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News Release

U.S. News and World Report Ranks USU's Nurse Anesthesia Program Sixth in the Nation

BETHESDA, Md. — The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences' (USU) Graduate School of Nursing Nurse Anesthesia program received a national ranking of sixth for the second consecutive year according to the 2009 Edition of U.S. News and World Report.

“This is quite an accomplishment for the nurse anesthesia program that admitted its first students in 1994,” said Air Force Lt Col Adrienne Hartgerink, Nurse Anesthesia Program director. “Last year we were extremely thrilled that our program was recognized. To be ranked a second time just solidifies the outstanding contributions of both the graduate school of nursing and the anesthesia program. It is a direct reflection of the hard work and dedication of the USU faculty and students from all services.”

The U.S. News and World Report bases its nurse specialty rankings on peer assessment surveys sent to deans, administrators, and/or faculty at accredited degree programs or schools in each discipline. Educators rate the academic quality of programs on a 5-point scale.

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists are vital to the Federal Health System's mission of delivering quality health care to eligible beneficiaries in the federal sector. Upon graduation from USU, nurse anesthetists provide safe, competent care, adhering to the highest practice standards. Anesthesia is practiced in a variety of settings, including modern, state of the art medical centers, in the field with Special Operations teams and ground forces, onboard ships, in the air, at overseas duty stations, and remote locations that are serviced by the Public Health Service. Independent practice and the ability to perform a wide variety of anesthetic techniques, including regional anesthesia, is expected.

The 30-month program consists of two phases. The Phase I didactic component is 12 months long and is conducted on the campus of USU. A strong scientific program provides the foundation upon which all academic and professional education is based. Courses provided are necessary for entrance into the clinical arena and include the basic sciences, nursing core courses, basic and advanced principles of anesthesia, basic and clinical pharmacology, statistics and research methodology. Human Patient Simulation is extensively used to prepare students for clinical practice.

Learning to Care for Those in Harm's Way

The eighteen-month Phase II clinical component focuses on critical thinking and the application of science and research to clinical anesthesia. Students are assigned to a military medical treatment facility as their primary clinical training site. The clinical phase is designed to progress the graduate student toward the goal of functional autonomy and independence in decision-making appropriate to the student's level of experience.

The Graduate School of Nursing was established within USU in 1993. It offers programs in Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesia, Family Health Nurse Practitioner, and Perioperative Clinical Nurse Specialist leading to the Master of Science in Nursing. Starting next month the school will enroll its first class in the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program. The GSN also offers a full- and part-time Ph.D. in Nursing Science option that began in 2003 and graduated its first class in 2006.

For more information on the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesia program at USU, visit our Web site at www.usuhs.mil or contact the Office of External Affairs at (301) 295-1219.

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