

THE CROSS ROAD

Alumni Newsletter of American National University



Update from Academics

BY DR. CAROLYN SCOTT, CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

A Season of Celebration at American National University

As the academic year draws to a close, we're entering a season of reflection, pride, and celebration at American National University. Our graduating students are preparing for two of the most meaningful virtual events of the year: Senior Awards Night and Commencement.

Senior Awards Night, held virtually, recognizes students who have gone above and beyond—not only in academic achievement but in leadership, service, and perseverance. It's a special evening dedicated to honoring the character and commitment that define our graduates.

Shortly after, we will come together again—online and in spirit—for Commencement. This virtual ceremony marks the culmination of each graduate's hard work, dedication, and resilience. Though we may be separated by distance, our community remains deeply connected by shared purpose and pride.

These celebrations are not only milestones for our graduates, but also a tribute to the faculty, staff, families, and alumni who have supported them along the way. Your legacy as alumni continues to inspire and uplift our newest graduates as they prepare to take the next step in their journeys.

Thank you for being part of the ANU community and for helping make these moments possible. We invite you to join us virtually and celebrate this extraordinary class together.

Dr. Scott

Class Notes

GOT MARRIED?
HAD A BABY?
LANDED A NEW JOB?

WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT!
SUBMIT A CLASS NOTE HERE:
[HTTPS://ALUMNI.AN.EDU/CLASS-
NOTES/](https://alumni.an.edu/class-notes/)

Excitement and Appreciation: Rama Alzamel's Story with ANU

BY CHLOE DANIELS

Driven by a deep belief in the power of education, Rama embarked on her journey to turn her dreams into reality. As a mother, she sought a program that would provide the flexibility she needed to balance her family responsibilities while pursuing her academic goals. Enrolling in ANU's Medical Assisting associate degree program allowed her to excel as a student, a mother, and a wife—all without compromise. Her efforts earned her the title of Term Trailblazer for Term 248, a nomination she earned from her professors through her dedication to her courses and willingness to learn.

Originally from Syria, Rama moved to the United States with her family in 2016, eager to build a better future. As a wife and mother, she wanted to earn a degree that would help her reach her career goals while balancing family life after having to put her education on pause during her pregnancy. Upon exploring different opportunities in the medical field, she came across ANU's Medical Assisting associate degree program and knew it was the right fit for her. *"One of [ANU's] advisors really helped me. He directed me through the whole program... I told him about my situation that I have a baby, like my schedule is not always as I need it to be. He was like, 'yeah, you can do morning classes! Or if that doesn't work, you can do evening classes.' And I was like, 'okay, that's amazing, that's what I'm looking for!'"* She explains. As Rama has always had her eyes on the medical field, this program allows her to get her foot into the door and earn more as she desires.

With her excitement in her courses, Rama was also pleasantly surprised to learn that her lab kits were included in her tuition, and she didn't have to pay out of pocket to obtain the material she needed to learn in her courses. *"When I started the program, and the teacher told us, 'yeah you have to send us the address and we're sending [lab]kits.' I was like, 'are you sure I don't have to pay anything?!' And she was like, 'no! This is through the program.' I really appreciated that, it's really helping me,"* she describes with laughter. This is one of the main reasons she stayed with ANU, because she could get the hands-on training she wanted without having to leave her daughter or change her schedule.

Rama has really been grateful to learn from her professors' previous work experiences. *"I love how they tell us these experiences, their experiences, because that's what really sticks [in my] mind... if you heard it from someone else, then you'll know how to react when it happens to you,"* she says. In particular, Traci Dingle made an impact on Rama's education through her engaging Zoom sessions in Ethics. *"Her Zooms – I was always excited for it!"* She smiles, *"she made us all excited because we were all engaging in the [ethics] situation... I really, really enjoyed her class."* Additionally, Rama enjoyed Dr. Stephanie Denton in her Anatomy and Physiology course: *"She is super! I love her. She always tells us examples and made it so simple and easy to understand... She always tells us stories, she has a lot of experience that she shares with us."* She also explains that Stephanie made things easier for her as English isn't her native language – *"It's sometimes hard to understand some grammar and some words that are new to [me], but she always makes it simple to understand."*

Would she recommend ANU to others? She already has! *"I recommended [ANU] to my sister... I was like 'it's 100% online and you can do things [hands-on]! That was like the most important things for me... The instructors are so, so, so good! They help out a lot.'" She goes on to describe her experiences in other colleges before ANU. "I used to send an email and not get an answer. I used to send an email and get a late, late answer and that was when the due date was over... Whenever I text any of the instructors here [at ANU], they get back to me within 24 hours. I never get late, late replies or not helpful answers. I told [my sister] all of these things."* Her sister has since signed up for ANU and she's "so happy and she's excited for everything!"



