Student Spotlight: Anna McClellan

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself before you decided to come to BTC.

I actually attended BTC shortly after high school and graduated from the Practical Nursing program in 2001. I had been working as an LPN in several different doctor’s offices over the past 13+ years. I mostly worked part time as home life has kept me busy, I’m a wife and mom of 4.

2. What brought you to BTC?

Becoming an RN has been a goal of mine for a long time. When I became an LPN, the RN program was not an option at BTC. This goal has seemed lofty at times, due to program availability, wait lists, money, kids, and my age; but when I looked into the Advanced Degree Nursing Program this time it just seemed to work. I appreciated that BTC was able to show a clear, concise program outline so I knew what to expect. Knowing what to expect helped my husband and I decide if we could make this work for our family. My experience at BTC for the Practical Nursing Program had been great, I was excited (and nervous) at the thought of going back.

3. What has your experience here been like so far?

Returning to school has been difficult, for reasons I expected. I have homework to do when my kids need help with their homework, or they have sports, or just want to play with mom. I also have had to cut down on my work hours which is both difficult for us and for my employer. I have found that my instructors both know and appreciate that most of us students are working, many have families, and we all have lives outside of school. They still have high expectations, they simply have respect for the time we spend at school and on school related activities.
4. What surprised you?

I was truly surprised at how many of my fellow students were like myself. We had families, jobs, yet were trying to improve ourselves. It really gave us a great ability to encourage each other right away, we had common goals.

I was also surprised by the available financial aid. There were many more scholarships and financial programs available to help me than I expected.

5. What drew you to Nursing?

I was initially drawn to nursing as a profession by chance. Years ago when I attending BTC’s Practical Nursing program, I was fresh out of high school and new I needed to do something. As I have worked as a nurse, I have grown to love this profession. There is so much versatility, opportunity and knowledge in this career centered around caring for one another. RNs are in high demand nation-wide, the wages are great for the time and money invested in schooling.

6. When you first started, what did you find challenging?

I was a little overwhelmed to get back in the school setting. It had been over 10 years since I’d had “homework”. It was also challenge going back to school financially, we expected this, but it was still a concern. We knew the long term benefit would be worth it.

7. How did you address challenges that came up?

Time management was essential for me, making the very most of my time spent at school, working less and giving up some time spent on recreational activities. I still had some time for fun with kids, friends, etc., but prioritizing was a must.

To address our finances, I applied for financial aid. I was fortunate to receive financial aid based on our income and family size and I also applied and was accepted into the Opportunity Grant Program.
There are also numerous scholarships available, I applied and was chosen for 3. I would encourage anyone thinking of returning to school to talk with financial aid! There are so many resources available if you're willing to spend some time applying.

8. What have you learned as a college student that you would like to share with other students?

I encourage anyone contemplating returning to college to go for it. There are many reasons why it’s difficult, many reasons we put off returning to school. I feel like the short term sacrifices; time, money, stress, are worth the long term benefits. Time is going to pass anyway, we may as well spend it bettering ourselves!