A LOOK AT PAGE 8

Meet Medical Assistant Lucy Vang
A Concorde Success Story

Photography by Mike Paek
Greetings Alumni:

We are pleased to represent the Student Affairs Department throughout our colleges. Being able to partner with our future alumni, throughout their educational journey, affords us the opportunity to witness the remarkable accomplishments that our graduates achieve in their local communities.

As you all know, Concorde Alumni are well respected and in high demand in the health care field. Besides having many opportunities in the health care field, some may also join our team as a Concorde employee, Concorde employers, Program Advisory Committee members, as well as distinguished and knowledgeable guest speakers in the classroom and at commencement ceremonies. We love to hear your success stories and the many achievements in your health care career. Distinguished alumni are a valuable component in helping Concorde maintain its status as a leader in health care training. We remind you that your partnership with Student Affairs is ongoing!

Please enjoy this issue, and we hope to hear from you... our outstanding Concorde Alumni!

Sincerely,

Nancy L. Jones
Senior Director of Student Affairs
Concorde Career Colleges, Inc.

Koula Foura
Student Affairs Manager
Concorde Career Colleges, Inc.
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Want to tell your story?
We would love to hear from you, our valuable Alumni! If you would like to share how Concorde played a part in your journey to a new future, please reach out to us at marketing@concorde.edu.
Concorde has a lot planned for alumni in 2017, all focused on connecting with you. We want to make sure that your Concorde experience lasts beyond graduation.

Over the span of the upcoming year, we plan on launching a series of initiatives that will reach out to alumni with ways to stay connected to each other and to Concorde.

The first of these initiatives involves reaching out to alumni to see how engaged they want to be.

“We’ll be sending out a survey in the near future to gauge interest,” said Koula Foura, Student Affairs Manager at Concorde’s Campus Support Center in Mission, Kan. “We’ll be gauging the interest in such things as quarterly speaking engagements, quarterly community service projects and commencement speaking opportunities.”

New features also are being developed to engage alumni on the concorde.edu website.

“We’re identifying ways to keep alumni engaged as well as ways to help you connect with fellow alumni,” said Lisa Pieper, Director of Marketing Operations at Concorde.

“We also want to inform alumni about events in their area, connect them with employers and inform them about community events and networking opportunities.”

Another initiative, Pieper said, involves finding ways to inform alumni about opportunities to earn another degree and advance their education. Two of the more prominent opportunities currently at Concorde are a new Surgical Technology Degree Completion Program, which allows licensed surgical technologists with their diplomas to earn associate’s degrees, and a Bachelor’s Degree in Health Care Administration for holders of an associate’s degree in Respiratory Therapy. Both are available 100 percent online.

Concorde also is working to provide alumni more benefits, such as Working Advantage, an online program where members can get discounts on movie and theme park tickets, hotels, rental cars and much more. We’re also looking at launching and offering alumni merchandise.

Meanwhile, our alumni are welcome and encouraged to continue gaining access to Concorde’s ongoing graduate employment help. If you need assistance in seeking a new job, please feel free to contact your local campus.

“We encourage alumni to reach out to their local Concorde campus and speak to a director of student affairs,” Foura said. “If they work for an employer who is interested in hiring Concorde graduates, they can also contact their local campus,
speak to a DSA and ask about ways they can get involved.”

Finally, we want to celebrate your accomplishments. Why don’t you drop us a line and let us know what’s going on in your life, community and area.

Here are some examples of Concorde alumni outreach and ways we’re staying connected.

• “Graduate of Concorde 2012 class RN (ASN) degree. Completed my BSN degree with Nova Southeastern University. Have applied for the master’s program with South University. I am hopeful to gain opportunities of working as a Nurse Practitioner.

- Alicia Rayford, Nursing, Miramar

• “After graduating from Concorde in 2012, it has opened doors to many great health care opportunities. I work at Healthcare Associates of Irving as a medical assistant. I also have a career at Baylor Hospital All Saints working in the laboratory as a phlebotomist. The exciting thing about this job is I learned how to perform venipuncture procedures through Concorde and was able to make a career of not only medical assisting but also as a phlebotomist. Because of Concorde I now work at a well-known hospital that is offering me the benefit of paying for schooling to help further my education.”

- Ebony Daniels, Medical Assistant, Dallas

• “I began my journey at Concorde and in eight months, I started my externship. If you want to have a career that you can be proud of, Concorde is your first step to success.”

- Nelande Williams, Medical Office Administration, Miramar
The world of health care is changing and evolving even faster than the world itself. As technology changes and new techniques and medications are created, it forces practitioners in all health care fields to become more advanced in their education and skill set. As a result, more and more employers, especially hospital settings, where care is most acute, are requiring higher levels of education when hiring new associates.

