



**Oklahoma's  
Nursing Times**

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# **2018 Oklahoma's College Guide to Nursing**

**A Guide for Prospective Nursing Students**

# Getting ready for college or career school can be easier than you think

Graduating High School? Thinking about college? There's so much to consider when it comes to getting ready for college: where to go, what to study, how to apply, how to pay for it all, and more.

It's never too early—or too late—to explore your options for college. Inside this Guide are some key steps in preparing for

college and resources that can help you along the way. You'll have to take the time to research and understand your options, but you don't have to do it alone. This Guide Can Help!

## Why go to college?

More money, more job options, and more freedom. With less than a high school diploma the average income is just over \$31,000 per year. With an Associates degree your earnings jump to more than \$53,000 per year and \$75,000 with a Bachelor's degree. Earnings soar ever higher with a Master's and/or Doctoral Degree at over \$100,000 per year.

## Checklist.

As student or parent just about to start college, the following checklists will help you get ready.

1. Work hard all the way to graduation—second-semester

grades can affect scholarship eligibility.

2. Stay involved in after-school activities, and seek leadership roles if possible.

3. As soon as possible after its Oct. 1 release, complete and submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®), at [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov), along with any other financial aid applications your chosen school(s) may require. You should submit your FAFSA® by the earliest financial aid deadline of the schools to which you are applying, usually by early February.

4. After you submit the FAFSA, you should receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) within three days to three weeks. This document lists your answers to the questions on your FAFSA and gives you some basic information about your aid eligibility. Quickly make any necessary corrections and submit them to the FAFSA processor.

5. If you haven't done so already, register for and take the standardized tests required for college admission. Check with the colleges you are interested in to see what tests they require. Apply to the colleges you have chosen. Prepare your applications carefully. Follow the instructions, and PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO DEADLINES!

6. Well before your college application deadlines, ask your counselor and teachers to submit the required documents (e.g., transcript, letters of recommendation) to the colleges to which you're applying.

7. Complete any last scholarship applications.

8. Visit colleges that have invited you to enroll.

9. Review your college acceptances and compare the colleges' financial aid offers.

10. Contact a school's financial aid office if you have questions about the aid that school has offered you. In fact, getting to know your financial aid staff early is a good idea no matter what—they can tell you about deadlines, other aid for which you might wish to apply, and important paperwork you might need to submit.

11. When you decide which school you want to attend, notify that school of your commitment and submit any required financial deposit. Many schools require this notification and deposit by May 1st.

Notes: a. Understand the FAFSA better by watching the videos in the "FAFSA: Apply for Aid" playlist at [www.YouTube.com/FederalStudentAid](http://www.YouTube.com/FederalStudentAid). b. Follow or like the office of Federal Student Aid at [www.Twitter.com/FAFSA](http://www.Twitter.com/FAFSA) and [www.Facebook.com/FederalStudentAid](http://www.Facebook.com/FederalStudentAid) to get regular financial aid tips. c. Make informed decisions about student loans; the following resources are important at this point: Federal Versus Private Loans and Federal Student Loans: Basics for Students

**REMEMBER:** Register for all tests in advance and be sure to give yourself time to prepare appropriately! If you have difficulty paying a registration fee, ask your school counselor about getting the fee waived.

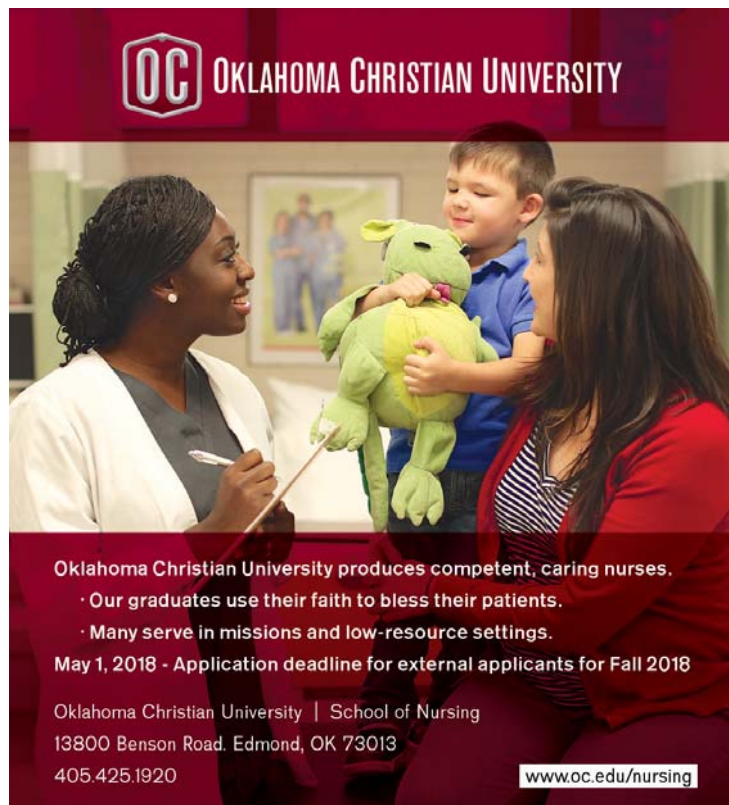
For more information go to: <https://studentaid.ed.gov>

