

# An engaging night for BC3 registered nursing graduates

Pinning ceremony rings in new eras, marriage proposals

May 11, 2018



Julia Carney, left, a Butler County Community College faculty member, places a registered nursing pin on the uniform of Carrie Peters, of Saxonburg, on Thursday, May 10, 2018, inside Succop Theater on BC3's main campus in Butler Township.

(Butler, PA) Many Butler County Community College students receive job offers from health-care providers such as the Butler Health System, the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and Allegheny General Hospital long before they receive a pin that, presented during a ceremony, officially marks their successful completion of BC3's rigorous two-year registered nursing program.

Ashley Laux and Haley Sheaffer received job offers before graduating in Thursday night's pinning ceremony at Succop Theater on BC3's main campus in Butler Township. Moments after the 90-minute event, they also received marriage proposals.

“Yes!” Laux, 23, of Ford City, exclaimed to Brandon Skomo, 25, of Kittanning.

“Yes!” Sheaffer, 21, of Butler, cried to Jordan Blum, 23, of Butler.

“Yes!” Laux said to that job offer as a telemetry nurse in Allegheny County two weeks earlier.

“Yes!” Sheaffer said to that job offer as a telemetry nurse in Butler County two days earlier.

“This,” Laux said, clutching a bouquet of white roses and wiggling her left-hand ring finger, “is pretty much the happiest night of my life.”

Fighting back tears, Sheaffer said, “I am so excited.”

As are the 45 other members of BC3’s registered nursing Class of 2018, who will enter a profession that is among the Top 20 paying positions in 2018 that require only an associate degree, with a median salary of \$68,450, according to Get Educated.Com.

Registered nursing is expected to see a 15 percent increase in jobs through 2026, according to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics. That is deemed “much faster than average,” according to the BLS.

## “These students represent the finest of the finest”

More than 400 guests attended BC3’s pinning ceremony, marking the conclusion of an academic year that saw the college receive two \$1 million donations to its nursing and allied health program and receive authorization from the Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing to expand its registered nursing program to the college’s additional location in Brockway.

It was also a year in which BC3’s registered nursing program reported a 96 percent success rate of its graduates on the National Council Licensure Examination, exceeding the state average of 84.

“BC3 has a great pass rate,” said Melanie Coyle, 42, of Butler, who accepted a job offer as a critical medical care unit nurse in Pittsburgh, “and I think employers know that.”



Brandon Skomo, 25, of Kittanning, places an engagement ring on the finger of Butler County Community College graduate Ashley Laux, 23, of Ford City, on Thursday, May 10, 2018, outside Succop Theater on BC3’s main campus in Butler Township. Moments earlier, Laux received a pin to mark her graduation from BC3’s registered nursing program.

Kaylee Spahn, 24, of Butler, is mulling an offer as a nurse in a dementia unit in Butler County.

Ray McDonald, 31, of Evans City, accepted a position as an emergency room nurse in Allegheny County.

Autumn Gressly, 39, of Saxonburg, who Thursday night received BC3's clinical practice award – presented to the student who during her clinical experience exemplifies the professional attributes of caring, compassion and safety with patients – recently accepted a position as a registered nurse in a telemetry unit in Allegheny County.

“It was amazing to see that when I did my job interview, there were already four BC3 alumni who were on the floor. Just on that floor,” Gressly said. “That definitely says a lot about the BC3 program.”

Registered nursing is the No. 1 program at the No. 1 community college in Pennsylvania, BC3 President Dr. Nick Neupauer said of the college's back-to-back rankings by Schools.Com.

“These students represent the finest of the finest,” Neupauer said during his address in Succop Theater. “There are 320,000 students who take classes in Pennsylvania's community colleges. These are the best of the best.”

## “This community has done amazing things”

Janice Phillips Larrick, of Butler Township, and Tim Shaffer, of Prospect, each gifted \$1 million to BC3's nursing and allied health division, Larrick in September and Shaffer in February. BC3's 2018 registered nursing students were the first to graduate from its Shaffer School of Nursing and Allied Health. The division will be housed in the proposed Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health Building planned for the south side of BC3's main campus in Butler Township.

“This community has done amazing things for me and for many of my classmates,” said Luke Homa, 24, of East Butler, who is considering an offer he received hours before the pinning



Haley Sheaffer, 21, of Butler, receives a hug from Caitlyn Kaufman, 23, of Chicora, after Sheaffer accepted a marriage proposal from Jordan Blum, 23, of Butler, right, on Thursday, May 10, 2018, outside Succop Theater on BC3's main campus in Butler Township. Moments earlier, Sheaffer and Kaufman received pins to mark their graduation from BC3's registered nursing program.



ceremony as a registered nurse in a critical care unit in Farrell and, like 75 percent of BC3 graduates, will be debt-free.

“There are really no words for it,” Homa said. “To be able to go to BC3 and be able to graduate with no debt means the world to me.”

Skomo means the world to Laux; and Blum, to Sheaffer.

“I am going to marry the man of my dreams,” Laux said. “And I became a nurse. And I have a job.”

As the sun began its descent and cast long shadows across the patio in front of Succop Theater, marking the end of the most memorable day in his new fiancée’s life, Blum watched as Sheaffer exchanged hugs with family and friends, and showed off her engagement ring.

“She’s having a pretty good night,” said Blum, himself a 2016 graduate of BC3’s registered nursing program who works as a critical care float pool nurse in Butler County.

“Maybe a little overwhelming, but good.”



Ivy Jaillet, of Butler, lights a candle during Butler County Community College’s pinning ceremony for registered nurses on Thursday, May 10, 2018, inside Succop Theater on BC3’s main campus in Butler Township. At left is Danielle Hull, of Butler.

## Meet BC3’s registered nursing Class of 2018

Members of BC3’s registered nursing Class of 2018 are: Jolene Hicks, Boyers; Erin Fulmer, Brookville; Melanie Coyle, Butler; Rachel Davis, Butler; Kaitlynn Dipadova, Butler; Christine Douglas, Butler; Danielle Hull, Butler; Ivy Jaillet, Butler; Kassandra Koprivnak, Butler; and Haley Sheaffer, Butler.

Kaylee Spahn, Butler; Madison Unverzagt, Butler; Mikayla White, Butler; Nicholle Williams, Butler; Jessica Sunday, Cabot; Caitlyn Kaufman, Chicora; Morgan Boltz, Cranberry Township; Luke Homa, East Butler; Angela Gibbons, Ellwood City; and Stephanie Householder, Ellwood City.

Ray McDonald, Evans City; Lauren Schillero, Evans City; Rachel Schoeffel, Evans City; Rachel Goodman, Fenelton; Ashley Laux, Ford City; Wendy Fischer, Freeport; Sarah Kavanagh, Grove City; Kaileigh Dorrier, Harrisville; Amy Moosa, Jackson Township; and Samantha Noullet, Karns City.

Janie Vlassich, Kennerdell; Alyssa Black, Kittanning; Courtney Magagnotti, Kittanning; Brody Trumbull, Kittanning; Cassandra Newmeyer, Latrobe; Preslea Shumaker, New Bethlehem; Jodi Grazier, New Castle; Liberty Fechter, North Washington; Kasandra Williams, Renfrew; and Allyson Comperatore, Sarver.

Ashley Deahl, Saxonburg; Autumn Gressly, Saxonburg; Carrie Peters, Saxonburg; Levi Pintirsch, Saxonburg; Madison Semler, Saxonburg; Ashley Aeschbacher, Slippery Rock; and Alycia Brehm, West Sunbury.