THE TORCH

The Official Newsletter from the Virginia Nursing Students Association

Our Mission:

Our Mission: *to advance professional nursing practice through student mentorship, community service and scholarship.*

Winter 2026 edition:

- **Our mission**
- **Meet the 2025-2026 Board of directors**
- **2025 in Review**
- **2026 Annual VNSA Convention**
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Our meetings are open to all VNSA members, so come see what it's like to be on the VNSA board. If you would like to attend a meeting, please feel free to contact anyone on our board of directors for finalized dates, times, and location. Once you see firsthand how great being a board member would be, come to our annual VNSA convention and run for a position!

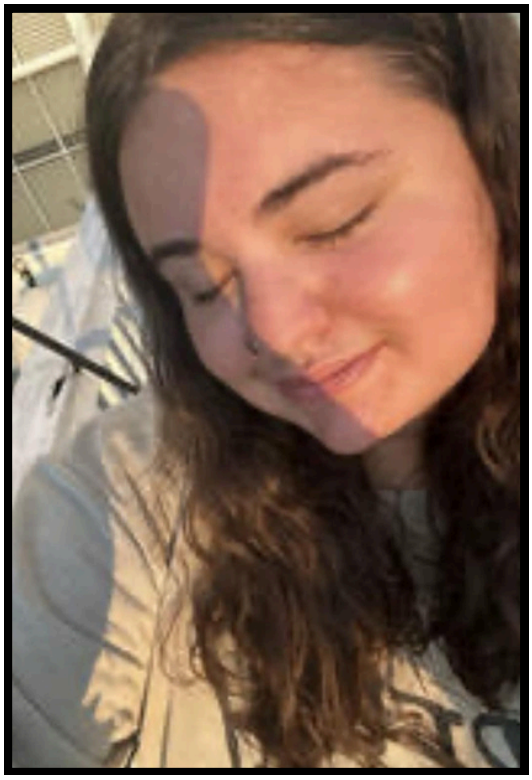
Board of Directors:

April Fox, President

contactvnsa@gmail.com

Senior nursing student at Liberty University School of Nursing

As VNSA President, April strives to foster connection, inspire leadership, and amplify the student nurse voice across Virginia. "I joined VNSA's Board because I'm passionate about supporting and empowering the next generation of nurses. I want to listen, represent our collective voice, and help bring nursing students together through shared goals and meaningful initiatives. My top goal is to serve the board well, foster engagement, mentorship and open dialogue. Outside of school. I focus on things that fill my cup – friends, church, the gym, cooking, and reading – so that I can pour into others."



Marissa Cardoza, 1st Vice President

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Junior nursing student at Radford University College of Nursing

As VNSA First Vice President, Marissa strives to promote inclusive, equitable healthcare education for all nursing students in Virginia. Through planning the annual VNSA Convention, she hopes to create a space that celebrates diversity, empowers students, and inspires leadership across the state. "I joined the VNSA Board to represent nursing students across Virginia and help amplify our voices at the. state level. I want to advocate for positive change within nursing education and strengthen the student nurse community. My goal is to ensure that every student feels valued, supported, and empowered to make a difference."

Ave Parker, 2nd Vice President

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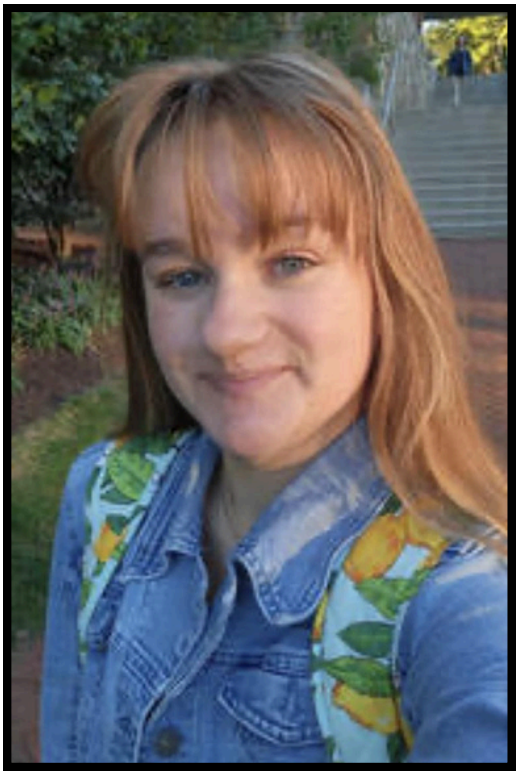
Senior nursing student at Radford University College of Nursing As VNSA Second Vice President, Ave aims to foster community among Virginia's nursing students through engaging events and meaningful connection. This year, she hopes to expand student participation at convention, promote wellness and self-care initiatives, and ensure every attendee feels welcomed, supported, and inspired. " I joined the VNSA Board to get more involved as a new nursing student and take advantage of the leadership opportunities it offers. Attending convention of my freshman year was a turning point – it opened my eyes to how much VNSA has to offer. Being on the Board lets me grow as a leader while helping other studentsfeel that same sense of connection and possibility."



