MENTORING FUTURE LEADERS TO REACH THEIR POTENTIAL

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Hass earned an Associate Degree in Nursing from Sacramento City College and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Master of Science in Nursing from California State University, Sacramento. She earned family nurse practitioner and physician assistant certifications from UC Davis and a Doctor of Nursing Practice from Rush University.

Q. What prompted you to pursue a leadership role in health care education?

A. Upon graduation from high school, I experienced the rare opportunity to review my school record dating back to kindergarten. Through comments spanning all grade levels, a theme emerged — my teachers referred to me as a natural-born leader. I never saw myself that way, but the realization that others did propelled me to step out into leadership roles. While in nursing school, I tutored classmates, taught a few classes, even served as class president. As I took on these roles, I received positive reinforcement and grew confidence to take on bigger and broader responsibilities.

During my first job as a registered nurse in a medical and surgical telemetry unit, I quickly learned that while I was the leader in name during the night shift, success relied on the skills and resources of all team members. From classrooms to the hospital, the mentors who helped me along the way shaped both my clinical skills and my leadership perspective. Being a leader means recognizing when you don't have all the answers and identifying others on the team whose skillsets complement yours. You must welcome the knowledge of others, if you want to continue learning. You must be open to mentoring.

While working at the bedside, I realized I was on the wrong end of the spectrum. Rather than try to fix what was broken, I wanted to prevent disease, and if not prevent, then prevent its progression. Advancing my scope was the next step. UC Davis' combined nurse practitioner and physician assistant programs allowed me to learn with people from diverse backgrounds, both professional and cultural. While there, I embraced mentoring future leaders to reach their potential.
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Q. What do you like about the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing?

A. The School of Nursing supports innovation, while staying true to its mission of educating future health leaders to serve the underprivileged people of California. Our admissions process, the curriculum we build and the grants we seek to support our programs all connect to that touchstone. Immersed in this program first as a student and now as a faculty leader, I consider mentoring my biggest role. I see beyond one student or one class. Who will be our next leaders? Who will fill my shoes? Who will carry our programs into the future where our professions are growing? We must prepare the next phase of future leaders who have the next ‘great idea’ to take the reins. Some of my best bosses provided resources when I needed them, then trusted me to do my job without micromanaging. Now I pass that methodology on to my students, so they reach their full potential. Failure to see the big picture ultimately inhibits their growth.

Q. Why do the unique combined clinical programs of the School of Nursing benefit students today and the future of care?

A. The classroom experience is much richer because students come from so many backgrounds. One may be a surgeon from another country, a medical assistant, a social worker, acupuncturist, even a veterinarian. The clinical, geographic and ethnic diversity of our students brings so many perspectives into the classroom. Everyone practices communication skills, grows more comfortable in admitting they don’t know everything and learns how to collaborate within a team. That teamwork philosophy cultivates providers who reach out to colleagues for insight, recognize the strengths of all team players and think broadly about what people need, ultimately building a community around families.

Q. How can the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing transform education and health care?

A. Our students and approaches benefit the future of health care. We create diversity in classes and curriculum, while continuing to embrace the notion that anything is possible. We create an environment where it’s OK to question why things have been done a certain way and challenge our students to innovate new ways to approach problems. The goal for our physician assistant and nurse practitioner students is to educate clinicians, who are informed consumers of evidence, knowledgeable consumers of research, and who can put that awareness into practice to improve the quality of health care. The presence of the School of Nursing within UC Davis Health System has made a tremendous difference in advancing interprofessional education and embracing the role of interprofessional teams. Our innovation fuels our passion and fulfills our mission of serving the underserved in California. An interprofessional system benefits all of us — the mentors, the learners, the people who receive care and the community.

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