To serve this latest requirement, Concorde is offering its newest program, a Surgical Technology Degree Completion Program.

Concorde’s Surgical Technology Completion Program is for those certified surgical techs who wish to advance from a diploma to an Associate of Applied Science degree. The program is offered 100 percent online, so you can complete coursework on your time and work around your busy work and life schedules. Concorde Online uses Canvas technology – an online learning management system that makes it easy to stay on track in your education.

The program consists of nine courses – ranging from English Composition I, to Anatomy & Physiology, to General Psychology, to Surgical Technology Professional Concepts. A total of 60 semester credit hours is required for completion of the course. However, students who qualify for the course, upon verification of entrance requirements, are granted 32 semester credit hours at the beginning of the program.

Our instructors are experienced and seasoned in the online learning environment. All instructors for the general education courses hold at least a master’s, and many have a more advanced degree.

“We require this not only for accreditation purposes, but also because we want to ensure our students receive the highest quality education by experts in their field,” said Nikki Fox-Bolte, Concorde’s Dean of Online Operations.

The Surgical Technology Degree Completion program at Concorde helps you achieve your career aspirations while serving your family and community on the front lines of surgical support.

“The completer program is more about professional and transitional changes within the field,” Fox-Bolte said. “Students learn skills to help in management positions, current practices in the field and the most current safety and regulation practices.”

Surgical Technology jobs are projected to grow at a higher-than-average rate of 15 percent through 2024, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The field continues to grow because of advances in technology, contributing to an increase in surgical procedures. You’ll be fully equipped and prepared to work in a variety of settings that include hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, satellite surgery centers, physicians’ offices and laser centers.

Are you a certified Surgical Technologist looking to advance your education to an Associate of Applied Science degree? Have you been searching for a school where you can earn that degree quickly and conveniently? Then, it’s time you consider Concorde’s Surgical Technology Degree Completion program!

Now Enrolling!
Are you ready to take the next step? Learn more about this program by visiting concorde.edu/online. If you are ready to enroll, give us a call at 1-800-781-5720 to find out how to apply!
(Top) Concorde-Garden Grove students and faculty pull a 124,000 pound FedEx Boeing 757 airplane to raise money for the Special Olympics.

(Middle) Respiratory Therapy students at Concorde-San Diego support the American Lung Association in the Fight For Air Climb in California.

(Bottom) Concorde-North Hollywood graduates celebrate achieving their goals with bedazzled caps.
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

The Ultimate People Person and MA

Lucy Vang figures, in some ways, she already had been on the job for quite some time before making the decision to officially become a Medical Assistant (MA).

“I’ve always been my family’s Medical Assistant,” said Vang, a wife and mother of three. As a first-generation Hmong American, she had always found herself assisting her family and relatives with bridging the language gap. “I helped them fill out paperwork when they had to go to the doctor, school conferences, translate letters and help my grandparents with their medications.”

For Vang, filling out paperwork during her family’s doctor visits was a logical extension of her profession at the time – as an administrator for a large business services and printing company in Portland, Ore. It was an occupation she knew she didn’t want to be in for the long run.

“It just wasn’t where I wanted to go,” she said.

On a Wednesday, Vang remembers, she decided to go down to her local Concorde Career College – Portland campus, where she initially intended to check out its Medical Office Assistant program.

“The counselor I spoke to said, the way I carried myself, I was not going to be a good fit for that program,” she said. “I was told I was more of a people person, and that I’d be happier working directly with patients than in the background doing administrative stuff.”

That led Vang to the Medical Assistant program. But, before she committed, the counselor had one more task for Vang to complete.

“The counselor asked me to first call my husband,” she said. “Home life mattered to them, and it was important that my family knew what was coming.

“My husband was up for it. That was Wednesday. I started classes Friday evening.”

What followed were eight months of intensive, accelerated learning and training that Vang said fully prepared her for a career as an MA. At the end of her program, she performed an externship with Legacy Medical Group, applied to its resource pool, and was hired there full-time one month after graduating in May 2015.

She passed her one-year anniversary with Legacy earlier this year and said she never dreamed she’d be where she is today.

“Concorde was one of my best vehicles that helped me gain the confidence I needed to change my life,” Vang said. “To say thank you doesn’t seem enough.”

So, Vang didn’t “say” it. Instead, she wrote a letter with the heading, To My Concorde Family. In it, she shared the celebration of her one-year anniversary “with a wealth of people who truly cared about my accomplishments and my future.”

