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[Letter from USU Moab Nursing]

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March 24, 2022

Utah State University Moab graduated its first nursing class in the spring of 2018. Our enrollment has fluctuated over the last five years. We have had as few as two students and as many as ten students in our cohorts. It has certainly been an adventure, creating a complete and robust nursing program in our little town with just a couple faculty and sometimes just a couple students. The program started with Nancy Chartier as a professor and the campus coordinator and Connie Wilson as a professor. After getting the program up and running, Nancy was ready to retire. Connie took over as campus coordinator, teaching all of the second-year associate's degree classes! Rachel Parker was brought on as a professor to teach the first-year practical nursing courses.

There have been struggles. Tears have been shed over our uncooperative simulation mannequin and other technologies. Hands have been thrown up in frustration over curriculum or new editions of textbooks. Shoulders have shrugged in unworried indifference when donated equipment broke or supplies were simply unavailable. We have tried our best to navigate the sometimes choppy waters of coordinating with our other statewide nursing programs and our clinical partners throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Although we have weathered some storms, there have been smooth sailing and triumphs. This year was the first year our students traveled to Grand Junction to have clinicals on the medical-surgical floors at St. Mary's hospital. Our students have been able to go to critical care units at Utah Valley Hospital in Provo. This year, six of our graduates signed 2-year contracts with Moab Regional Hospital to continue their practice and provide care here in our community. That, after all, has been our main goal throughout everything, to provide our community with competent and compassionate nurses. While we always love to see our graduates serve the community of Moab, we know our nurses are out there serving many communities across the country and the world. We have been proud to be a part of making that happen, and our hope is that it is still happening in 2072 when you are reading this.

Many of us involved in the program at this time will not be around in 50 years, but we wanted to leave you a token of our time in the 2020s. We have attached the script of our 2020 nursing pinning ceremony, which took place on the internet. The ceremony took place on Zoom right after the first lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because we were not able to meet in person, we had 100 attendees from across the country watching through their screens. It seemed unprecedented at the time, but now, we are more accustomed to remote meetings, lectures, and gatherings two years later. The document includes our script from the ceremony and some pictures of those involved with the program, and, of course, lots of pictures of our nursing scholars. You'll see that we try to blend some work and fun together, which is the Moab way!

If we're still around when you're reading this bring us a beer at the Canyonlands Care Center! (if beer is still legal in Utah).

Connie Wilson and Rachel Parker RNs