Savannah Shelton, Secretary

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Junior nursing student at Liberty University School of Nursing

VNSA Secretary, Savvy strives to strengthen communication, organization, and connection across the association. She's dedicated to ensuring nursing students in Virginia have access to the resources and encouragement they need to thrive in their education and future careers. "I joined the VNSA Board because I want to create opportunities that help shape better nurses for the future. Being part of VNSA allows me to serve others, advocate for students, and help strengthen the foundation for nursing education across Virginia.

Emily Friar, Treasurer

vnsatreasurer@gmail.com

Senior nursing student at Radford University College of Nursing

As VNSA Treasurer, Emily is dedicated to ensuring financial stability and transparency within the organization so future leaders can continue to thrive. With three years of experience in this role, she brings strong organization, insight, and a heart for service to every project she leads. “I joined the VNSA Board to get more involved in the nursing student community and strengthen my leadership skills. Being part of VNSA has given me the opportunity to grow both personally and professionally while helping support nursing students across Virginia.”

Leah Lipinski, Policy and Initiatives Director

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Senior nursing student at Liberty University

As VNSA Policy and Initiatives Director, Leah serves on the VNSA Board of Directors with a passion for collaboration, leadership, and policy-driven change. “I joined the VNSA Board to work alongside driven student nurses and help develop initiatives that prepare us to lead change in healthcare. I’m especially passionate about caring for high-acuity patients in intensive care and, long-term, addressing the mental health crisis through community care and policy reform. My goal this year is to give nursing students a strong voice by empowering them to engage in policy and stay informed on current issues shaping our profession.”

Sabrina Yap, Public Relations Director

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Senior nursing student at James Madison University School of Nursing

As VNSA Public Relations Director, Sabrina aims to foster connection, communication, and inclusivity among Virginia nursing students. She plans to champion diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives while reviving engagement across all chapters statewide. “I joined the VNSA Board because I wanted to connect and collaborate with nursing students across Virginia. Working with peers from different schools brings fresh perspectives and helps me grow as both a student and a leader. VNSA offers the perfect opportunity to build connections while strengthening my communication and leadership skills.”

Lily Demarest, Torch Editor

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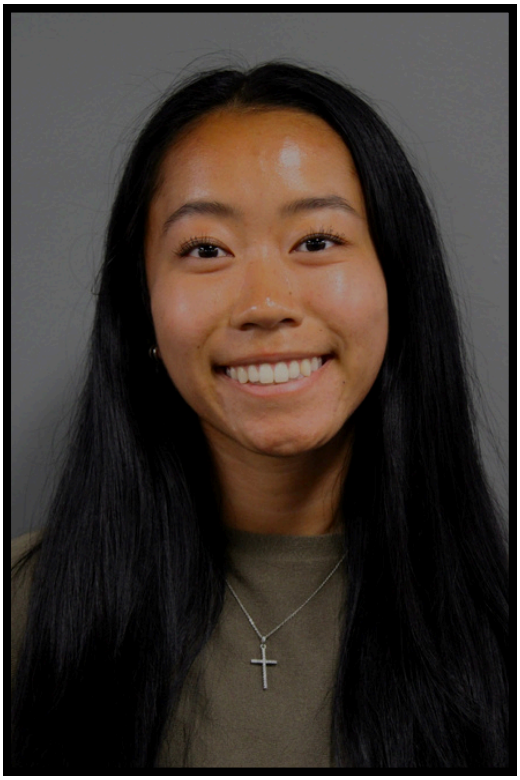
Sophomore nursing student at Liberty University School of Nursing

As VNSA Torch Editor, Lily strives to promote engagement within the nursing student community, as well as provide encouragement, and advance education amongst nursing students in order to serve each other and the patients we encounter best. “I joined the VNSA Board because I value connection and believe it is foundational to supporting nursing students from every background across the state of Virginia. Through shared experiences, encouragement, and constructive challenge, we can uplift one another, elevate the standard of patient care, advocate for our own well-being as aspiring healthcare professionals, and inspire future generations of nursing students.”



