

# Welcome to the Nurse Anesthetist Program!

Fara Clarke, BSN, RN, CCRN, SRNA

## You Made It!

CONGRATULATIONS! You have made it to the nurse anesthetist program! You have made it through the interview process and rejoiced over your acceptance letters. Your journey through the world of nursing has brought you to a brand new and *exciting* place in your career. You should be quite proud of yourselves,

as you have accomplished many great things to make it to this point. You are being given the opportunity to be a part of a challenging, rewarding, and honorable profession. Some of you may go on to be a chief CRNA, or provide anesthesia overseas for missions. The world is at your fingertips; you can

do anything! You could have done anything else in the world and you chose to become a nurse anesthetist. So thank you for choosing to contribute your knowledge, skills, and compassion to this profession. Remember that you are the future of this wonderful profession. Congratulations once again.

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## How Do I Do This?

How *do* you do this? Many of you haven't been to school in many years. Studying for hours and taking tests may be something that is far in your distant memory. So how do you get back into school mode? How do you best re-establish yourself as a student? Whatever way works for *you*. It's important to understand that going back to school is a process that is different for everyone. You might have seen your schedule and wondered how in the world you will be able to take all of those classes, go to clinical, *and* manage your life outside of school. Well... you will! We all find a way, but it's important to remember that we each have our own way. So where do you start? Well it's good to have a plan. Identify

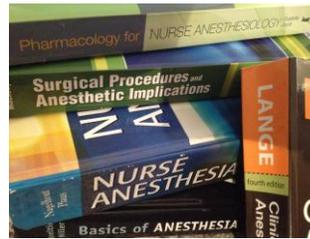
areas in your life that need to be modified, and then make a plan that will allow you to prioritize school while still allowing you to accomplish your goals for these other areas. Test your plan, and if it doesn't work out, modify your plan or create a new one, and do it as soon as you find out your plan isn't working. Some of you may be from out-of-state, have children, or be married, which are all things that can affect your transition into anesthesia school. You might have been the one who always made dinner, but maybe now your spouse must take over for you. You might have been the one to take your kids to school in the morning, but now you have to spend quality time with them after school. You might even

have to cut your daily trips to the gym to weekly. Also remember that modifications may not be enough- you may have to make some sacrifices, like giving up your weekly girl's night out. Each semester brings new challenges and opportunities, so you may not have to sacrifice or modify the same things every semester. You will be periodically changing your plans and creating new ones. Perhaps the best advice for the question "How do I do this?" is the advice given to us our first semester by Dr. Derrick Glymph- "Whatever you did in school before has made you successful enough to make it to this point, so just do what you did before." It sounds simple but it's true. Do what works.

## Study! Study! Study!

Senior Cole Asay puts it straight when it comes to studying- "Decide from the beginning to dedicate all of your time to studying. If you don't you will fall behind quickly and the stress level will increase... exponentially!" Don't let that scare you; but it does emphasize the importance of studying. Put your brain into school mode. Studying is the most important thing you need to do to be successful in anesthesia school. Semester I establishes a foundation of knowledge that will be built upon semester-by-semester. Remember that you are not studying only to pass the test, you are studying to retain knowledge that you will need for the rest of your career. So how do you study? Whatever way works for you. Some people like to study little-by-little up until the test, and some like to pull all-

nighters (which I don't recommend!). Some people gain a better understanding from reading many different books, and others learn by supplementing with journal articles.



Group studying may be for you, or it may not be. You may find that studying at home or with the TV on may be too distracting for you; for others, it may be perfect. You might need to run your errands during the day and then study at night, or study by the pool during the day and spend time with your family at night. Whatever helps you to get that information into your

brain in such a way that you can retain it in your long-term memory will achieve the goal. It's also important to keep in mind some things that *don't* work for you. Personally, I have a very comfortable sofa that I know I can't study on because it puts me to sleep every time. Something I find very helpful for memory is making flashcards. Some books have key points or questions at the end of the chapter that help you to grasp the most important concepts. Remember that studying is important, but don't over-study. Many of us who choose anesthesia are quite the over-achievers and it's easy to go non-stop. Giving your brain a rest is necessary not only for retention, but also for good mental health. You will find that there is a lot to learn, but it's good to give yourself a break.

"Whatever you did in school before has made you successful enough to make it to this point, so just do what you did before."

~ Derrick C.

Glymph, CRNA,  
DNAP

## Make Friends

You will quickly find that you cannot do this on your own. Think of your class as one big team. These relationships are important because you will be working very closely together for the next twenty-eight months. You will be planning parties for graduation and for the class coming behind you. You will be learning, studying, and growing together. You will need your classmates to help you remember deadlines, quiz dates, to bring your laptop on test day, and many other

things. You may need a shoulder to lean on or someone to vent to. Your classmates are the only people who will truly be able to relate to your challenges and triumphs with regards to this program. As much as you may explain to your friends and family just how exhausted you are, or how you can't make it to the big event, they won't fully understand. The good news is that the people who do understand will be right there going through this journey with you.

