

Dean VanHart

I have worked my way through life, and started my educational journey by working while taking classes, both full time, to receive my Associates Degree in Paramedic Sciences. Throughout my career, when I worked with patients and brought them to the emergency room I would often turn over care to Respiratory Therapists. These hard-working individuals would always ask me, "Dean, when are you going to Respiratory school?" I always considered Emergency Medical Services my life, so I shrugged it off and thought, "yeah, right."

After roughly fifteen years in the emergency medicine field, I found myself at a crossroads of needing surgery on my back. This was caused by years of wear and tear while assisting patients out of a variety of situations. It was a turning point in my life, as the potential of moving into a career that was less abusive on my back started to look more appealing.

While continuing to work full time as a Paramedic to pay for my education, I received my second Associates Degree in Respiratory Care. After graduating, I worked in a local Hospital for roughly six years before I had the opportunity to work for the prestigious Duke University Hospital in North Carolina. Two years into my career at Duke, I heard many stories from co-workers about how they had completed their Bachelor's degree from UNC Charlotte. Soon, I became interested in doing the same.

I always wished there were a way that my two Associate Degrees could transform into a Bachelor's. My next best option to continue learning more about my profession, improve my knowledge base, and enhance patient care was through the UNC Charlotte Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Therapy Program through Distance Education.



Though my experience on campus has been limited, I am proud to say I feel like part of the niner nation family. The very best part of my journey at UNC Charlotte has been the wonderful professors and staff that are at your beck and call. Whether by phone or by email, all my questions and concerns have felt important to the staff. The transition to college life was smooth because the staff and faculty possessed a lot of preparedness in helping students like me. The primary resource I was closely involved with was the Library. I had my own Librarian in my major to assist me with my research needs, which proved to be a godsend to have someone so knowledgeable and helpful available to me. Additionally, without the OASES team, I would still be lost. From day one, my interaction with the staff in this department has been nothing less than remarkable. I was notified of not only an opportunity for scholarships, but other tools to make my college life easier. The staff all treated me with respect and caring. There was never a question that went unanswered. I was truly supplied with the tools to govern my success.

The continuation of my education has spurred a growth in me as a person and a health professional. As I approach graduation in 2017, I want to continue to promote my profession and grow as part of the healthcare team at Duke. I want to build on the knowledge and confidence that UNC Charlotte has provided for me and change my future and the future of others.

My advice to students thinking about returning or who are on the path is to be strong! I know you have a lot on your plate, but if you want something just reach for it. Many times we say, maybe next year. Yesterday is history, today is a gift, and tomorrow is a mystery. Make your tomorrow what you want and UNC Charlotte can help get you there! I could not be more thankful to the staff and professors for their knowledge and understanding. I am proud to be a forty niner!

OASES sends our congratulations to Dean on his graduation in 2017! Discover more about our B.S. in Respiratory Therapy program and other Distance Education Degree Programs offered through UNC Charlotte!

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