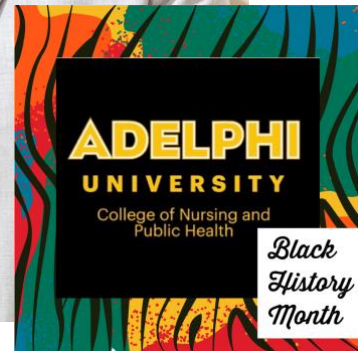
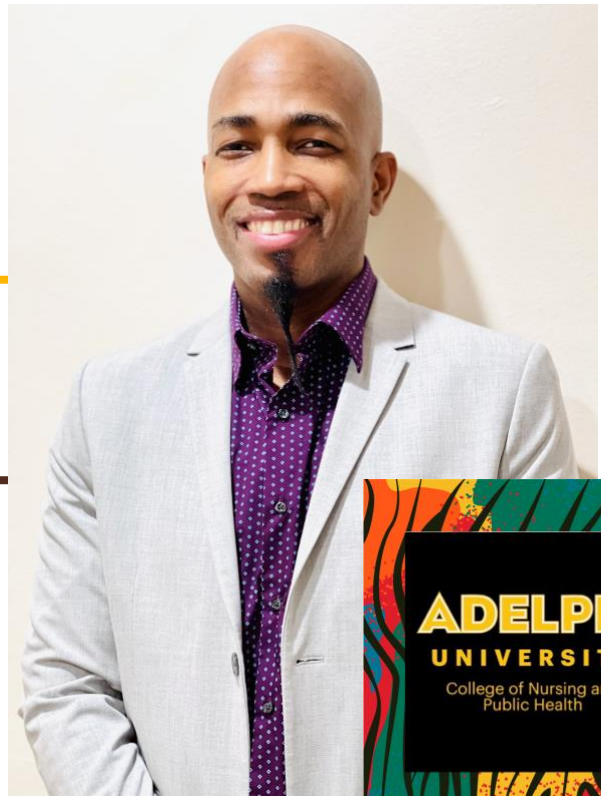


Getting to know your CNPH Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council Members

Gary Chang,

**Psych Mental Health Nurse
Practitioner Student**



My interest in healthcare began as a young child after my mother had a tragic car accident and was seriously injured. Following her surgeries, she was left to heal at home without sufficient healthcare. I was devastated, but even more, I felt helpless as I have never seen my mother so broken physically and spiritually. I tried to nurse my mom back to health, and it quickly became clear I was out of my league. I was determined never to have that moment repeat itself in my lifetime.

I began my nursing career as a volunteer at a major hospital. I soon developed an appreciation and love for nursing and decided that this was the career path that I would pursue. As a young man, I dreamed of being successful, and my plan was simply to have a job that would positively impact people's lives, have a family, and contribute positively to society. So my dream began to take shape when I enrolled at a community college nursing program and was further inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King. I remember my first prerequisite English class paper was to write an analysis of Dr. King's "I have a dream" speech. I was inadvertently possessed by the spirit of this speech and the dream Dr. King spoke of. I knew how important it was to have a dream, and yet so many people don't believe that they can dream, or that their dreams can ever come true; seeing a life instead not valued and one predestined to a powerless, voiceless, uninspiring future. My goal was simple - be in a position to help and to heal. I graduated nursing school and was honored for outstanding clinical performance. Since then, my career has spanned medical-surgical, telemetry, substance abuse facility nursing supervisor, to critical-care with an in-depth heart transplant and heart ventricular assist device experience. I completed my Bachelor's in nursing with a GPA of 3.94 on a 4.0 scale and decided to complete my master's degree, another step towards completing my journey.

Choosing my master's degree major became a leap of faith. Should I follow a medical curriculum or anesthesia path as so many of my colleagues versed in critical-care pursue or follow my first love of mental health? My first love of mental health prevailed, and soon I would enroll in the psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner program at Adelphi. I enjoyed clinical rotations in nursing school but especially enjoyed mental health and remember the last statement one of the patients once told me; she said, "you have begun to stitch my soul back together." That statement stayed with me throughout my career because I realized that there are so many souls that feel broken and need to be made whole. Nursing provides an opportunity to help clients achieve a higher state of wellness and gives the nurse a fulfilling sense of purpose unmatched by any other profession. I needed a program that emphasized therapeutic intervention combining online and in-person classes. Adelphi was the perfect match.



CNPH DEI Council Member, Gary Chang

My time at Adelphi has been riveting, as I have experienced some of the most experienced and inspiring professors and professionals in their field. One of the most inspiring role models I have met during my time at Adelphi is Professor Cal. I believe the spirit of Dr. King's "I have a dream" speech is alive at Adelphi in the person of Professor Cal. I first met him as the professor of my informatics class, one of my first graduate courses. His ability to deliver the material is surpassed only by his passion for advancing his students' future success. His passion has become him and goes beyond the classroom. He helped start the College of Nursing and Public Health (CNPH) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council when the country awakened to the call for social justice. I joined the council as a student representative, and since then, it has become one of my greatest privileges. The DEI council has been operationalized from its inception with the input and involvement of staff, faculty, and students. The committee has addressed deficiencies in the University's curriculum on diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice issues, developed workshops, a DEI book club through task force activities, and supports the National Commission to Address Racism in Nursing initiative, among other things.

Change is not only possible but is happening at Adelphi. I believe that the dream of a better world is still alive, a diversified, equitable, and inclusive future, and that is a dream that everyone can share.