Grace Steiner, Director at Large

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Senior nursing student at Liberty University School of Nursing

As VNSA Director at Large, Grace is passionate about supporting nursing students across Virginia. Her goal this year is to foster unity, encouragement, and collaboration, helping to build a strong and supportive professional community. “I joined the VNSA Board to contribute to an environment where students feel supported, valued, and empowered throughout their nursing journey. Being on the Board allows me to contribute to meaningful change and work alongside others who share a commitment to student leadership and professional growth.” As a Christian, Grace is also actively involved in her church and values mentorship and service. Outside of school, she works as a Starbucks barista and destresses through art, yoga, being with friends and family, and spending time outdoors.

Julia Beth Stamp, Historian

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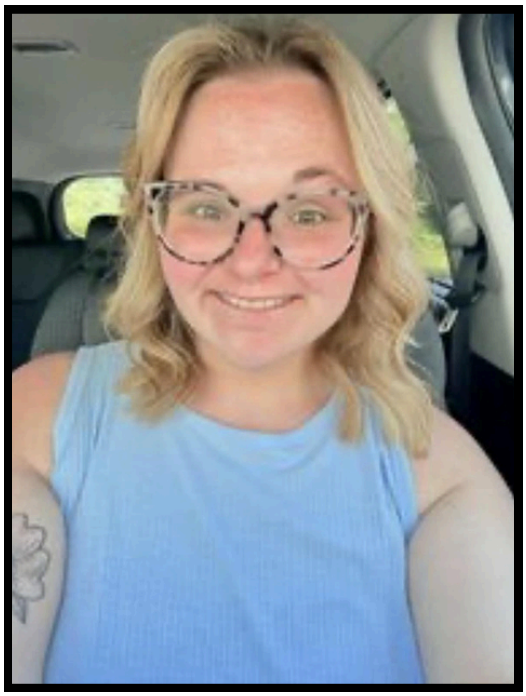
Sophomore nursing student at Liberty University School of Nursing

As VNSA Historian, Julia Beth hopes to highlight the impact of student leadership, expand community health education, and encourage nursing students to explore diverse career paths—whether in research, policy, or global health. Her ultimate goal is to help every student see that their nursing journey has limitless possibilities. “I joined the VNSA Board because I’m passionate about community outreach and education. I want to help ensure that all nursing students throughout Virginia have the equitable educational access and the support to pursue a career in healthcare without barriers. Being on the Board allows me to advocate for that mission and bring awareness to inequalities in nursing education.”



Addison Wallace, Graduate Consultant

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Graduated from Radford University College of Nursing, Class of 2022

As VNSA's Graduate Advisor, Addison's goal is to guide and support student nurses as they discover their leadership potential. With five years of experience on the Board, she's dedicated to fostering collaboration, connection, and confidence among nursing students across Virginia. "I first joined VNSA back in 2020 as Treasurer and never left! I've loved watching nursing students grow into their leadership roles and thrive both on and off the Board. Being part of VNSA continues to give me the opportunity to mentor and support the next generation of nurse leaders."

Josie Graham, Graduate Consultant

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Graduated from Radford University College of Nursing, Class of 2022

As VNSA's Second Graduate Advisor, Josie hopes to expand outreach, grow membership, and help student nurses find their place within the VNSA community. She's passionate about inspiring others to see that leadership starts with connection and service. "I joined the VNSA Board to reach more nursing students across Virginia and help them discover the impact they can make through involvement and leadership. Watching students grow and find their confidence is one of the most rewarding parts of being on the Board."

2025 in Review…

VNSA 73rd Annual Convention

Hosted by Liberty University

Thank You!

VNSA would like to thank everyone that made Convention 2025 possible! Thank you to Liberty University for hosting us, to our gracious sponsors, to the speakers who donated their time, and especially for all the student nurses who attended!