Another excerpt …

“You have been a part of a journey in my life that opened up my eyes to the endless possibilities of what I could do for myself, my family and the lives I may change tomorrow. I want you to know that you have impacted me in a powerful and purposeful way.”

Vang goes on to list a number of the committee positions and leadership roles she’s assumed at Legacy, largely because of the ways her Concorde training motivated her.

“I’m so happy I can conquer every day and any challenge with a mindset that I am physically and mentally able to help all these people I come in contact with every day,” she said. “It all started with a vision, a will and Concorde.”
A Win-Win Partnership

Two stalwart organizations in the Southaven, Miss. area have formed an outstanding partnership that has benefited professional athletes, students and everyday folks all around.

For the third straight year, massage therapy students at Concorde Career College’s Southaven campus are providing Mississippi RiverKings players with sports massages designed to treat and prevent injuries, optimize performance and increase well-being. Students gain unique real-world experience and get to hone their skills by providing players with customized sports massages.

“The RiverKings have been giving back to the surrounding community for more than two decades,” said Chris Burgio, Campus President at Concorde – Southaven, which convened its first class in 2013. “As an organization, Concorde embodies a similar core value of serving the community, making this partnership an excellent fit.”

Studies have shown that, when massage is incorporated into an athlete’s overall training regimen, the benefits are numerous.

“It has been incredibly beneficial for the players to be working with the Concorde massage students,” said Rick Hanlon, head athletic trainer for the RiverKings. “They have done a phenomenal job working with the players to help me keep the guys playing at peak performance.”

At Concorde, students don’t wait until they’ve graduated to start making a difference in their communities. As part of the partnership with the RiverKings, fans also have benefited. Chair massages and health checks have become regular occurrences on the promotional night schedule at the Landers Center.

And, if you can’t make it to one of the games, you can still enjoy a quality massage by our talented students for much less than market prices. To get more information and schedule your appointment, call 662-429-9909, ext. 344.

CAMPUS PRESIDENT SPOTLIGHT

Rod Kirkwood presides over the Concorde Career Institute – Tampa campus, which offers seven health care career programs. He ensures that all run smoothly and carry the high-quality, real-world education and training to which Concorde aspires on a daily basis.

Kirkwood graduated from the University of Oregon, but moved to Florida in 1996 and obtained his master’s degree in adult education from the University of South Florida. He became Concorde-Tampa’s Campus President in 2013.

“The staff at the Tampa campus is what makes the campus special,” he said. “It may be cliché to say that they really care about each other and seeing our students graduate, but it’s true. We have a very experienced leadership team at Tampa that seems to go together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Each member seems to complement each other’s skills and blend well with each other.”
Getting to a sit-down, face-to-face interview is hard enough. When searching for health care careers, you first must fill out applications, submit resumes, probably even do a pre-interview with a human resources person over the phone, all before even getting a sniff at a face-to-face meeting. So, when you get face-to-face, you obviously want to do well.

When you get down to it, doing well in a sit-down interview is like excelling in your favorite sport or any other activity – it takes practice, practice, practice.

Identifying and studying “common interview questions”

Alex Nguyen, Graduate Employment Specialist at Concorde’s campus in Portland, Ore., said practicing common and behavioral interview questions is extremely important to acing a face-to-face interview. Searching “common interview questions” on a search engine like Google can provide plenty of questions that might be asked during an interview.

“Identifying these common interview questions will be key to formulating the desired answers,” Nguyen said. “After a couple practice sessions, it is encouraged to practice with a friend or family member and ask for their feedback.

“The behavioral questions are a bit tricky when it comes to answering them. By coming up with a few examples from previous work experiences, these examples can be used to answer these difficult questions by putting the story together with the desired example.”

When interviewing for health care careers, be yourself

Another piece of advice for acing the face-to-face interview, Nguyen said, is to simply be yourself … with the codicil of being confident and friendly at the same time. Interviewers want to meet with candidates and discuss the opportunity to determine whether they are able to work together.

“Confidence is very important as well as being very friendly,” Nguyen said. “They will try to find any red flags from responses to interview questions to ensure they are hiring the best candidate for their team.”

Other points to remember when interviewing for health care careers

Karen Blanks, Graduate Employment Specialist at Concorde’s Kansas City, Mo. campus, has many years of experience in workforce/job development and has a nine-point primer for succeeding in the live interview.

• Be on time
• Be dressed for success
• Have a portfolio with resume, references and copies of certificates and awards
• Bring a pen with which to take notes
• Take notes during the interview
• Practice your 30-second commercial prior to the interview
• Smile
• Ask pertinent questions
• Ask for the position

Finally, Nguyen suggests taking the time to write a thank you note is key to acing the face-to-face interview.