## Why Nursing?

Nursing is challenging, interesting, and allows you to make a difference in people's lives every day. Nursing is one of the fastest growing careers in the U.S. and offers a variety of medical settings. Nurses are near the top of the list when it comes to employment growth and income. In short, nursing can offer a career that is both personally and financially rewarding.



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# Nursing student discovers career path through hospital externship

Matthew Tygart always knew he liked working with children. When his compassion for people influenced him to major in nursing, he learned through a series of clinical rotations and his externship at St. Francis Hospital that he wanted to work in pediatric oncology after graduation.

"I grew up working with children," said Tygart. "Now I can take that one step further by caring for them in their most vulnerable states. I can be there for the families and the patients."

Tygart is earning a bachelor of science in nursing at The University of Tulsa School of Nursing in the Oxley College of Health Sciences. One of the reasons he chose TU was due to the high success rate of TU students passing the NCLEX (National Council Licensure Exam) exam, a standardized test that each state board of nursing uses to determine whether a candidate is prepared for entry-level nursing practice. The pass rate for TU School of Nursing students is higher than the average in Oklahoma and nationally.

Tygart and his classmates participated in clinical rotations at the three major hospitals and various clinics in Tulsa. "Our clinical rotation group was small and included only six or seven students," said Tygart. "This allowed us to develop closer relationships with faculty."

Want to learn more about TU School of Nursing externships?

Watch our video at <https://healthsciences.utulsa.edu/news/clinical-experiences-lead-nursing-externships-jobs/>.

During his rotation at St. Francis Hospital, Tygart realized that he wanted to work in oncology and with the help of his professors, he secured an externship there. "The faculty helped me complete my externship application and provided references," said Tygart. "I was able to work in both adult and pediatric oncology."

After his externship, Tygart received a job offer from St. Francis to work as a nurse technician providing basic medical care in the pediatric oncology unit while he completes his schooling. Nurse technician positions are generally part-time employment opportunities reserved for students currently enrolled in a licensed practical nursing or registered nursing program.

During his time at TU, Tygart served as a member of the Golden Hurricane Spirit Squad and participated in a fraternity. He also started the TU chapter of Love Your Melon raising money for children battling cancer. This organization functions on a buy one give one model where every piece of apparel sold provides a beanie to a child fighting cancer.

Read more about the TU School of Nursing and apply at <https://healthsciences.utulsa.edu>.



Matthew Tygart RN BSN Externship, Oxley College of Health Sciences at The University of Tulsa.



## Invest in your future at TU

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### CONTACT INFORMATION:



OHSF 506 1215 S. Boulder Ave.  
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(918) 631-3116



[www.utulsa.edu](http://www.utulsa.edu)



*The Oklahoma Baptist University College of Nursing boasts a long and storied history. Its reputation is known far and wide for educating nursing graduates who are skilled and in-demand. Yet, the College of Nursing is known not only for its high standards of excellence, but also for being a trailblazer in Oklahoma nursing education, leading from the front in its earliest days, and continuing that tradition today.*

## OBU Leads the Way

In the fall of 1952, the Oklahoma State Board of Nursing granted approval to OBU for Oklahoma's first baccalaureate nursing program. This degree was the first four year baccalaureate program for nursing in the state among all universities.

The first class of eleven students graduated in 1956 and the OBU nursing program was accredited by the National League for Nursing in 1960. This accreditation continued without interruption until the School of Nursing affiliated with American Association of Colleges of Nursing, its current accrediting body.

The College of Nursing now offers a Bachelor of Science degree with a strong liberal arts foundation, a BSN completion degree for nurses with an Associate Degree, an LPN to BSN degree, and a Master of Science in Nursing.

