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El Camino College Student Nurse Ready to Transfer

When Kelli Conlon first enrolled at El Camino College, she started taking business and economics courses. In between her studies, she did some volunteer work at an area hospital. She had no idea about the challenges and changes coming her way.

“I liked the business classes, but it wasn’t something I was passionate about,” said Conlon, who grew up in Torrance and graduated from South High School. “During my volunteer hours, I really started to like working in a hospital and soon I was talking to doctors and nurses and I realized that this is what I wanted to do. Two years later and now my life is completely changed.”

Conlon is one of 22 students who will graduate from the El Camino College Nursing Program on June 10. El Camino College commencement is scheduled for 4 p.m. at Murdock Stadium. The Nursing Program has scheduled its annual pinning ceremony at 6 p.m. June 10.

The ECC nursing program has been educating nurses since 1962 and has graduated thousands of students ready to meet the health care needs of the community. The program’s Ella Rose Madden Simulation Lab, situated in a facility complete with nursing stations and a central supply, features high fidelity mannequins that mimic the human body. The program boasts an impressive 94 percent pass rate on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) for first-time test takers in 2009-10.

Conlon is now in her preceptorship training at Kaiser Permanente South Bay Medical Center in Harbor City. She will transfer in the fall to California State University, Dominguez Hills to work toward a bachelor’s degree in nursing and determine her next step.

“I’m not entirely sure what kind of nursing I want to do, but with an advanced degree I will have more opportunities in my career,” she said. “That’s what makes me so excited about nursing – there are so many ways to go. That’s also what is good about El Camino College; they really let you see all the different options we have as nurses. I think that’s what I like most, the different aspects of patient care.”

Among other healthcare departments, Conlon and her classmates have experienced the emergency room, obstetrics, ICU, pediatrics – they even take their studies outside the hospital to visit with home health nurses and various clinics.

“I think the instructors at El Camino College are wonderful. They are there for you and are supportive and can help with any questions you have,” she said.

“I would recommend the program to anyone who is really determined and really wants to do it. You have to want it because the work is hard. This program is extremely challenging – it changed everything for me. Being in a hospital and caring for others is the best. It is really amazing.”

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