

THE CROSS ROAD

Student Newsletter of American National University



A Legacy That Lasts

BY DR. CAROLYN SCOTT, CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

As we enter this season of reflection and gratitude, I want to extend my sincere thanks to each of you—our alumni, our current students, and those who studied with us in the past. Whether your time at American National University was recent or many years ago, you are an important part of our story. Your commitment to improving your life, your career, and your community continues to inspire the work we do every day.

This past quarter has been especially meaningful for us. We officially launched the inaugural classes of our Medical Laboratory Technology (MLT) program, a milestone years in the making. This program prepares students to sit for the ASCP MLT certification exam and is accredited by ABHES, ensuring a strong, career-focused pathway into one of healthcare's most essential professions. Seeing our first cohort begin this journey has been a proud moment for our entire institution.

We are also excited to share that ANU has been granted DEAC accreditation to offer an HVAC certificate program. This new offering expands our reach into high-demand technical careers and reflects our continued focus on meeting workforce needs while providing students with practical, industry-recognized training.

As we move into the Thanksgiving and holiday season, please know how grateful we are for you. Your resilience, your achievements, and your trust in us—whether you're just beginning your program, actively pursuing your degree, or reflecting back on your time with ANU—are at the heart of everything we do.

Thank you for being part of the ANU family. We look forward to continuing to support your goals in the months and years ahead.

Warmest wishes for a safe and meaningful holiday season.



Warm Holiday Wishes

BY JESSICA WILLIAMS

As we approach the holiday season, the Student Services Team would like to take a moment to extend our warmest wishes to you and your loved ones. This time of year, is a great opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments of the past months and to relax, recharge, and enjoy the festivities with family and friends.

We appreciate all the hard work and dedication you've shown throughout your academic journey, and we are proud to support you every step of the way. As we head into the new year, we look forward to continuing to serve you and helping you achieve even more success.

Please be sure to take time for yourselves, stay safe, and enjoy this special season. We look forward to seeing you back in the new year, ready for even greater achievements.

The Value of Education

BY LUCAS KAVLIE, EDD*

As we enter a season of thanks and giving, we pause to reflect on the enduring value of education as a personal achievement and as a lasting contribution to our families and communities. Nelson Mandela once said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” That truth is evident in the countless ways learning transforms lives, expands opportunity, and strengthens the fabric of society.

Each student’s journey—whether just beginning, continuing, or resuming after time away—represents a commitment to growth. Completing a course or a degree is not simply an academic milestone; it is an act of giving. It demonstrates to children, family members, and peers that perseverance leads to possibility. The decision to persist in one’s studies becomes a model of hope and determination, inspiring others to pursue their goals.

As the new year approaches, many of us reflect on what resolutions are worth keeping. For some, that may mean finishing a degree long deferred or a degree just started; for others, it may mean taking the first step toward a new educational goal or returning to continue what was once begun. Education provides one of the most meaningful resolutions of all. Education is a promise to oneself to grow, to advance, and to open new doors of opportunity in the year ahead.

Education is not a one-time achievement; it is a continuous process of renewal. In this season of gratitude, we honor the generosity inherent in learning. We honor the way it enriches not only the individual but also the generations that follow. By choosing to learn, to persist, or to return, you give the enduring gift of transformation that continues to shape lives long after the final class concludes.

**Dr. Lucas Kavlie is Provost of National University Services, working alongside American National University to advance its programs and strategic goals.*



The Power of Persistence

BY DR. JOEL MUSGROVE, SR EXECUTIVE VP OF OPERATIONS

At American National University, we see every day that persistence changes lives. Our students balance work, family, and community responsibilities while pursuing their education—demonstrating that steady progress, even when the path isn’t easy, leads to lasting success. That perseverance is part of what makes ANU so special.

It’s also a trait shared by our alumni. Across the country and around the world, ANU graduates continue to grow, learn, and lead. Many return to the university to advance their credentials, pursue new degrees, or pivot into emerging fields. To support that ongoing drive, ANU offers the **ANU Legacy Merit Scholarship**, providing eligible graduates with tuition assistance when they return to complete another program. It’s one more way we invest in the persistence and lifelong learning that define our community.

