



NEWS

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ECC Nursing Program Approved by California Board of Registered Nursing

El Camino College nursing program graduate Laura Sweatt still remembers how tense she was, standing outside of a patient's room during a clinical rotation, waiting to hear feedback from a rigorous teacher.

"She mentioned improvements for everyone else, but for me she said, 'Great job, you're going to make a fantastic nurse someday,'" Sweatt said. "I was thrilled. From then on, there's never been a doubt in my mind I made the right decision."

The California Board of Registered Nursing voted this past summer to continue approval of El Camino College's Associate Degree of Nursing program, which has graduated more than 2,500 registered nurses in the past 50 years. The majority of those graduates went on to obtain jobs in the South Bay.

About 120 nurses graduate each year, ready to work in specialty fields like intensive care, pediatrics, obstetrics, geriatrics, rehabilitation, oncology, cardiology, and occupational health. El Camino College's program partners with more than a dozen local hospitals and medical centers.

Sweatt, who takes her licensing exam next month, said she already has a potential job offer from one of the hospitals she visited during her studies at El Camino College. She said the opportunity to complete clinical rotations in so many local facilities was a huge help in deciding where she wanted to work after she completed the program.

The nursing program at El Camino College recently received a \$171,000 Assessment, Remediation and Retention Grant from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to improve the attrition, retention and completion rates of the program. El Camino College Compton Center received a grant of \$91,000.

Funds will be used to help support prospective students seeking entry in the two programs, and purchase entry-level diagnostic exam to assess the readiness of students seeking admission, funding tutoring and mentoring, and purchasing instructional tools. Funding will also be available to offset costs of review coursework to prepare graduates for licensing exams.

Sweatt, a 2009 West Torrance High School graduate, said she eventually wants to work in a labor and delivery floor in a local hospital. She begins the next step in her education, a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas, Arlington, via online classes early next year. Sweatt said the dedication of nursing faculty at El Camino College is inspiring.

"The teachers really do dedicate their lives to teaching you," Sweatt said. "They truly want you to learn and understand what you're doing so you can give safe patient care and be a good nurse in the future."

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