

Uintah Basin Nursing Faculty Inella Bastian Leaving Behind Legacy | Statewide Campuses

Marcus Jensen News Coordinator

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Utah State University Uintah Basin faculty member Inella Bastian has announced her retirement at the end of the 2021 spring semester. Bastian has been a member of USU's faculty since 2013 and has been the coordinator of nursing since 2018.

"I have had the best years here at USU," Bastian said. "The program has had great support from the local hospitals, community, administration, advisors, and instructors who have taught our students their prerequisite courses. We are all an important part of the success of the nursing program."

Prior to her taking college courses, Bastian spent her early adult life raising her five children. Bastian, and her family, moved to the Uintah Basin in 1989. She had early thoughts of being an elementary educator, but upon moving to the Uintah Basin area, she decided to enter the practical nursing program.

"I decided why not try it," she said. "I never regretted it."

In 1991 she took the prerequisite courses required for nurses at USU Uintah Basin and went on to complete the practical nursing program at Uintah Basin Technical College (UBTech), just as her current students do.

Bastian got her first nursing job in 1992, working in the Obstetrician Department at Uintah Basin Medical Center. After several years, she was approached by UBTech to be a clinical instructor. She had not considered teaching as part of her nursing career path, but upon taking the

assignment, she found that it was something she enjoyed immensely.

"I loved working with the students and realized how fun it was to watch them go through the learning process," she said. "I had instructors, at times, who were belittling and discouraging in my learning path and so, I knew I wanted to be someone who would lift the students and help them see their potential."

Bastian's USU promotion, in 2018, to coordinator of nursing has allowed her to lift students in a way that will last well beyond her retirement. During her time, she played a vital role in the program developing curriculum criteria and content common to all statewide campus nursing courses, which in turn helped the university's statewide campuses to receive accreditation from the state for the nursing program.

"We had to start from the ground up as we came together to make a consistent program across the statewide campuses to become accredited," she said. "We had to develop a concept-based curriculum which, was pretty rare at the time. It took us three years to get it where we are today. It was one of the most challenging experiences I've had to deal with."

Bastian and her family have been very involved in the nursing program in Uintah Basin, and have not only put in their time, but also have financially backed the program.

"Inella is one of those leaders who gives her all with professionalism and a personal touch," said Associate Vice President James Y. Taylor. "It doesn't matter if she is the one in charge or supporting someone else; she gives it her best. Inella has my respect and gratitude. I appreciate her dedication to the statewide campuses' nursing program."

Alongside her sister and brother-in-law, Bastian was able to contribute toward the program having a simulation lab—helping students gain experience on difficult medical procedures while remaining in a safe environment that can help them gain confidence. Bastian is proud to have helped make the lab possible.

"Nursing has given so much to my sister Ann and I," she said. "We realized what a great tool having simulation is. I am grateful for Ann and her husband, Dr. John Grewells. If it would help students become more confident in their ability to assess and respond to stressful nursing situations as students, we knew it would be worth it."

As a USU faculty member at USU Uintah Basin, Bastian has built relationships in the area that have allowed her to help her students find internships and to learn from other nurses. She sees this as a vital part of her students' educational experience. She especially enjoys when her current students are paired with former USU alumni already in the field.

"The nurses our students follow are so willing and knowledgeable," she said. "They give the students great experiences and offer a great deal of patience and care to teach students not only skills but 'the why' behind what they are doing. I am so glad I have had the opportunity to build relationships with the great people who serve the communities in the basin."

Because of the practical hands-on experience her students get from these opportunities, Bastian's students have routinely had high scores on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). She has also been a key collaborator in USU's harmonious nursing education relationship with UBTech, seamlessly helping students transition from UBTech's PN certificate into USU's RN program.

When asked her plans after retirement, Bastian related she has many ideas, but has her first activity—already cemented in stone: sleeping in on her first day off.

"I keep telling people the first week will be me sitting on my sofa, soda and snacks in hand, catching up on reading and my tv shows," she said.

She and her husband have plans to serve a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the next few years. She also wants to spend a lot of time with her children and grandchildren.

Although she is excited to enter her next phase, she also will miss that which made her job so fulfilling: the students. Seeing their enthusiasm for the nursing profession and watching them grow will be something she misses.

"I am so proud of these amazing people. I have been blessed to be a part of their learning and their dream," Bastian said. "I love seeing the students I have taught, out working in nursing. It is the most amazing profession."

Students in the Uintah Basin have the opportunity to earn their associates of applied science in nursing and a bachelor's degree in USU's 100% online RN-to-BSN completion program. In partnership with UBTech, students can also earn their practical nurse credentials. Learn more at uintahbasin.usu.edu.



Inella Bastian



USU nursing coordinator Inella Bastian (right) and her sister Ann pose for a photography with a picture of their younger selves. Inella and Ann were key contributors to the USU Uintah Basin nursing simulation lab.



USU Uintah Basin nursing coordinator and nursing faculty Inella Bastian (left) works with 2021 nursing graduate Makenzie Holmes in the lab. Bastian announced her retirement at the end of the spring semester.

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