OBU nursing alumnus Travis DeWall, '16, offered his perspective on why he chose to study nursing at OBU.

"I felt compelled to use my talents and efforts in a field that would allow me to directly serve others. Nursing met this goal and is a career with the opportunity to expand my scope of practice in the future if I decide to. I chose the OBU College of Nursing because I felt the appeal of both rigorous academics and the valuable focused interaction with professors that only a school of this size can provide."

**more on OBU Page 5**



The College of Nursing at OBU has a rich history of training nurses who demonstrate Christ's compassion while providing excellent care for patients. For decades, students have benefited from the expertise and strong tradition that comes with being part of Oklahoma's oldest nursing baccalaureate program.

**Find your place today.  
Visit [okbu.edu/nursing](http://okbu.edu/nursing).**

# OBU

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**26**  
**Consecutive Years**  
Best Regional College  
by **U.S. News &  
World Report**



# The Future Leading the Way Again

## OBU

Continued from Page 4

The OBU College of Nursing is housed in a state-of-the-art nursing education facility, Jane E. and Nick K. Stavros Hall. Opening in 2016, Stavros Hall delivers cutting-edge nursing education for both undergraduate and graduate-level students. It includes five classrooms, a 109-seat lecture hall and a computer lab as well as spaces for students to study, meet and interact with faculty. The facility features six state-of-the-art, high-fidelity skills simulation labs, a medium skills lab, a health assessment skills lab, and a home health and bathing training room, totaling 24 beds.

The facility is unrivaled in the state of Oklahoma, its attention to detail and inclusion of real-world medical technology allowing OBU nursing students to be ultimately prepared to enter the nursing workforce.

# Nursing Simulation Technology

The crown jewels of Stavros Hall are its simulation labs. Their technology, design and cutting-edge practices are second to none. These labs bridge the gap between learning and practice, placing students at the front lines of patient care, all while under the watchful eye of their professors.

The high-tech simulation labs are equipped with the industry's most advanced medical simulation solutions. The lifelike patient simulators are used to train students in various medical emergencies, allowing learners to acquire the clinical skills necessary to improve patient safety. Students have the opportunity to acquire hands-on practice using a birthing simulator, pediatric simulator and adult patient simulators.

All simulation scenarios are recorded, allowing instructors to conduct debriefing sessions with students in which video recordings are reviewed so that students can receive necessary feedback for improving their skills. The training curriculum consists of single- and multi-patient scenarios that include respiratory, cardiovascular, neurological, maternal-child, trauma, mass casualty and disaster situations.

Patient simulators significantly enhance realism, as they can breathe, bleed, speak and even give birth to a lifelike baby that cries upon delivery. The lifelike devices also simulate complications and various life-threatening scenarios while allowing students to monitor vital signs and administer treatment.

With this facility, OBU is poised to once again take the lead in nursing higher education in the state of Oklahoma, a position familiar to the College since its earliest days.

## Other important Resources

### Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

<https://www.okhighered.org/current-college-students/resources.shtml>

Select topics below for helpful online resources with information to help you succeed in college!



### COUNSELORS' RESOURCE BOOK

<http://www.okhighered.org/students/publications/crb/full.pdf>

Have a Question? Use this online COUNSELORS' RESOURCE BOOK for answers and a full list of Oklahoma Public Colleges, Universities, Technical Branches, University Centers and Learning Sites throughout the state and OSRHE RESOURCES. This book includes admission requirements, admission standards, costs and information about financial aid and college assistance programs for students and parents.



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**405.585.4450**



**[nursing@okbu.edu](mailto:nursing@okbu.edu)**



**[www.okbu.edu](http://www.okbu.edu)**

# OSU Institute of Technology provides both personal satisfaction and great income

There is no better place to learn to be a registered nurse than by attending OSU Institute of Technology and earning an Associate in Applied Science Degree in Registered Nursing. The OSUIT Registered Nursing Program is approved by the Oklahoma Board of Nursing and accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).

Our nursing labs feature advanced simulation mannequins – enabling practice for a wide range of nursing procedures. Upon successful completion of the degree program and NCLEX, you will be eligible for employment as a registered nurse helping people in a lifelong career that provides both personal satisfaction and great income.

OSUIT's Associate in Applied Science Degree in Nursing provides: hands-on learning environments, experienced faculty, and numerous employment opportunities with excellent salary potential. Every nursing school graduate across the country who wants to become a registered nurse must first pass the National Council Licensure Exam-Registered Nurse (NCLEX-RN), a national standardized test administered by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing.