“Even though it might not be during the interview, leaving a friendly thank you note (via email message) will be a good way to allow the employer to view the possible last moment of interaction from the candidate as a good memory,” he said.
The Student Loan Support Center at Concorde has three full-time staff people working hard to ensure that Concorde students and graduates have all the help and support they need to successfully navigate the federal student loan process.

**Peggy Mark**, Default Loan Supervisor, has been with Concorde eight years assisting students and former students and monitoring default rates.

She supervises two Student Loan Specialists — **De Lisa Bennett**, who has been at Concorde nearly five years, and **Nancye Calkins**, who has been with Concorde five years.

The three put their heads together to answer a few questions about what they do to help Concorde students, former students and graduates.

**How do you help students and former students with the financial aid repayment process?**

**Peggy**: We send correspondence to students throughout their six-month grace period before they go into repayment. If a student becomes past due, we contact them to discuss different repayment options that could help keep their federal loans in good standing.

**What is the biggest misconception about what you do?**

**Nancye**: Our students do not realize that we are here to assist them with the many questions or options that they have in regard to their payments, how or when to apply for a deferment or forbearance or check into the lower repayment plans that the Department of Education offers. They also need to understand that, by not making payments, this might have a negative impact on their credit score.

**What resources do you provide to help students and former students with the student loan repayment process?**

**De Lisa**: I provide my telephone number and email, loan servicers’ telephone and website and helpful websites such as NSLDS.ed.gov, studentaid.ed.gov and studentloans.gov.

**What is the toughest thing students face after graduation when dealing with student loans?**

**Nancye**: They’re eager to start in their new profession and do not completely understand what choices they have in regard to their payments, how or when to apply for a deferment or forbearance or check into the lower repayment plans that the Department of Education offers. They also need to understand that, by not making payments, this might have a negative impact on their credit score.

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Do you need help with your student loans? Call the Student Loan Support Center at 1-800-861-9119, and we’ll answer any question you might have or help you through the repayment process.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER 2016
1  YES! F.A.I.R. (Family Abilities Information Rally) · Tampa
2  La Feria De La Familia · Tampa
3  Commencement Ceremony · Kansas City
5  “Show Your Stuff” for OctSHOWber · Orlando

11-12  Bone Marrow Drive · Kansas City
13  Career Fair · San Antonio
14  Commencement Ceremony · Tampa
21  Commencement Ceremony · Memphis
23  Making Strides for Breast Cancer Walk · Memphis
26  Career Fair · Tampa
27  Community Resource Fair · Memphis

NOVEMBER 2016
1-11  Food Drive for SICOM · Memphis
1-21  Food Drive for H.O.P.E Youth Mentor Program · Garden Grove
2-15  Harvesters Food Drive · Kansas City
5  Kids TLC Gala · Kansas City
9  Student Resource Fair · San Antonio
11  Veterans’ Day Recognition Event · Memphis
12  Commencement Ceremony · Garden Grove
24-25  Thanksgiving · All campuses closed

DECEMBER 2016
1-19  Holiday Toy Drive · Garden Grove
2  Commencement Ceremony · North Hollywood
7  Lifeblood Blood Drive · Memphis

24-1/1  Winter Break · For Core Students*
   ‘Core students on extern are expected to work the schedule of the location
   they are working, which could include some dates during break. Clinical
   programs vary across campuses as to dates off.

Making a Difference
On October 29-30, Concorde Career College’s Garden Grove, Calif. campus is
welcoming Remote Area Medical (RAM), Kids Vision for Life, the Illumination
Foundation and California Senator Janet Nguyen’s office for a medical, dental and
vision clinic for both adults and children.
There will be the capacity to serve 300-500 patients over the course of two days.
With 15 volunteer dentists and many hygienists, there will be a full range of
dental services, including extractions and cleanings offered. Vision services will
include examinations, referrals (as needed) and glasses made on-site via a mobile lab.
Basic medical services and flu shots will also be offered.
Garden Grove students will be involved with the event as general volunteers,
walking patients and delivering supplies. The public is welcome to volunteer and
can do so by going to ramusa.org. For more information on the event, go to
ramusa.org/event/garden-grove-ca/.

Name the Newsletter
You have one last chance to name this publication! We will be taking feedback for
one more issue, then we will settle on a title for this publication. Below are the six
options to choose from:

1. Quarterly
2. Courier
3. The Flame
4. Insight
5. Beacon
6. Review

Email us at marketing@concorde.edu
 to let us know which name you prefer!

A quick note from our editors...
If you would like to promote your upcoming events in the Q1 January newsletter, please contact the Marketing Team at
marketing@concorde.edu. Please send by December 15.