

Astra Manning, Junior, School of Nursing

I was born and raised in Kyrgyzstan, moving to America in 2014 to be with the man I love and to raise a family with him here in Indiana. Ever since I was little, the western culture and ideology always attracted me, therefore I started studying English and western culture and especially American culture throughout my teen years and in high school. I spent my early 20's working for the US military as a contractor in Iraq and Afghanistan, where I also met my husband. We now have two beautiful girls and call West Lafayette, Indiana our home.



What do you value most about your Purdue student experience?

Purdue University, faculty, and staff provide opportunity for an excellent education and incredible community. Whether it is financial support like the childcare scholarship, helpful support sessions, or even social events to help us feel connected and engaged, I value the support Span Plan provides to me as a student. My nursing professors and advisors are very supportive and encouraging, and help me to thrive and meet my academic goals.

What has been the most challenging part so far in your studies?

The most challenging part of my academic journey has been the schedule. As a mother and non-traditional student, I have a variety of very important roles I must balance. I am not able to sign up for classes that I would work best with my schedule because they are often not available by the time I am eligible to register. For example, I drive my children to school in the morning and have to make it to a 9 am lecture or exam. I drop my youngest child first at 8:45am, making it to a parking garage later in the morning where there is limited space. The quick turn around and walk to the building often creates a stressful experience. Our nursing professors teach us that we should always be early and not late, so I call this my morning exercise since I have to run to my lecture or exam in order to arrive on time.

What advice would you provide to your peers on how to succeed and reach their student goals?

Learn how to reward yourself and redirect your negative thoughts into a positive thoughts. I believe this practice doesn't happen overnight, but we can learn and develop this each day. I find that having a group of people who support, inspire, and encourage you are most important during difficult times. I know some of you may think, how do I find those people? I found this community through Span Plan, the School of Nursing, and with my peers. I think being aware that stress is normal has changed my thinking tremendously. I still face difficulties to find a healthy life-school balance, and it is easy to get discouraged when you are under a lot of stress. I have to remind myself a lot of why I started my academic studies and look at the bigger picture of my life and what it will be in 5 years and then in 10 years.