Each year, nursing programs, including the one at OSU Institute of Technology School of Nursing & Health Sciences, are given a NCLEX Pass Rate report that shows the percentage of nursing graduates that have passed the exam. In 2016, OSUIT's NCLEX score was 85.71 percent, which was higher than the state pass rate of 83.78 percent and the national pass rate of 84.56 percent. The same thing happened in 2015 when OSUIT received an

88 percent pass rate compared to Oklahoma's 85.70 percent and the nation's 84.51 pass rates.

The NCLEX, a computerized exam made of up 75 to 275 questions, tests nursing graduates knowledge in eight health care areas including management of care; safety and infection control; health promotion and maintenance; psychosocial integrity; basic care and comfort; pharmacological and parenteral therapies; reduction of risk potential; and physiological adaptation.

Nursing school graduates are required to pass their NCLEX exam in order to work as a registered nurse. Jana Martin, dean of the School of Nursing & Health Sciences, said in the last several years OSUIT's NCLEX pass rate has really improved, and the trend seems to be continuing. "We're very, very proud. That tells us we have a quality program. Our graduates are eligible to work as registered nurses, they can support their families and they can pay their student loans," Martin said. "We have a rigorous program. It has to be rigorous— we are dealing with patients' lives."

Martin said students who come to the nursing program are almost always surprised by just how difficult and challenging it is, even for those who excelled in high school or other college programs. "It's a new way of learning that they're not used to. It's memorization but also critical thinking. It's a lot of reading and stringent studying," she said. "It requires organization, flexibility, the ability to make tough decisions and prioritize. And the student needs a support system at home." The training and education is tough because the profession is hard work, Martin said, and the faculty in the nursing program are continually working to ensure the program improves while also meeting the needs of the industry. "Our faculty make sure this is a quality program. They make sure we maintain our standards."

Everything we have done and our accomplishments are because of our faculty," she said. "They stay up to date on best practices and new technologies." It's all in service in making sure the students are prepared and knowledgeable when they start their careers. But before they can do that, they have to pass the NCLEX, which can be stressful and nerve-wracking, Martin said, which is why the preparation and support doesn't end when the students walk across the graduation stage.

"Students are assigned a mentor, myself or one of our faculty, after they graduate, and we follow them through their NCLEX testing," she said. "We text or call them to make sure they are doing their test trainers or if there is anything they need. That extra encouragement really shows our students we care about them."



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918-293-5337, [www.osuit.edu](http://www.osuit.edu)**

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Application for fall entry March 1st – May 15th.



## CONTACT INFORMATION:



**1801 East 4th  
Okmulgee, OK, 74447**



**(918) 293-5337**



**[donna.prior@okstate.edu](mailto:donna.prior@okstate.edu)**



**[www.osuit.edu](http://www.osuit.edu)**



# Nursing at Northwestern Oklahoma State University

It is an exciting time to be a nurse and Northwestern Oklahoma State University is making a difference in the lives of nurses and patients alike. Northwestern's Nursing Graduates are in demand! Northwestern offers three exciting Nursing programs to help meet the need for BSN-prepared Registered Nurses and APRN - Family Nurse Practitioners throughout the state and nation.

Graduates of the traditional on-campus BSN program are eligible to take the NCLEX-RN exam after program completion. Students have a choice of attending classes on the Alva, Enid, and Woodward campuses as well as at the University Center in Ponca City. State of the art simulation labs and a wide variety of experiences in hospitals, clinics, schools, other health agencies throughout the northwest Oklahoma region as well as at Vance Air Force Base assure students receive a well-rounded education experience. Students begin their nursing courses after completing two years of general education and program prerequisite courses. A low student-to-faculty ratio allows for personalized experiences allowing

**It is an exciting time to be a nurse and Northwestern Oklahoma State University is making a difference in the lives of nurses and patients alike.**

every student to optimize their learning and be successful.

For RNs with an Associate's Degree in Nursing, Northwestern offers an affordable Online RN-to-BSN program designed for working RNs. With no traditional clinical hours required, the BSN may be earned in 12 months, once all general education requirements have been met. Students are challenged to build upon their current knowledge and develop new skills, experiences, and insight to strengthen their nursing practice.