Also, take advantage of your senior buddy- we have been in your shoes, and are still in your shoes; so not only can we help to guide you, we can relate to you as well. Just ask!



## Be Prepared

One of the keys to being successful in school is to be prepared. One good way to be prepared is to be organized. Save everything- schedules, emails, phone numbers, syllabuses- because you will refer back to them frequently.

Preparedness requires punctuality. Your professors are dedicated to your education and have invested much of their time and effort to ensure that you receive a

quality education, so be on time for lab, lecture, and clinical.

Speaking of clinical, many of you had questions about the expectation at clinical. First and foremost, the expectation is always that you do your best. The majority of your workload for the first semester is your classes, so don't *overly* stress about clinical expectations. Being on time, being professional, mastering the machine check, setting up

the room, and drawing up the right drugs in the right (labeled, dated, and timed) syringes will help to put you on the right path in clinical for this semester.



## Face Your Fears

"This year will reveal the strength of your character," says Senior Patrick Etienne. Anesthesia school will reveal the best and the worst in your character. Allow it to do so, as it will encourage you to grow, to solidify your strengths, to conquer your weaknesses, and to overcome your fears. Embarking on this endeavor can bring out some of your fears; be assured that it is perfectly natural to have fears. It may be a fear of making mistakes, a fear of failure, a fear of meeting new people, a fear of being away from family, a

fear of financial hardship; it can be just about anything. We all have those kinds of fears, but the only way to overcome a fear is to face it. The "unknown" often looks much bigger from afar than it does up close. Once you learn the layout of your clinical setting, get into your daily routine, figure out your most effective study habits, and when faces become familiar, you'll find that those fears will start to dissipate. The good thing about fear is that we can choose to use it to drive us towards success instead of away

from failure. Super-Senior Roman Picado sums it up with one of his favorite encouraging quotes- "Your desire for success must be greater than your fear of failure." Remember that you were chosen for this program because your professors believe in you. They believe that you have built the foundation of clinical skills and knowledge that is necessary to be successful in this program. The rest is up to you; so believe in yourself, do your best, face your fears, and enjoy the journey.

*"Your desire for success must be greater than your fear of failure."*

## Enjoy the Journey

As a travel nurse, I was so focused on arriving to my destination that I almost missed the beauty of the mountains and all of the beautiful sites in between. Dr. Derrick Glymph once said "Enjoy the journey because you will never be a first semester anesthesia

student again." I didn't truly understand this until I experienced the excitement of doing my first nasal intubation. Just like a baby will only speak their first words or take their first step once; you too will have those firsts that will only ever be a first once. Treasure your

firsts and take A LOT of pictures! You won't want to forget this journey. Welcome the challenges and rejoice in overcoming them. Your experience will be what you make it. Appreciate and enjoy all that you can, as these next 28 months will fly by faster than you think.



**AANA**  
Health &  
Wellness

VISIT THE AANA STUDENT  
WELLNESS HOMEPAGE:

[www.AANA.com/studentwellness](http://www.AANA.com/studentwellness)

## AANA Student Wellness Homepage

The America Association of Nurse Anesthetists has a great website that is dedicated to providing resources for the physical and emotional well being of nurse anesthetists and student nurse anesthetists. As the selected AANA Student Health and Wellness Representative for the fiscal year 2014, my goal is to encourage you to be well. So I'd like to encourage you (as a class) to choose one class wellness activity to participate in for the year. For the next 28 months, your lives will be saturated in anesthesia,

so it will be good for your soul to take your mind away from it every once in a while. It may be volunteering for a local community organization, taking a class trip to the beach, or running a 5k together. You can even challenge the seniors to a game of kickball; are you up for the challenge? Helping others and having fun is good for your emotional and physical well-being. What activity can you think of? Need help planning? Let me know! And don't forget to visit the Student Wellness Homepage- it's there for you!

## Words of Wisdom from Your Upperclassmen

"When you think you want to just stop after a rough day or a stressful study session, just stay positive and keep working hard. You will be so proud and strong when you are done. It's worth the sacrifice." ~ Courtney MacMahon, Super-Senior SRNA

"Pay attention to your mistakes but don't get upset when you make a mistake; rather use it in such a way to help you to not repeat that mistake. Don't try to be better than someone else, try to be better than *yourself*. Work really hard to make yourself better every day." ~ Fara Vazquez, Super-Senior SRNA

"If you didn't deserve to be in this program, you wouldn't have made it past the interview stage. Don't ever get so overwhelmed or stressed out that you forget that you deserve to be here; now enjoy the ride." ~ Yaniv Ergas, Senior SRNA

"Don't be hard on yourself. Be good to yourself". ~ Sandra Taylor, Senior SRNA



### Things to Remember:

- Remember that you can do this!
- Create a plan! Modify your plan! Make sacrifices!
- Put your brain into school mode and study, study, study!
- Do whatever has made you successful in the past.
- Enjoy the journey!