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GWU Senior Grew Academically and Personally by Participating in Honors Program

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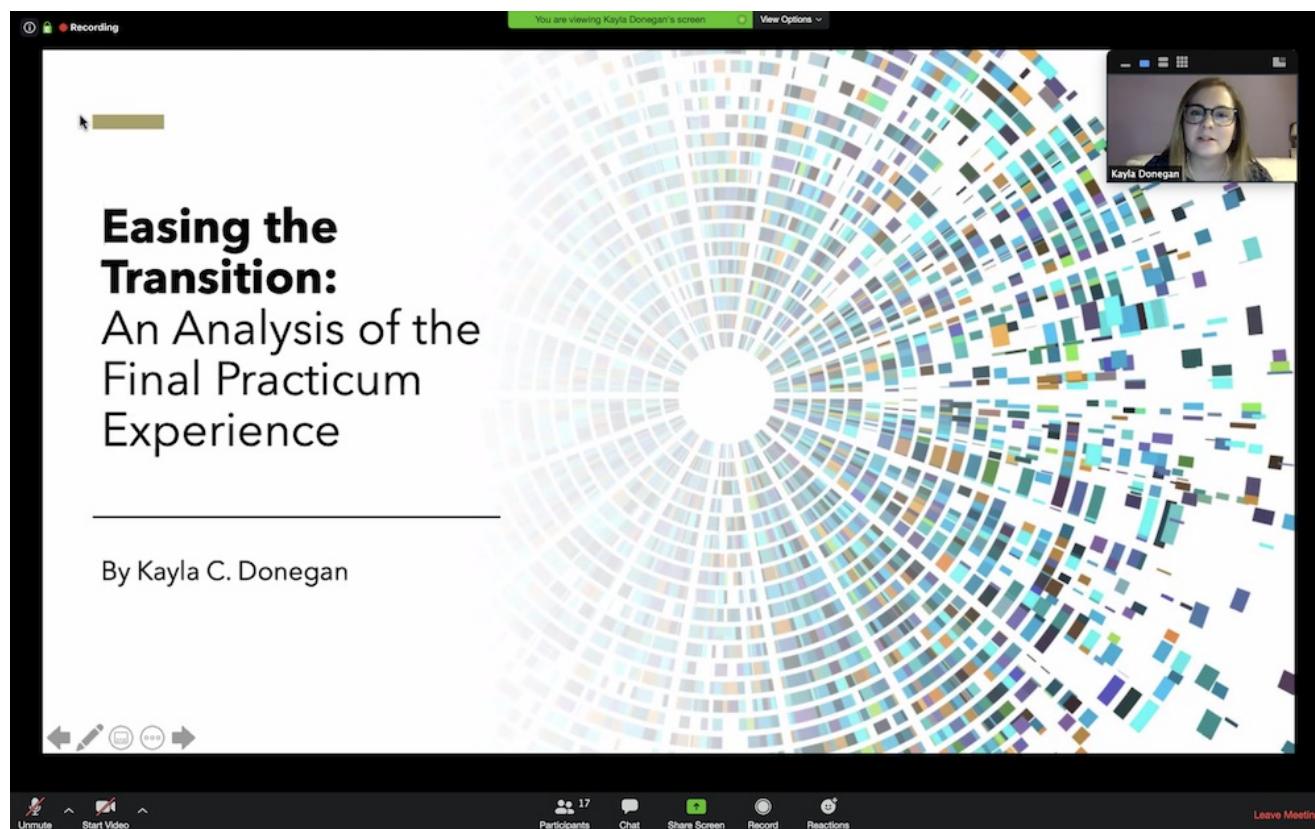
GWU Senior Grew Academically and Personally by Participating in Honors Program

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Kayla Donegan, '20, Studies Topic Relevant to Her Career Plans



A screenshot of Kayla Donegan's Honors Thesis Presentation made during a Zoom teleconference.

For her research project in the Gardner-Webb University Honors Program, Kayla Donegan, '20, chose to study a topic that directly affects her and her classmates in the Hunt School of Nursing.

Donegan, of Shoreham, N.Y., wanted to assess how nursing students transition into their careers. Her thesis was titled, "Easing the Transition: An Analysis of the Final Practicum Experience." Because of the Coronavirus pandemic, she and other seniors in the Honors Program presented their theses during a recent Zoom teleconference.

After graduation, Donegan, will take the NCLEX, and begin her career at High Point (N.C.) Medical Center in the intensive care unit.

Q: Why did you choose your research topic and how do you feel about what you learned?

Donegan: I felt that this was a topic that was important to both myself and the nursing profession as a whole. The transition from student nurse to professional nurse can cause feelings of stress and anxiety for the new graduate nurse. These feelings, when paired with other factors, can cause new graduate nurses to leave the hospital setting or the nursing profession as a whole. The final practicum experience is known to affect this transition from student nurse to professional nurse. I felt it was important to assess the effectiveness of this experience at Gardner-Webb. Through my research, I learned that overall students felt prepared to enter professional practice. However, there was a lack of confidence noted in students' ability to handle emergency situations. Overall, I felt this was an important finding as educational measures could be taken to better prepare students to handle these emergency situations.



Q: What valuable lessons did you learn from doing your research?

Donegan: Not only was I able to grow my knowledge on the transition from student nurse to professional nurse, but I was able to learn about the research and thesis writing process as a whole with support and guidance from my thesis advisor. This is information and experiences that will be invaluable to me should I decide to pursue further education in the future.

Q: How has the GWU Honors Program enhanced your GWU experience?

Donegan: Throughout my time at Gardner-Webb, the Honors program has given me the ability to challenge myself academically. In the past two years, I was able to take a seminar class and complete a thesis project. Overall, these classes allowed me to grow both academically and personally.

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