The new BSN-to-DNP program offers students the opportunity to become family nurse practitioners with an emphasis on rural health needs. Graduates of this program are eligible to take the national certification exam and pursue licensure as Advanced Practice Registered Nurses. In this hybrid program, the students experience a variety of course and clinical experiences promoting professional growth and practice. This program saves the student

time and expense by advancing directly to the nationally desired Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree.

The Nursing Faculty at Northwestern are experts in their field and dedicated to your success. The Northwestern Nursing programs have received national recognition for affordability, accessibility, quality, and outcomes annually since 2014 in a variety of online sources. Northwestern Oklahoma State University also is recognized as #1 in Oklahoma

and #16 nationally among all public schools for its Low Student Loan Debt by The Student Loan Report. Now is the time to learn how Northwestern Nursing can help meet your professional goals. We look forward to hearing from YOU!

Check us out on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/northwesternnursing/> and online at <http://www.nwosu.edu/school-of-professional-studies/nursing>



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## CONTACT INFORMATION:

 **709 E Oklahoma Blvd, Alva, OK**  
**campuses in Enid and Woodward**

 **(580)-327-8493**

 **[prhess@nwosu.edu](mailto:prhess@nwosu.edu)**

 **[www.nwosu.edu](http://www.nwosu.edu)**

# Nursing Powerhouse

## *Redlands graduates tomorrow's nurses*

Last year, Redlands Community College graduated 25 nurses.

As Dean of Nursing and Allied Health, Rose Marie Smith, RN, MS, CNE oversaw the education of every single one.

There's no doubt in her mind that each will be successful in whatever setting they may choose.

Smith says Redlands' focus is always on the individual.

Quite simply, it's success by design.

"We feel it's the best because I truly believe (students) get a lot more clinical opportunities because we know the people," she said. "We know who needs what and we're there kind of guiding and pushing them to get to the learning experiences. They can't just hide in the numbers."

This May, Redlands is expecting its largest graduating class in 15 years. That could be as high as 38.

Closing in a quarter century of nursing education, Smith smiles when she sees former students. The administrator of Kingfisher Hospital is a Redlands graduate. The director of the Canadian County LPN program is a Redlands graduate. The director of the Carnegie Hospital is a Redlands graduate.

"You see how long I've been in nursing education and it blesses my heart," she said. "Our graduates take care of patients and do well but they also go on."

Last year, Redlands partnered with Oklahoma Panhandle State University and their RN-BSN online program. Any graduate of Redlands can enroll in the

program at the Redlands tuition rate.

"And we're one of the lowest tuitions in the state of Oklahoma," Smith said. "Because our graduates are so successful they are courted if you will. Directors seek them out. I just feel proud when I walk around and see graduates caring for patients and graduates in administration."

Smith first began her career at Redlands in 1985 as faculty. She progressed through team leader and director of nursing program roles before stepping away in 2006.

She helped lead two other nursing programs in that time before coming back home in 2015 to Redlands.

She wanted to make the Redlands experience unique for each individual and that begins by investing time.

Community support is huge in Canadian County for the school and vice versa.

The Canadian County Health Department has requested Redlands students work with their OB nurse practitioner.

Students have adopted a mission in El Reno treating recently released inmates and recovering drug and alcohol addicts. Students serve in the twice-monthly, bilingual health clinic "Our students get a wealth of experience," Smith said. "We screen and provide health care advice, teaching and things they've never really had in their life before."

Redlands students also go into local schools to help teach pediatric curriculum.

"Our students get opportunities to not only learn public speaking but also teaching at appropriate grade levels," Smith said. "The students carry those experiences with them in life. Those are tools they can use, soft skills if you will."

Some students drive nearly an hour and a half from rural, Western Oklahoma to attend Redlands.

There's a definite investment.

"We have rural students who graduate and return to rural areas and with the demographics of Oklahoma changing we wanted to provide them with equipment to contributors to their cities, towns and counties," Smith said.

Bed transfers and feeding skills are taught down the street at a local five-star long-term care facility.

"We do a lot more live learning labs to learn how to care for that population as well," said Smith, who notes Redlands nursing students also help with annual flu vaccinations for the entire campus. "We don't just stop at the classroom we try to engage them throughout their education."

Redlands admits students one time each year to the traditional day program. LPN to RN admission occurs for a handful of individuals in the spring.

"What we do really well is student first, smaller classes with master's prepared faculty," Smith said.

The program threads theory and simulation together to help build understanding of the specific content being taught.