Persistence connects us all—students, alumni, faculty, and staff alike. It’s what moves dreams from possibility to reality and keeps the ANU tradition of opportunity alive after nearly 140 years. Wherever you are in your journey, keep moving forward. The door to your next chapter is always open at ANU.

“It’s not that I’m so smart; it’s just that I stay with problems longer.” – Albert Einstein



Advocacy Leads to Passion: Samantha's Story

BY CHLOE DANIELS

For Samantha Kunz Voelker, a lifelong dedication to hard work has always been second nature. After years in retail, she found herself longing for a career with more purpose and room to grow. When her husband was diagnosed with stage 4 heart failure, her life changed dramatically. She became deeply involved in his care, learning everything she could about his condition and medical needs. That experience sparked a new passion for healthcare and inspired her to pursue her education at ANU, where she could build a meaningful career while continuing to care for her husband at home.

At first, Samantha wasn't entirely sure if a career in healthcare was the right path – she just knew how much she loved caring for her husband and children. As she began exploring schools online, one name immediately caught her eye. Her strong sense of patriotism drew her to ANU, and she decided to learn more. After filling out her information, she was soon contacted by a member of the admissions team, whose encouragement and guidance helped Samantha take the next step toward her new career journey. "She made me want to go... she instantly made me feel like I was part of [ANU] already."

Her education at ANU has given Samantha the confidence to improve the care she gives her husband, and to one day join the field of medical assisting. Being online has given Samantha more freedom to learn in the comfort of her own home, whereas an in-person environment would cause her more stress. She explains that being in-person wouldn't provide her the comfort to join discussions, whereas ANU's Zoom sessions have given her that opportunity.

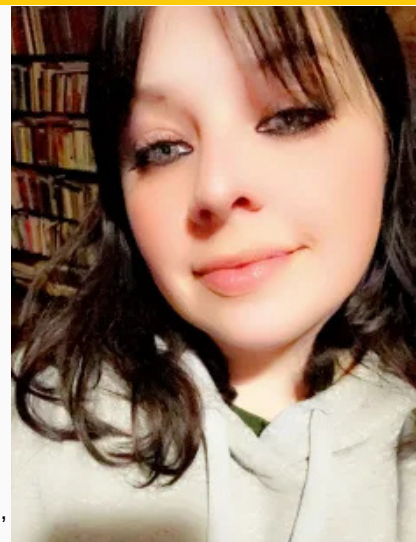
Samantha found the staff to be supportive of not only her journey but also her peers' journeys at every turn. The Medical Assisting program chair, Carrie Rodriguez, is one of the first staff that made an impact on her. "She helps everybody. She's just got a pure heart and she's good in anything! If there's ever any questions about anything – it could be something [that has] nothing to do with her – and she will help you in every way," Samantha explains.

One of the highlights of ANU's online experience is that it brings people from all over the country closer together. In one class, she learned that one of her instructors grew up not too far from where Samantha lives now. "After talking to her and getting to know her, I felt like I almost knew her on a personal level [because] we have a lot of friends in common, towns in common, and stories in common."

Her future goals include working at the clinic where her husband goes for appointments. After that, she hopes to pursue a nursing degree later. "I have a friend who is a nurse practitioner – and in the town that I live in, there isn't any clinics, so we would actually try to get a clinic here and have something at home," she explains. "Already, doing all of this, I already know, I am far more passionate about it than I thought I would be. I thought I would just do it to hopefully to help others learn about LVAD and certain heart failure and challenges my husband has faced. I see myself continuing and continuing to grow my education in the healthcare field."

Would she recommend ANU to others? "I have actually already recommended ANU to a few people around here, that I'm trying to get them in," she says. She has a friend who has been struggling with the financial aid portion of education. "The financial aid team at ANU was so easy to communicate with and helped handle things. That was my biggest thing I was worried about, and they made it so easy for me!"

