

**College/Program:**

College of Graduate Nursing, Master of Science in Nursing Entry

Hometown:

San Gabriel, CA

Undergraduate Institution:

University of California, San Diego

Undergraduate Degree(s):

Bachelors of Science (B.S.) in Human Biology

Hobbies/Interests:

Baking, Cooking, Listening to music

Previous Career:

Early Education Center Aide Substitute

PROFILE

What inspired you to pursue your health sciences career path?

Since I was young, I have been fascinated with science and medicine, leading me to seek out opportunities to learn within the medical field. I am particularly drawn to nursing because it allows for the hands-on application of my knowledge, which leads to a direct impact on my patients' lives. The prospect

of being able to use my expertise to provide care and healing to those in need brings me immense joy and fuels my commitment to this career path.

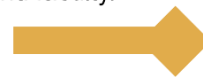
Describe the biggest challenge you overcame on your path to WesternU.

The biggest challenge on my path to WesternU was navigating through my undergraduate education as a first-generation college student. As the first in my family to attend a four-year university, I had to navigate through college without the guidance that many of my peers received from family members who had attended college. I was able to persevere with the thought that pursuing higher education will build a better future for myself and to give back to my family and community.

Why did you choose to attend WesternU?

While WesternU had long been one of my top choices due to its reputable program, I ultimately chose WesternU because of its welcoming and supportive community. The day I first walked onto campus, I was left with a lasting impression of WesternU's beautiful, warm community that made me want to be a part of. I felt that WesternU would provide me with not just a quality education, but an environment where I can thrive, surrounded by supportive peers and faculty.

**Melissa
Dang**



A graphic consisting of two overlapping dark red rectangular boxes. The top box is larger and contains the name "Melissa" in white serif font. The bottom box is smaller and overlaps the bottom right of the top box, containing the name "Dang" in white serif font.

**Melissa
Dang**

PROFILE CONTINUED

What is your proudest accomplishment?

My proudest accomplishment is being the first in my family to graduate with a Bachelor of Science. As the child of immigrant parents who worked tirelessly despite the poverty we faced, this achievement represents not only my academic success, but also reflects their sacrifices and unwavering support. I'm proud to be turning their support into something meaningful, and I'm motivated every day by the goal of giving back to them and serving others through a career in nursing.

Thank you letter to the Board of Trustees:

Thank you so much for your generous support through the Board of Trustees Scholarship. As someone from a low-income family, graduate school always seemed like an overwhelming financial endeavor. Receiving this scholarship lifts a great weight off my shoulders and allows me to focus on my education and training.

Growing up, I witnessed firsthand the challenges my family faced in accessing quality healthcare, limited by both financial constraints and barriers created by language and cultural differences. This experience inspired me to pursue a career in nursing, where I can combine my passion for science and medicine with my commitment to advocacy and compassionate care.

This scholarship allows me to fully dedicate myself to my studies and clinical training without the constant worry of how I will afford the cost of graduate school. With this support, I can stay focused on my goal of becoming a compassionate, knowledgeable, and socially conscious nurse.

In the future, I hope to work as a registered nurse in a setting where I can serve low-income families, non-English-speaking populations, and individuals who are often overlooked by the healthcare system. More than anything, I want to be a nurse who listens, advocates, and makes people feel safe and seen.

Your generosity has brought me one step closer to making that dream a reality. Thank you again for believing in students like me and for helping pave the way toward a more compassionate and equitable healthcare system.

Sincerely,
Melissa Dang, MSN-E, '27