Simulations enhance student understanding, build confidence prior to clinical as to what to do, say, and provide appropriate interventions for patients.

Redlands Nursing Program graduated its first class in 1981. The program is a two-year nursing program with new classes beginning in the fall of every year.

Students graduate with an Associate in Applied Science Degree and, upon graduation, are eligible to take the NCLEX exam to become a Registered Nurse.

Redlands also offers options for LPNs attending the nursing program. LPNs with one year of experience are given credit for Fundamentals of Nursing.



**Get Started** on the Right Path at  
Redlands Community College

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- Simulation lab
- Great employment opportunities after graduation
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405.422.1417



## CONTACT INFORMATION:



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El Reno, OK 73036



(405) 422-1417



[student.services@redlandsc.edu](mailto:student.services@redlandsc.edu)



[www.redlandsc.edu](http://www.redlandsc.edu)



# Kramer School of Nursing Offers Innovative Programs, Cutting-Edge Environment



Oklahoma City University's Kramer School of Nursing offers a wide range of innovative undergraduate and graduate programs, and has recently invested in a new simulation center.

In addition to a traditional bachelor of science in nursing program, KSN offers a path to a nursing career even if one's first degree is in another field. Those who have an associate of arts or science degree from a regionally accredited institution and have taken a course equivalent to World Religions at OKCU, as well as those who have earned full undergraduate or graduate degrees, completely meet the university's general education requirements. Students who choose accelerated coursework can complete a BSN in just 16 months.

The RN-BSN program honors working nurses by awarding them 94 credit hours for their RN licensure, certifications, and continuing education as they enter the program. No additional math or science courses, nursing exams, care plans, or clinical hours are required. RN-BSN students meet in person for just four hours per week and can complete their degrees in just two semesters. Not only are classes held at the Oklahoma City campus, but the RN-BSN faculty travel across the state as well. The program currently features classes at Mercy Hospital Ardmore and at Norman Regional Hospital.

Many students who complete their BSN at Kramer School of Nursing choose to stay and earn a graduate degree. In addition to a Master of Nursing (MSN) degree with emphasis in leadership or education, KSN offers a Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) specialization. The CNL is a relatively new role which serves as advanced generalist and interdisciplinary team leader, particularly in complex healthcare organizations. Other graduate programs include Family

Nurse Practitioner (FNP) and Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP) in which nurses with a BSN a doctor of nursing practice (DNP) degree in just four years of part-time study. A DNP-completion program with emphasis in administration or clinical specialization is also available, as well as post-master's FNP and AGACNP certificates which help nurses transition between advanced practice fields. Advanced nursing programs also require advanced nurse educators, so KSN further offers PhD and BSN-PhD programs.

The school recently completed a \$1 million renovation to create the new Meinders Simulation Center. Designed to look and feel as close as possible to an actual hospital, the facility features seven high-fidelity simulators which are used to provide enhanced educational experiences to students. The manikins create extremely life-like behaviors and reactions including pulse, breathing, pupil dilation, internal sounds, and vocal sounds which can present a wide range of normal and abnormal pediatric, obstetric, medical/surgical, and intensive care scenarios. The manikins can also be manipulated during a simulation exercise to demonstrate reactions to medication or other interventions. Undergraduate and graduate students will use the simulation center during their courses of study.

More information about Kramer School of Nursing can be found at [okcu.edu/nursing](http://okcu.edu/nursing) or by calling (405) 208-5900.

## Oklahoma City

UNIVERSITY

### BSN

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- Live Streaming available

### Doctoral

- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) and DNP-completion
- BSN-DNP: Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) and Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP)
- PhD and BSN-PhD

[www.okcu.edu/nursing](http://www.okcu.edu/nursing)

OKCU pledges to recruit, select and promote diversity by providing equality of opportunity for all persons

## CONTACT INFORMATION:



2501 N. Blackwelder  
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# Quality counts

## OSU-OKC nurses stand out

For more than 50 years now, Oklahoma State University - Oklahoma City has produced some of the most sought-after nurses in the state.

That legacy continues with the school's new RN to BSN program. OSU-OKC nursing students are even granted provisional acceptance to the program and receive full admission.

"One of the philosophies for the associate degree nursing program is to provide means for students to continue their education," said Anna Nguyen, PhD, RN, department head of the OSU-OKC nurse science program. "Many of the hospitals now are seeking Magnet status which prefers bachelor's graduates."

"Our program started in 1969 so we have a very solid and well established program. I believe we have a very solid program and on top of that OSU-OKC has a very positive reputation in the community for producing well-prepared graduates."

