



Transfer Success Story



Stephanie Hawkins-Guevara

Basic Nursing Assistant Training Program, 2015

A.A., Wilbur Wright College, 2017

B.S.W., Northeastern Illinois University, 2019

M.S.W., Northeastern Illinois University, 2021

Deciding to return to school in 2013, after graduating high school in 1986, was a dream deferred. As a child, I envisioned myself working in a hospital as a nurse. I would be the first-generation female college graduate in my family. However, the lack of understanding of mathematical equations increased my fear of getting started. Like so many marginalized people, I found myself engrossed in the environmental struggles, such as lack of resources, and educators void of training and disposition to assess children grappling with trauma accurately.

The same year I started at Wright College, I decided to seek professional help to deal with unresolved trauma enveloping my life. This was one of the best decisions I could ever make for my family. With the help of my therapist and the support of my loving husband, I took the required steps toward getting started. I took the placement exam. It was no surprise that I tested at the Foundational Math level; this meant I would have to take three math classes before starting college-level math. This was a little discouraging because I had finally dared to get started. Lucky for me, I had an excellent professor. His patience, humor, and understanding of mathematical calculations gave me the confidence to continue with my journey.

My assigned college advisor, Malgorzata Haptas, welcomed me and walked me through all the courses needed to prepare to transfer. I needed to take one more math course – Statistics. I was anxious and apprehensive about taking this math class. Professor Lydia Dobria was exceptional in her teaching of math and helped me to successfully complete Statistics. She met with me during her office hours, and her passion for helping students was key in my succeeding. Throughout my time at Wright, I encountered many professors willing to extend a helping hand to ensure successful completion.

During my advising appointments with Advisor Malgorzata, we explored majors and careers focused on helping people. I became interested in the field of social work and decided to transfer to Northeastern Illinois University to earn my Bachelor's in Social Work (B.S.W.). This was a family decision that my husband and I agreed was the best path for me. I wanted to help those whose lives are halted in most instances due to circumstances beyond their control. I was accepted into the B.S.W. program with a \$3,000 scholarship. After earning my B.S.W., I decided to pursue the Master's in Social Work (M.S.W.) Throughout this time, I continued to stay in touch with Advisor Malgorzata. She always encouraged and motivated me to continue to work towards my dreams. I earned my M.S.W. in 2021. Now I am exploring opportunities to serve in the Chicago Public School system to help marginalized communities, and subsequently I hope to pursue a doctoral degree in education.

