

Seattle University

ScholarWorks @ SeattleU

---

The Spectator Online

Newspapers

---

5-28-2021

## Virtual Pinning Ceremony Leaves Graduates Nursing Students Disappointed

Megan Bobilin  
*Seattle University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online>

---

### Recommended Citation

Bobilin, Megan, "Virtual Pinning Ceremony Leaves Graduates Nursing Students Disappointed" (2021). *The Spectator Online*. 346.

<https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online/346>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Newspapers at ScholarWorks @ SeattleU. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Spectator Online by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ SeattleU.



# Virtual Pinning Ceremony Leaves Graduates Nursing Students Disappointed

Megan Bobilin, Staff Reporter

The College of Nursing recently announced that the 2021 Nursing Student Pinning Ceremony will no longer be held in-person, leaving Seattle University's Traditional Nursing Cohort of 72 students disappointed.

Just last month, students in the College of Nursing had been told that an in-person pinning ceremony with strict safety limitations remained a possibility. However, this month, they were told the ceremony was no longer feasible.

Kristen Swanson, dean and professor in the College of Nursing, explained that because Seattle U still has not lifted their restrictions for on-campus events, the ceremony would not be in compliance, prohibiting the event from being held in-person.

"The announcement of a live-pinning ceremony was, unfortunately, based on older information," Swanson said. "At this point, the university's decision is leaning towards not holding an in-person event because to do so would not be in alignment with the governor's guidelines, and Seattle U's interpretations of those guidelines, regarding maintaining safety during commencement events and celebrations."

Keetra Kartes, a fourth-year nursing major, and co-president of the Traditional Nursing Cohort said that their board of officers had been campaigning for an in-person pinning ceremony because, until recently, they were under the impression that it was still a possibility.

"My cohort officers and I ended up writing a three-page letter to the provost, to petition for an in-person ceremony, but also to explain why pinning is really important to us, and how we would make sure the ceremony was safe," Kartes said. "We sent that in, and we didn't get a response for a very long while. That was really disheartening."

Their proposal letter included a thoughtful eight-step implementation plan for safely following the Washington Department of Health guidelines at their ceremony, including mask-wearing, six-feet distance, no hand-shaking, quality air ventilation, routine sanitization and disinfection of surfaces with pre-planned staggered entrances/exits to avoid any social congregation.

"When other state schools are having in-person graduation, 75 people doesn't seem so big," Kartes said. "Especially when taking the appropriate measures like masking and social distancing, and also considering that all of us are nursing majors, so the large majority, if not all of us, have already been vaccinated."

The Nursing Cohort's letter of petition also included a detailed description of the symbolic importance behind the tradition of the College of Nursing's pinning ceremony.



Kim Nucum

“It’s so symbolic and so meaningful,” Kartes said. “Pinning is something that all nurses end up doing to symbolize a welcoming into the profession.”

Sharon Zhang, a fourth-year nursing major, and the other co-president of the Traditional Nursing Cohort echoed this belief.

“It is such an important milestone for all of us. It’s like a rite of passage for new nurses,” Zhang said. “Typically, at a pinning ceremony, we have a professional nurse come pin each student. Essentially, it recognizes the hard work and dedication each student has invested into their degree throughout the past four years. It also symbolizes the transition from schooling into their professional careers.”

In addition to the ceremony holding special meaning, Kartes and Zhang were sad to be missing out on a final chance to see their whole cohort together again.

“Many of us feel very disappointed. We just miss each other,” Zhang said. “I think having four years of classes together going through this rigorous program—we’re very sad not to see each other in person.”

Kartes agreed that the ceremony would have been a nice way to reconnect with their support system of fellow student nurses again.

“Pinning was our last hope to all see each other again,” Kartes said. “Our cohort especially was really close and really great supporting each other...but during the pandemic, we weren’t able to see each other and go to classes together and check in on each other... So we were really hoping that the pinning would be our last goodbye before dispersing into the workforce.”

Although Zhang and Kartes shared disappointment for this turn of events, they do not hold any hard feelings towards the College of Nursing.

“We know the College of Nursing has advocated for us and that it’s not the College’s decision—it’s the university’s,” Zhang said. “We know they prioritize our safety. We completely understand that. I guess what we can do moving forward is just to celebrate what we can virtually.”

Because their cohort shares such a close bond with one another, Zhang said she has no doubt that they will be able to overcome this letdown together.

“I do think our cohort is very tight-knit and we’re very supportive of each other and no matter what I have complete faith that we’ll overcome this difficult time,” Zhang said. “I’m just so proud of each and every one of my classmates for all the hard work, tears, and sweat that they’ve put into this nursing program.”

Disappointment has been a common feeling shared amongst graduating students at Seattle U as ceremonies remain in virtual settings. Although Seattle U is a smaller university compared to other large universities holding in-person graduations, there is no wavering on the decision to keep everything remote, dismaying many graduates.