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Student completes externship at Mayo Clinic

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

After working for 12 years as a dealer in a Las Vegas casino, Jeri Buckley knew she needed a more meaningful career. Since completing 10 weeks of work in a cardiovascular intervention unit, Buckley is certain she's chosen the right field.

"I've definitely chosen the best profession for myself," said Buckley, a senior nursing major who recently completed an externship at **Mayo Clinic** in Rochester, Minn. "The clinical experience solidified everything I've been taught in my nursing classes. The value of this experience is intangible."

Buckley was one of just 159 student nurses accepted for a Mayo Clinic summer externship out of 750 who applied.

"Mayo Clinic represents the gold standard in health care," said Buckley, who is president of the Oakland University Student Nurses Association and second vice president of the Michigan Student Nurses Association. "A lot of hospitals deliver excellent health care. Mayo Clinic may not be ranked number one in all areas, but it's ranked at least number two or three in just about everything. It's a phenomenal hospital with a rich history."

Buckley was assigned to work with non-critical care patients who had undergone catheterizations and other similar procedures. Working alongside Mayo Clinic nurses, Buckley performed patient assessments and ensured there were no complications following surgery.

"All of the patients were interesting," Buckley said. "Each person represents a different life experience, which makes each patient a new case. No two patients are exactly the same. No one experiences pain the same way. I quickly realized that people's bodies react differently."

"**Mayo Clinic** also stresses patient education, and I spent some time talking to patients about the circulatory system, heart disease and healthy lifestyles. The externship gives nursing students an opportunity to get their feet wet in the profession and use skills learned in school and clinicals on a full-time basis. I also learned about organizational skills and the need to prioritize. You only learn to use those skills when you enter the field."

Buckley's shifts varied from days to evenings, and she worked every other weekend. Oftentimes she worked beyond her shift and put in 16-hour days. She also was invited to watch a lengthy heart bypass surgery and the removal of a gall bladder from a cancer patient.

"I became an integral part of the team. No one treated me as if I were there for the short term," Buckley said. "The externship gave me a chance to branch out and work closely with Mayo Clinic professionals. I also had the opportunity to bond with nursing students from all over the country."

"I'd recommend that anyone who is considering entering the nursing profession to seek out this kind of opportunity."

Buckley currently works as a patient care assistant at Port Huron Hospital, where she will have a full-time job in the intensive care unit after graduating. Earlier this year, she was named Michigan Student Nurse of the Year and received the School of Nursing Alumni Affiliate Scholarship.

For more information on courses, academic programs, faculty and continuing education opportunities, visit the **School of Nursing** Web site or contact the school at (248) 370-4253 or nrsinfo@oakland.edu.

SUMMARY

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