OSU-OKC is a community and

technical college located in central Oklahoma City. Each year, nearly 10,000 students attend OSU-OKC, seeking education as a pathway to a better life.

It is an urban campus, with a diverse student population. About half of the students are pursuing terminal degrees in a desire to move quickly into the workforce in technical positions, while the remainder are working on their basic coursework and will transfer to a four-year school in pursuit of a bachelor's degree.

### REPUTATION COUNTS

OSU-OKC's Nurse Science program is considered one of the pre-eminent programs at the university, and in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, with hundreds of students competing for admission into the program.

Of the students who successfully complete the program and the licensure exam, 100% find employment within six to nine months of graduating.

Nguyen says this high level of

placement indicates the strong demand for healthcare jobs in this area, the quality and reputation of the institution's nursing program, and that students in this field can quickly transition into a career when they complete their education.

The U.S. is projected to experience a shortage of registered nurses that is expected to intensify as Baby Boomers age and the need for health care grows.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Employment Projections 2014-2024, Registered Nursing is listed among the top occupations in terms of job growth through 2024.

The Workforce Oklahoma Occupational Outlook 2018 report lists registered nurses as one of Oklahoma's top five demand occupations with 1,260 average annual openings per year.

OSU-OKC's Nurse Science graduates scored a 95.54% pass rate on the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) in 2016.

The national average is 84.56% and the Oklahoma average is 83.78% during the same year.

### CONTINUED GROWTH

The OSU-OKC Allied Health program is now positioned to support tremendous increases in both student enrollment numbers and graduation rates beginning with the next academic year. Construction of the campus's new, 45,000-square-foot Allied Health building is complete, and the facility contains state-of-the-art technologies that rival the best that Oklahoma educational institutions offer.

This unique facility, opened in 2016, established a best-in-industry Simulation Center which enhances educational opportunities for both new health profession students and experienced healthcare workers employed by local hospitals and clinics.

The new facility and Simulation Center are significantly larger in size with more manikins which are considered state-of-the-art technology. The facility includes:

- Five simulation suites that emulate clinical situations
- Three medical/surgical suites
- A labor and delivery suite
- An emergency room/intensive care suite
- Two patient exam rooms
- Three debriefing rooms
- A ten-bed skills practice lab for Nurse Science
- An expanded ten-bed skills lab for Diagnostic Medical Sonography
- Virtual IV and phlebotomy skills lab
- Life-size "manikins" that can be programmed to provide a realistic replication of a clinical/emergency situation (and which the Hearst grant helped to purchase)
- Multidimensional, flexible and adaptable space allowing for creative instructional deliveries
- A 200-seat Auditorium
- Space to facilitate the educational needs of the community for conferences and continuing medical education
- Nutrition Science lab/classroom
- State-of-the-art computerized technology and audio-visual capabilities throughout the building

The new facility has also facilitated a partnership with Variety Care, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) that strives to make healthcare affordable and accessible for all patients. This partnership provides outstanding educational opportunities for the students as well as support to the surrounding communities.

It has also resulted in the establishment of a Variety Care community health clinic on the first floor of the new facility. The clinic offers services to those who otherwise could not afford it and the families of the underrepresented students attending OSU-OKC.

As an added benefit, students are able to expand upon what they have learned at the Simulation Center by then participating directly in clinical learning and onsite service learning — a unique arrangement for both the student and nonprofit clinic.



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# Southwestern College allows registered nurses to earn their BSN from the comfort of their own home

The flexibility of nurses can be one of their greatest assets, so why not choose a program to advance your career that is as flexible as you are?

Abbey Elliott, DNP, MHA, RN, CEN, CHSE, is the director of nursing at Southwestern College in Kansas and has been in charge of growing the online program for more than a year now with one thing in mind.

"I think what we do really well is we are very student-centered in our approach," she said.

Established in 1885, the Methodist-affiliated college is open to students of all backgrounds and faiths looking to pursue their nursing education.

More than a decade ago, Southwestern College became one of the first schools to offer a 100% online RN-BSN program, attracting students from across the nation. Registered nurses with a diploma or an associate degree in nursing may earn a Bachelor of Science degree from Southwestern College Professional Studies.

The RN to BSN program builds on previous nursing education and experience and is designed to position graduates for leadership roles and career advancement in a variety of healthcare settings.

