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Rappahannock Community College Holds Combined Nurse Pinning and Health Sciences Commencement Ceremony

Rappahannock Community College (RCC) introduced 50 nurses and five paramedics to the community at Commencement exercises on May 10 at Essex High School. Thirty-seven individuals earned an Associate of Applied Science in Nursing (ADN), 13 received the Practical Nursing Certificate (PN), and five graduated as Paramedics. This is the first year that Emergency Medical Services Paramedics were part of the Health Sciences Commencement ceremony.

The nurse pinning ceremony is a symbolic welcoming of nurses by other nurses to the profession. Many students selected someone who inspired and encouraged them through their journey as their “pinners,” including family members and faculty who are nurses themselves. The EMS Paramedic graduates received a commemorative Paramedic Challenge coin provided by the Peninsulas EMS Council, Inc. The coin represents membership and identity, provides morale, and serves as a reminder of their accomplishment.

Several students received awards. Elizabeth Thomas, Brandon Jessup, Sarah Taylor, and Bolormaa Khoroldorj received the *Perseverance Award* for ADN students, and Charlene Fisher and Rebekah Parker for PN. Krystal Knudsen was the recipient of the *Perseverance Award* for paramedics. This award recognizes students who have demonstrated the highest level of perseverance in pursuit of their degrees and showed courage to ignore the obvious wisdom of turning back.

The *Preceptorship Award* is given to students who are recognized as having excellent clinical performance during their final experience in the nursing program. Taylor Herrera, Okot Lino, Kyleigh Puckett, and Macy Ruppert received the *Preceptorship Award* for ADN students and Amy Kettner and Valerie Dunbar for PN.

Kylee Shackelford and Lynn Bartlett were awarded the *Outstanding Clinical Achievement Award* for ADN and Tina Oliver and Corrine Christian for PN. Similarly, Brittney Hendrickson was awarded the paramedic *Clinical Excellence Award*. These students were selected by faculty as having demonstrated excellent clinical practices.

Hannah Craig received the *Community Service Award* for paramedics and Summer Hilliard received the *Inspiring Excellence Award* for paramedics.

The Catherine Courtney Award is given in honor of Professor Emeritus Mrs. Catherine Courtney, the first nursing program faculty member who dedicated 32 years to teaching at RCC, and continues her commitment to RCC as a member of the Educational Foundation board. The award recognizes students who demonstrate all-around leadership and achievement in academic, clinical, and interpersonal excellence with patients, peers, and faculty. Winners are chosen by the nursing faculty. This year's recipients are ADN students Beth Howerton and Amelia Ridenour.

Dr. Shannon Kennedy, president of RCC, conferred the degrees and presented the graduates to the audience. "The journey has often been difficult and involved significant sacrifice by you and your loved ones," said Kennedy. "You now have the education and training to save lives. Be proud of your accomplishments!"

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Since 1970, Rappahannock Community College has been breaking down barriers to education in the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck. Five degrees, 6 certificates, and 26 career and workforce studies programs are offered through RCC, in addition to nearly 40 guaranteed admissions agreements with colleges and universities across the state and region. For more information, visit rappahannock.edu.