



By Walter Brooks

EDUCATION

Graduating CERTIFIED WINNERS

Stephanie Piel pumped her fist in the air and said, "Awright!"

A 1999 graduate of the medical technology program in UNMC's School of Allied Health Professions, Piel passed her medical certification board exam with more than flying colors. She wasn't alone.

Every graduate from seven of SAHP's 10 divisions passed his or her certification board in 1999 — a 100 percent success rate. The other three divisions had pass rates of 94 percent or higher.

The importance of these superior certification pass rates to Nebraska is tremendous. Today, among the state's practicing allied health professionals, UNMC graduates account for:

- 80 percent of medical technologists.
- 73 percent of physician assistants.
- 70 percent of radiation therapists.
- 60 percent of medical technologists.
- 50 percent of diagnostic ultrasonographers.
- 35 percent of physical therapists.
- 30 percent of clinical perfusionists.

Piel said SAHP's success is due to its dedicated faculty and a leave-nothing-to-chance curriculum.

"The boards cover a lot of practical, real-life problem-solving situations," Piel said. "You have to go through as many as four steps before the answer even begins to come into focus. The program kept us in the lab for the majority of school and that practical lab experience helped me answer 40 percent of my exam."

From students' first year until graduation, SAHP faculty never let them forget there is a "certification day of reckoning" ahead. At each school year's midpoint, instructors conduct mock board exams based upon the level of knowledge students should have acquired to that point.

These dry runs are especially helpful by providing identical testing situations — right down to using the same testing software.

Faculty members work hard to prepare their students. They see the certification pass rate as a personal report card.

"It is a well-known fact that someone can be extremely knowledgeable of their profession, but not know how to effectively teach it to others," said Mary Haven, associate dean of SAHP.

"We constantly survey our graduates and their potential employers for anything that will give our faculty the most updated knowledge.

We have a tremendous amount of contact time between faculty and students, often as much as 1,500 hours per instructor and class.

In addition, all faculty participate in many workshops and seminars, often mandatory, that review and expand upon their teaching skills."

In Stephanie Piel's case, SAHP didn't just get another "A," it got an "A+." Piel now works on UNMC's medical technology staff in the pathology/microbiology clinical lab.

"The allied health faculty thought of everything," Piel said. "I was ready for any question."

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS, CONTACT HAVEN AT 402-559-7428. *d*



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"The allied health faculty thought of everything," said Stephanie Piel, now employed in pathology/microbiology.