Her advice to new students starting at ANU is: "Plan! Daily planners, plan, write out schedules... I am a mother to three stepchildren who live with me, I have a husband in end stage heart failure, I have nine rescue cats, I work a job, and I am a full time student. If you plan everything out, it will work just fine!"



"I also think doing it online [with] the live lectures – the live lectures are actually my favorite part! Because the discussions – I get to hear everybody's point of view about a topic about a certain topic so it makes me look at it in a way that I wouldn't have looked at it before... I personally feel like I learn a lot more doing [classes] online than if I were doing it in a classroom."

SAMANTHA KUNZ
VOELKER

Financial Matters

BY BETH OVERBEY

Staying Engaged With Your Loan Servicer Matters

Graduation does not end your financial journey—it begins a new chapter. Staying connected with your federal loan servicer is one of the most important steps you can take to protect your financial health. Do not wait until a payment is due—stay informed throughout the year.

Why Engagement Matters

Your servicer is the primary resource for accurate information about your loan balance, repayment plan, interest updates, and payment history. They can assist with income-driven plan adjustments, deferment or forbearance requests, and verifying qualifying payments. Staying engaged helps you maintain access to tools and protections designed for borrowers.

Avoid Surprises

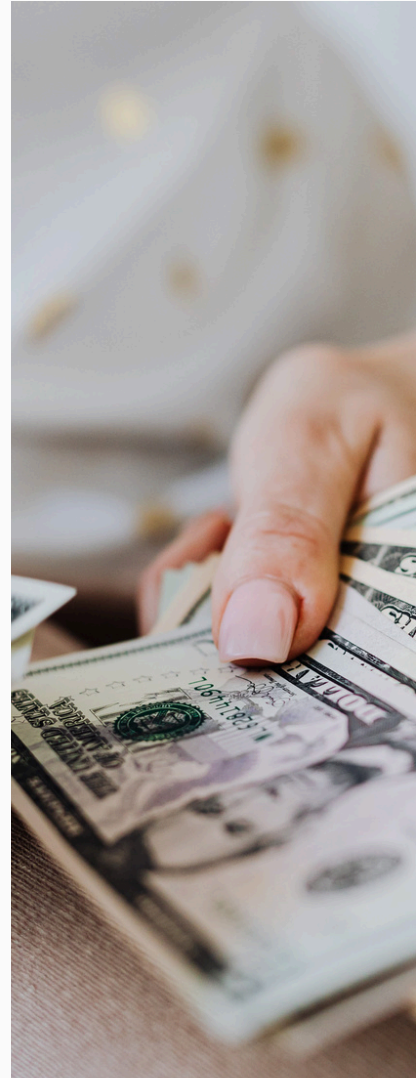
Respond promptly to any requests for updated income or household information. Failure to do so can lead to unexpected payment increases or changes to your status. Even if you are not currently making payments, ensure that your servicer always has your most current contact information.

Check In Regularly

Many repayment issues begin when borrowers assume everything is on autopilot. Reviewing your account several times a year and confirming that your repayment plan still fits your financial situation helps protect your credit and long-term goals.

Need Help? We Are Here

If you are unsure who your loan servicer is or need help locating or interpreting your loan details, our office can point you to the appropriate resources. You worked hard to earn your degree—now let us help you safeguard your investment.



2026 Commencement Ceremony

AMERICAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Please plan to join the graduation celebration of American National University on Saturday, June 27, 2026, at 12:00 PM EST. For additional information, please visit our Graduation 2026 micro page:

<https://www.eventcombo.com/ms/ev/76322/american-national-university--university-of-fairfax-2026-com/home>

Career Services - At Your Service!

BY WENDOLYN LARKINS

The ANU Career Services team is available to coach you through the career preparation process, answering career-related questions, providing personalized feedback, connecting you to ideal resources and opportunities, and helping you stay focused on your ultimate career goal.