"I love the medical field. I'm so excited since I'm getting to the end of the degree because now we have hands-on stuff. We're looking more into things in detail and I'm not just learning about the overall human body. We're now doing blood pressure, we're doing some injections – that gets me so excited! I always tell my husband, 'oh my gosh, I have a lab kit coming! I'm so excited to see what's in it!'"

RAMA ALZAMEL



In Memoriam

With deep respect and gratitude, we honor the lives of our alumni who have passed away. Their contributions to our university community and the impact they made in their personal and professional lives will not be forgotten. As we remember them, we extend our heartfelt condolences to their families, friends, and loved ones.

DONNA SHERYL SMITH DOSS., 1953-2025

Donna resided in eight different states as she followed her husband's 25-year military career (U.S. Coast Guard). She loved to travel, particularly anywhere near salt water. She enjoyed swimming and she particularly enjoyed diving in the Caribbean. She was a 1973 graduate of National Business College.

RANDOLPH E. HARRISON, JR., 1936-2025

Randy graduated from National Business College in 1960 following his service in the US Air Force. He was a banker for 12 years and worked as a Realtor for 25 years.

CAROLYN SUE HESTER, 1940-2025

Survived by her high school sweetheart and husband of 65 years. Sue grew up in Coalfield, TN and graduated from National Business College.

JOYCE PAINTER HUDSON, 1938-2025

A graduate of National Business College, Joyce had a fulfilling career in accounting. She was known for her kindness, warmth, and unwavering faith. She found great joy in cooking, entertaining, and gardening, always creating an environment of love and hospitality.

WILLIAM ROBERT "BILL" LONG, 1930-2025

A proud native of Elliston, VA, Bill graduated from Shawsville High School and went on to study at National Business College and the University of Virginia. He honorably served his country in the U.S. Army and the Army Reserves.

DONNA M. HEPLER LUNDY, 1948-2025

Donna graduated from Covington High School and later from National Business College where she met the love of her life and husband of 50 years. She possessed a remarkable creative spirit and a deep passion for art that she expressed through paintings, stage and set design, storytelling, fellowship events and digital arts.

RUTH MAE HERNDON REDD, 1945-2025

Ms. Redd was a lifetime member of Oakland Community Church and was director of medical records for Riverside Health & Rehab Center for 33 years.

THOMAS L. ROBERTSON, 1943-2025

Tom was employed by Anderson and Reed Accounting, then as Comptroller of Roanoke Memorial Hospitals. When he became President and CEO, he worked to bring together several hospitals forming Carilion Health System. He also led a successful fundraising campaign to reopen Hotel Roanoke.

MARY JOYCE MATTHEWS STEVENS, 1930-2025

Mary Joyce was a graduate of William Fleming High School and National Business College. She was a talented pianist and lively conversationalist. Serving in the Montgomery County School system for many years, Mary Joyce helped staff the front desk at Christiansburg High School and was secretary for the Guidance Office. Mary Joyce and husband Bruce were active members of St. Paul Methodist Church in Christiansburg, and enjoyed singing in both the church choir and the Joy Singers.

PHYLLIS HALL TRENT, 1928-2025

Phyllis was a proud member of Beta Sigma Phi Sorority. Phyllis was example of courage and determination in the face of adversity after a tragic car accident in 1965 left her permanently blinded. At a time when blindness was widely considered totally debilitating, Phyllis learned to navigate the world without sight.

Student Loan Repayment Success

BY BETH OVERBEY

As you prepare to begin repayment on your federal student loans, we want to make sure you have the information and tools you need to feel confident and ready.

Starting repayment is an important step, and we are here to support you. This guide walks you through each step, with direct links and contact information to make the process easier. Take a moment to review the guide and explore your options.

If you have any questions or need help with your next steps, please reach out—we are happy to assist.

Student Loan Repayment Guide Getting Started with Confidence

1. Know Your Loan Details

- Log in to [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) using your FSA ID.
- Click “My Aid” to view:
 - Loan balances
 - Loan types (Direct Subsidized, Unsubsidized, PLUS, etc.)
 - Loan servicer contact info

2. Find Out When Repayment Starts

- Most federal student loans enter repayment 6 months after graduation, leaving school, or dropping below half-time enrollment.
- Check your loan servicer’s website or emails for your exact due date.

3. Choose a Repayment Plan

You do not have to stay in the standard 10-year plan. Options include:

- ✓ Income-Driven Repayment (IDR)
 - Payments based on your income and family size
 - Monthly payments can be as low as \$0
 - Plans include SAVE, PAYE, REPAYE, IBR
- ✓ Standard, Extended, or Graduated Plans
 - Fixed or increasing payments over time
 - Up to 30 years depending on plan and loan amount

Use the Loan Simulator on [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) to compare plans.