2025 Convention Sponsors

Riverside Health

Sentara

Inova

VNA Virginia Nurses Association

Mary Washington Healthcare

Virginia Nursing Students' Association Council of Student Leadership Summit

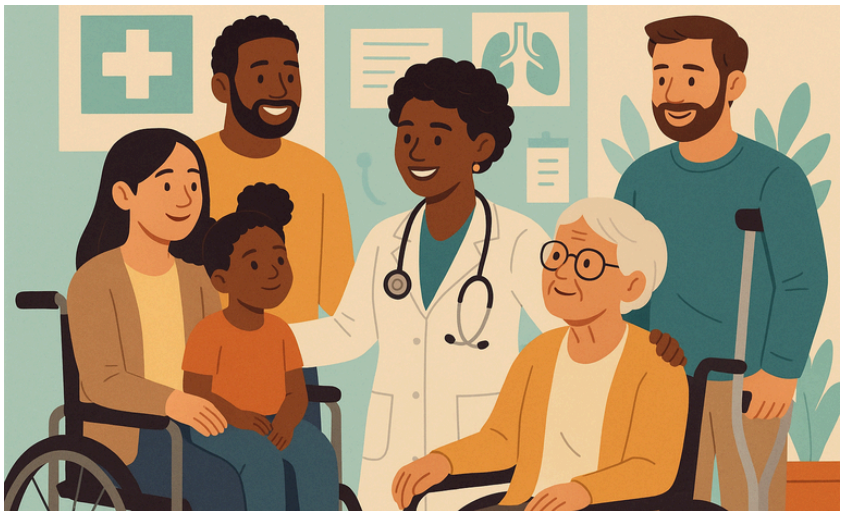
- Hosted by George Mason University -

"The Virginia Nursing Student Association's Council of Student Leaders (COSL) gathered emerging nurse leaders from across the state for a day of reflection, collaboration, and policy engagement. Participants began by writing personal reflections on why they chose nursing, identifying their greatest perceived barriers to entering the profession, and exploring what fuels their passion to overcome those challenges. From financial strain to burnout concerns, students shared deeply personal motivations to make nursing more accessible and equitable for future generations. Through interactive discussions and numerous breakout sessions, attendees explored how policy and resolutions can drive lasting improvements in both nursing education and the profession at large. Guest speakers, including representatives from AWHONN and Inova, inspired attendees to take an active role in healthcare advocacy and policy initiatives. The day concluded with a sense of renewed purpose and unity, as future nurses left inspired to turn their passion into action."

- Julia Beth Stamp, VNSA Historian

So grateful for the opportunity to come together for The Council of Student Leadership Summit!

Register Now for our 74th Annual Convention!



Join nursing students, faculty, and nurse leaders from across Virginia at the Virginia Nursing Students' Association Annual Convention—a one-day, high-impact event designed to inspire, educate, and empower the next generation of nurses.

This year's theme, "**Inclusive Healthcare for All: Check Your Bias at the Door**," challenges attendees to reflect, learn, and grow as compassionate, culturally competent healthcare professionals.

Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from dynamic speakers, participate in educational sessions, connect with peers, and explore career and leadership opportunities within nursing. Whether you're a pre-nursing student or preparing to graduate, the VNSA Convention offers valuable insight, professional development, and meaningful networking.

VNSA

📍 **Radford University**

801 E Main St, Radford, VA 24142

📅 **February 21st 7:30AM-4:00PPM**

📝 **Register by February 11th 11:30PM**

👉 **Scan the QR code to register!**

VNSA Announcements!

❖ Registration deadline for 2026 VNSA Annual Convention: February 11, 2026
❖ The VNSA is still looking for tote bag sponsors for our 2026 Annual Convention!
❖ The VNSA will have many open board positions soon, so take this opportunity to join the board!
❖ The VNSA offers scholarships for nursing students – apply for scholarships through the link on our website (under the Resources tab) found on the next page.
❖ Receive your FREE e-gift care of your choice when you attend The VNSA's Annual Convention and participate in the blood drive run by The Blood Connection!

CONNECT WITH US!

Learn More about VNSA!

Consider applying to be on the VNSA's Board of Directors!

-Email the VNSA Board of Directors (contactvnsa@gmail.com) for more information!

VNSA Official Website- http://www.vnsa.us

VNSA Facebook- VNSA Nursing Students' Association

Twitter- @vnsapr

Instagram- @vnsa.us

Want to share your local chapter's accomplishments? Interested in what other chapters are doing or what upcoming events that are happening? Have an interest in writing an article or publishing your research? Let us know! The Torch is your newsletter and publisher! Send us any articles, pictures, event information, and your contact information and we'll publish it in the next issue!!

Email: vnsatorcheditor@gmail.com

We look forward to hearing from you!