things about this program is the way I prevent burnout is I confide in the people I'm closest in my cohort you know that's what we're here for we're here to support each other and just being in the same clinicals and the same classes they understand what you're going through as well so don't be afraid to make connections and grow with your cohorts and faculty and advisors.

Kaitlin: I'd say you know making sure you schedule a time for yourself every day there's only so many hours in the day and just have realistic expectations that you can only study so much and you can only work on paper for so long and if you go into it having realistic expectations of what you can do in a day you will decrease your stress a lot and the more you can do things ahead of time like look ahead get some of the smaller items out of the way when you near the end of the semester doesn't feel as daunting and then hang out friends and do all the things you like to do, exercise is huge and eat well.

Alana: I would say for me nursing school burnout is a lot to do I think was mentioned before more with the scheduling then with the actual course load and the courses themselves because if you can get through the nursing prerequisites you can definitely get through nursing classes they are challenging but you already have that background knowledge of the anatomy and physiology and so you know you're going to be able to get to the classes so it's more so just managing time and balancing classes and what works for me and it's kind of random I like to follow a lot of nurses on Instagram or on YouTube and just trying to motivate myself that way and a lot of them have a lot of content as to like what the beginning of a nursing career looks like and inspiring to see other people doing it and succeeding in it when you feel like it's getting really hard and you don't know how to balance it so just kind of looking to media because there's a bunch of nurses out there for sure right now.

Mirella: I would say along the lines of what Kaitlin said of the scheduling time for yourself because you'll find that you sometimes have one free day or no free days based off of your studying and stuff so making sure that you give yourself at least a couple of hours where you're not giving yourself the pressure of having to feel like you have to study something or like you have to be doing something because it will get overwhelming and if you don't take those breaks I think that it can also be a little discouraging of just how how much work you have to do and what's left to do so I just know that things will eventually get done but yeah it really taking those breaks I think it's helpful

Puti: Adding onto that I feel like procrastination is my biggest enemy like everyone procrastinate but when you have a lot of things to do when you have paper due, you have test coming up, it's really important not to procrastinate and just really put everything in his schedule and make a detailed timeline schedule of what you need to do today when you do tomorrow and just read everything so it will be easier.

Amie: On behalf of the SRC I want to thank everyone for attending, we had a great turnout and I hope all of our attendees were able to learn a lot from our panelists

and thank you to our panelists for taking time out of your day to speak to our pre-nursing students. We appreciate you sharing your valuable information, your knowledge and experiences.