

Year-long project helps nursing-school hopefuls achieve their dream

Entrepreneurial pair find a missing link to their education, fill the void with an online resource

When she began her educational trek toward a hoped-for career in nursing, Rebecca Rhea found a minor obstacle in the way: a dearth of interactive online resources.

A Tempe Coventry resident and 2014 graduate of Grand Canyon University, Rhea linked up with classmates Anna Bright and Tonya Smith to solve the problem.

Their collaborative efforts led to building a website that encompassed what they considered pertinent and helpful tools for nursing students—an initiative that paid off beyond their expectations.

“When the three of us were relatively new in our program, our class was asked to purchase four books, and we had no idea what they were,” Rhea said.

“Our success was dependent on finding those books. It was a big process,” she said. “When we were finished we thought to ourselves, ‘There has got to be a website that has all of this one place.’ At first we searched for anything out there similar to our idea, but once we realized there was nothing, we found ourselves in this position to start creating it. It was our driving point.”

After dedicating the majority of 2013 to building and refining the components, their website, iStudentNurse.com, was launched in December.

The innovative site serves to enhance the student experience through the delivery of comprehensive products and empowering information designed to promote academic, professional and personal success in nursing school.

Content is created through collaborations with various nursing students, licensed RNs, clinical liaisons, educators, interdisciplinary consultants and alliances with professional associations.

The project took first place at the 2014 Annual Business Idea Competition at Grand Canyon

University.

“The three of us mainly worked on the project but a lot of other people were kind enough to help, and there was a lot of support from the online IT community,” Rhea said.

“We could not have done it without our mentor Lisa McAllister; we were really lucky to have her on our side. She is trained as an accountant and she is a volunteer business coach. Someone happened to introduce me to her and she pointed me in the right direction.”

Although website-building has become more readily available, the task is not for everyone.

“The process has involved a lot of educating myself and learning how to figure things out, one by one,” Rhea said. “In order to succeed I had to remain persistent and willing to work with it until I could figure it out. It’s comparable to building a house because the navigation is such a crucial part of it all.”

“Our biggest challenge was creating a user-friendly site with the mass amount of content we had.”

Despite the effort involved, the team has conquered each challenge with confidence.

A second portion of the website, the shop, was successfully launched this summer.

Currently hosting 1,200-plus products, the site eventually will include a section for male students and for textbooks.

iStudentNurse.com is built on the foundation of helping others, Rhea noted.

“You never know what’s going to happen until you start,” she said. “Despite the challenges, when we learned that we’ve helped someone and made it a little easier for them than it was for us, it’s the most satisfying thing.”

“That’s what it’s all about.”

— Wrangler News staff

MCC forums to answer questions about budgeting for college

For Kyrene Corridor residents who tend to find matters that involve budgeting for college stressful and confusing, Mesa Community College comes to the rescue.

MCC is offering students, their family members and the community tools and resources to better understand and manage their finances during a series of workshops now underway.

College officials say the program is the result of studies that show that of the 20 million people who enroll in college, close to 12 million, or 60 percent, borrow to help cover costs.

“We know education can change lives,” said Dr. James Mabry, MCC’s vice president for academic affairs. “We also know students and their families are struggling to pay for tuition and books.”

“This is why MCC remains committed to providing a low cost, high quality educational

experience and helping our students and our community find effective ways to manage their financial commitments.”

The college’s Library and Financial Aid departments teamed with students from the Omicron Beta Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society to host the series of free workshops on Thursday evenings at MCC’s Southern and Dobson campus in BP Building 43A, Room 4.

Remaining topics and their dates include:

Sept. 18 — Budgeting; Sept. 25 — Scholarships; Oct. 2 — Credit and Credit Cards; Oct. 9 — Native American-specific Finances; Oct. 16 — Satisfactory Academic Progress; Oct. 23 — Student Loans; Oct. 30 — Savings; Nov. 6 — Veteran-specific Finances; and Nov. 13 — Financial Aid and Eligibility Limits.

The MCC campus also will be the site of a financial literacy fair scheduled for Phi Theta Kappa Founder’s Day, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 19.

For additional information, contact Christin Franco at 480-461-7459 or christin.franco@mesacc.edu.



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