No matter where you are in your career, or how long ago you may have attended American National University, you have access to the full range of services that ANU Career Services provides. Services available include:



Customized career advice, as well as access to career videos on making your resume pop, networking, interview research, professional dress, behavioral interviews, and social media tips



Resume writing assistance, including a resume creator, great samples, and a personalized review and feedback from a career placement specialist



Interviewing preparation tools with valuable tips and access to premier video interviewing technology to practice and review your interview skills



Live mock interviews with a career placement specialist

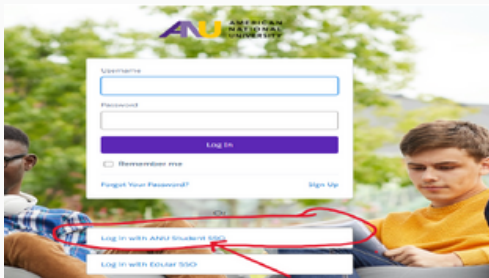


Searchable employment postings from employers recruiting ANU graduates, as well as employment opportunities linked from reputable job search engines



Instant online chats with career specialists to get answers to career-related questions

Current students should schedule a call with a team member via the student portal:



Former students can reach out to a team member directly.



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In Memoriam

With deep respect and gratitude, we honor the lives of our students and staff 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.

HARRY VESTER BOONE JR., 1925-2025

Harry enrolled at National Business College in 1942, but left school to serve in the U.S. Army. He completed Officer Candidate School, qualified as a B-24 navigator, and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. He leads a long life of community service, sports, and his loving family.

EMMA LOUISE LONG BROWN, 1926-2025

Lou attended National Business College and met the love of her life there, Bill. She was a devoted wife and mother and served in many community service roles throughout her life.

JEWEL PICKRAL EAST, 1944-2025

Jewel was valedictorian of her Chatham High School graduating class of 1962 and received her business certificate from National Business College. She retired from the Naval Surface Warfare Center in 1998 after 25 years of service.

RICHARD GRAHAM, 1932-2025

A retired US Foreign Officer with 31 years of service. During his career, he was assigned to Embassies in Nigeria, Honduras, Venezuela, Guatemala, Barbados, including seven West Indies countries. Also, to Washington DC on several occasions and to the United Nations General Assemblies in Geneva, La Paz Bolivia, New York and Copenhagen. Directed US Missions in Guatemala and Barbados. Prior to the Foreign Service, he attended National Business College in Roanoke Virginia, volunteered as a US Marine during the Korean War and worked on the construction of a Strategic Airbase in Libya.

SHIRLEY ADELE GARST MCDONALD, 1936-2025

Shirley pursued a business degree from National Business College after being told that a career in accounting would not be “proper” for a woman. There, she was also elected a member of the Miss NBC Court. Her lifetime consisted of family, entertaining, photography, and travel.

RICHARD TIPTON MCNEIL JR., 1930-2025

Richard attended Fork Union Military Academy, Wake Forest College, and National Business College. He enlisted in the US Army Reserves and was called to active duty in 1950. Mr. McNeil loved flying and earned his private pilot’s license in 1965. After 50 years and 4,000 hours as pilot in command and owning 5 airplanes over the years.

RILEY “TOM” THOMAS MCPEAK, 1943-2025

Tom entered the US Army after graduating from National Business College. Most of his service time was spent attached to the White House Communication Agency as an accountant. His last two years in the Army he was stationed in Landstuhl, Germany. He retired as a Master Sergeant in 1987 and eventually opened his own accounting business.

DEWEY MITCHELL, JR., 1946-2025

Dewey proudly served his country in the United States Army from 1967 to 1970. A hardworking man with a calm spirit, Dewey took great pride in fixing things. There was rarely anything broken that he wouldn’t attempt to repair. Dewey is remembered as a former staff member of ANU.

CONNIE CAMPBELL SHELTON, 1943-2025

Connie loved to travel and meet people. She traveled all over the United States and Europe with her husband and loved to attend Virginia Tech football games as well. She attended Radford College and National Business College.