4. Set Up Your Payments

- Create an account with your loan servicer
- Enroll in auto-debit to avoid missing payments and receive a 0.25% interest rate reduction

5. Keep Your Contact Info Updated

- Update your contact info with both your loan servicer and [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov)
- This ensures you do not miss important updates or billing statements

6. Ask for Help Early

- If your situation changes, you can request to:
 - Change repayment plans
 - Recertify income for IDR
 - Apply for deferment or forbearance (temporary postponement options)
- Contact your loan servicer—they are there to help you stay on track

Quick Resources

Loan Servicer Contact Info: Log in to [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov)

Compare Plans: [StudentAid.gov/loan-simulator](https://studentaid.gov/loan-simulator)

Learn More: [StudentAid.gov/manage-loans](https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans)



Faculty Feature

DR. BILLY PAINTER

Dr. Painter has been in the pharmacy business for 51 years, either as a teacher or a student. Over the course of his career, he has been partial owner of three stores. His experience spans a wide range of settings, including retail, hospital, boarding houses, head trauma units, drug rehab centers, assisted living facilities, as well as chain and independent pharmacies. A proud Navy veteran, he served for four years and traveled half the world aboard a destroyer.

For the past six years, he has been teaching pharmacology—a role he thoroughly enjoys. Outside of work, he loves the beach, lakes, fishing, singing gospel songs, watching movies, teaching, and savoring good food and drink.

DAVID HENRIKSEN

Mr. Henriksen is originally from Coon Rapids, Minnesota and currently resides in Clarksville, Tennessee. He served in the United States Army as a special agent criminal investigator, from June 1975 until his retirement in June 1995. During his military career, he served in a variety of assignments throughout the United States, Europe, Africa, and Asia.

During Mr. Henriksen's time in the service, he earned an Associate of Applied Science from Colorado Technical College in Colorado Springs. He later went on to earn his Bachelor of Arts in History with a minor in Secondary Education and a Master of Arts in Military History.

Mr. Henriksen taught Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment U.S. History with the Cheatham County, Tennessee school system from 1999-2012. He then taught as a full time instructor with Daymar College in Clarksville, TN in the Criminal Justice, Business, and General Education programs until 2021, when he retired from full time teaching. For the last eight years, Mr. Henriksen has taught as an adjunct instructor of American History and Government with American National University.

Mr. Henriksen has three adult children, six grandchildren, one great-grandchild, and he is expecting another great-grandchild in March 2025. In his spare time, Mr. Henriksen enjoys reading, photography, and camping with his recreation vehicle and traveling throughout the United States.



Class Notes

Celebrating the accomplishments
of our graduates

CLASS OF 2011

Zach Ellmore, EMT
Graduated with distinction from the University of Hull (UK) with an MSc in Flood Risk Management.

CLASS OF 2012

Waver Ann Anderson, RMA, RHIT
Emergency Department under RMA and also Workmans Comp Coordinator for the State of Georgia and the Department of Labor as a CWCP

CLASS OF 2014

William Anthony Baker, Surgical Tech
Recently became a CSFA (Certified Surgical First Assistant)

CLASS OF 2015

Christopher J. Smith, Network Admin
Promotion to Apple Mac Desktop Engineer at Marsh McLennan

CLASS OF 2022

Aimee Barnett, MHSM
Promotion to Lead Clinical Medical Assistance for UofL Cardiology Associates

CLASS OF 2025

Harley Odom, MAA
Hired from her internship site

2025 Virtual Commencement Ceremony

CELEBRATE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR 2025 GRADUATES BY JOINING US JUNE 21, 2025 AT NOON

Congratulations, Class of 2024/2025! Your hard work and dedication have led you to this incredible milestone, and we are excited to celebrate your success.

Join us for the 2024/2025 Virtual Graduation Ceremony on Saturday, June 21st, 2025, at Noon EST. This special event will recognize your achievements and mark the beginning of your next journey.

The University would like for all Alumni to attend and celebrate the 2024/2025 graduates of American National University (ANU) & University of Fairfax (UOF). Let's come together as a community to honor this momentous occasion!

✔ RSVP today to secure your spot! Click the link to register and receive additional event details.

Let's honor this moment together! We can't wait to celebrate with you. <https://www.eventcombo.com/ms/ev/74286/american-national-university--university-of-fairfax-2025-com/home>

CALLING ALL GRADUATES!

Please scan the QR code to take this post-graduation survey



Alumni Site

DID YOU KNOW WE HAVE A WEBSITE DEDICATED TO OUR ESTEEMED ALUM?

On this site, you will find:

ANU News - a selection of news and updates from American National University

ANU Eagle Nation - a selection of current students making waves in their degree programs, careers, and communities

Alumni newsletters

Archive Library full of historical catalogs (with more legendary content coming soon!)

Alumni Resources - links to Career Services, a reminder about the refresher courses you are entitled to take, Ordering your Transcripts, Updating your contact information, Class Notes so we can feature our alumni achievements in this newsletter and on our site, our social media accounts, and our gear store

Alumni.AN.edu

