



We regret that the legibility of this clipping is reduced due to the imperfect printing by the newspaper.

# Woman takes winding path to medical career

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An environmental science class took Beth Bryant-Lisk out of the business world.

By Jennie Tal

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Beth Bryant-Lisk didn't want to be a hypocrite. A few years ago, she and her husband, Nick Lisk, started a college fund for their son. When the question arose about what to do with the money if the now 7-year-old Mikael Soren Lisk decided not to go to school, Bryant-Lisk immediately knew that was not an option for her son.

She also knew she wouldn't be able to enforce her decision if she didn't have a degree of her own.

So today she will be awarded a bachelor's degree in biomedical sciences from Jefferson College of Health Sciences.

After high school, Bryant-Lisk, 37, worked for Sears, Lane Bryant and Telcordia Technologies in management, training and customer service so a business degree seemed natural for her and she set her sights on an MBA. Now, about 4½ years and two degrees later, she has a different view.

While working on an associate degree in business from Western



JOSH MELTZER | The Roanoke Times

Beth Bryant-Lisk is graduating today from Jefferson College of Health Sciences. She plans to work toward a master's degree in public health.

International University, which she completed in 10 months, Bryant-Lisk took an environmental science class that flipped her career goals upside down.

She was working on a project for the class that made her realize the difficulties people go through worldwide to find food and water and stay healthy from day to day.

"It reminded me of who I wanted to be and it was then and there that I decided to go into the medical profession," said Bryant-Lisk, who hopes

to become a doctor of osteopathic medicine.

"I love people, want to help people and I am generous to a fault, and thought that this would be a wonderful asset to have as a doctor."

Bryant-Lisk graduates today after 3½ years of hard work— this semester she took 26 credits and earned a 4.0 grade point average in addition to working with student organizations including the one she initiated, the JCHS chapter of the American Medical Student Association Premedical

## Jefferson College of Health Sciences

**Graduation:** 11 a.m. today

**Number of graduates:** 242

**Where:** Roanoke Civic Center coliseum

**Guest Speaker:** Dr. Edward Murphy, president and CEO of Carilion Clinic

**Fast fact:** The largest group of undergraduates is receiving associate degrees in nursing. There are 78.

## Chapter.

"I'm in awe of her being able to juggle the number of credits she has with the academic success that she's had and be involved in the number of things that she is," said Jennifer Carlo, the JCHS dean for student services.

But even after putting so much time into her education, she's not walking across any stages to symbolize her achievement— her mother-in-law is in town and Bryant-Lisk wants to spend the day with her family.

Plus, she's working the night shift tonight at her new weekend job as an emergency room registrar at Lewis-Gale Medical Center, so there's no post-grad partying on her calendar.

She starts a distance learning course at Walden University in August, when she'll work toward a master's in public health. She plans

to spend the majority of her 250 required clinical hours volunteering.

Her hours at Lewis-Gale probably won't count, but Bryant-Lisk has contacted the Bradley Free Clinic in Roanoke to plan some volunteer work there.

She already spends time shadowing a doctor of osteopathy at a clinic of the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and working with RAM House, the Red Cross and other nonprofit organizations. She said she feels passionate about helping people who can't afford to pay for their well-being.

"I definitely want to do pro bono work, either Doctors Without Borders or opening a clinic where I can offer free health care," Bryant-Lisk said of her eventual career.

Anchored in the Roanoke Valley by her son and husband, a federal police officer for the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Bryant-Lisk hopes to attend the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine in Blacksburg, which her family, peers and faculty don't foresee being an issue.

"Any college would be lucky to have her," said Carlo, who is also an assistant professor at JCHS. "She'd be an asset to any campus."

By August 2009, she'll be done with her course work from Walden and can get started at VCOM — if all goes as planned.