In recognition that nurses are broadly educated and have transferable knowledge and skills, the Southwestern College RN to BSN program provides the opportunity for further study in nursing professional practice including leadership, community health and evidence-based practice.

Elliott says incoming students are paired with an individual advisor that works with them through every aspect of their education from scholarships they want to attain all the way through registration and eventually graduation. It's one of the many more personal benefits of working with a smaller college.

"We also have a small group of faculty members in the nursing program that work closely with the students and guide them if they are struggling," said Elliott.

Southwestern has also long been a higher-education hub for students from nearby McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita. The school prides itself on its flexibility with military learners and carried that knowledge over to its online RN to BSN program.

"We're not a large program, but we're not the smallest," Elliott said. "We are able, with smaller class sizes, to provide more of an intimate setting or working with them and helping the students through."

And attending class online means no out-of-state tuition at the Wichita, Kansas institution.

"Students never feel like they're alone in the process of going to college whether it's been a year or 20 years," Elliott says. "It's not as scary going through



Southwestern because we are so student friendly."

Learners coming back to school after a layoff find a welcoming entry point. Elliott says students also are pleased to find that Chemistry isn't a required course.

"That's a big seller for our learners," Elliott explained. "When they finish their ADN, we accept those credits. There's not a lot of general education they have to complete before entering our program, so we waive that."

The depth of faculty experience is also a big draw at Southwestern. With an online program, that means Elliott is able to draw faculty from around the nation whether it be in Florida or Las Vegas. From backgrounds in the medical surgical floor to the ICU, faculty are well-rounded and bring that real-life working experience to students.

"What's nice is students get a different perspective of what nursing is like," Elliott said. "This provides different ideas and thoughts about what nursing is like not just in Kansas, Oklahoma or the Midwest, but in other parts of the country."

Still, working in the field allows instructors to better relate, especially when it comes to evidence-based practice instruction.

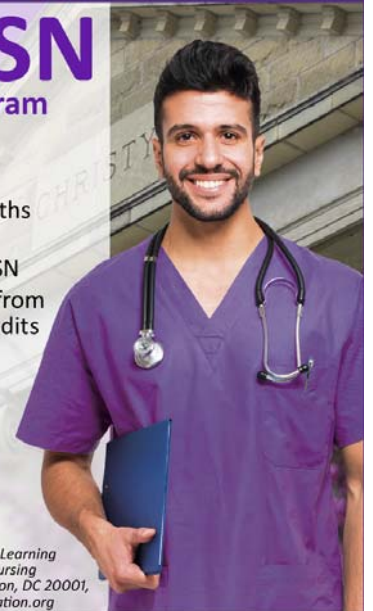
"Our faculty work in different fields of nurses and are academically prepared from different universities," Elliott says. "They bring all these different parts they've learned at different universities to how they teach. All of our faculty are at least master's prepared and I think that brings in some different pieces, too, and some helpful thoughts of those thinking they may go on to a graduate degree."

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# Next Assignment Vet takes student reigns

Two deployments overseas as a combat medic. A marriage, three kids and a job as a nursing assistant at Mercy Hospital Logan County.

Alex Hughes is more than ready for his next assignment which happens to be president of the Oklahoma Nursing Student Association.

Hughes will lead Oklahoma's largest body of student nurses after his election a few weeks ago at the organization's annual convention.

## COMBAT FOCUS

Growing up an Army brat, Hughes moved often, traversing the U.S. and the globe with stops in Germany and Okinawa, Japan along the way.

Moving every year and a half taught him the importance of family and flexibility.

It was no surprise that he would

later enter the Army after graduating from a military high school in Oklahoma.

Initially, Hughes served as an engineer in the reserves. He quickly learned his body would pay the price long term in that specialty so decided to change when he moved over to active duty.

The field of healthcare specialist didn't exactly catch on. But when the recruiter told him "combat medic" he was hooked.

"I loved it," Hughes said. "I had a blast with it."

Hughes started off attached with some of the same engineers he went through training with.

Basing out of Fort Carson, Colorado Hughes spent one year serving in Iraq, moving from Kirkuk to Mosul.

He returned home and married

before shipping out to the Arghandab River valley in Afghanistan.

Coming down from the guard tower one day during a base security rotation he heard one of his fellow soldiers yell "Hey doc, by the way you're a dad now."

He hurried into the communications tent to talk to his wife, who had minutes earlier delivered their first child.

## BACK HOME

For the last couple of years Hughes has worked as a nursing assistant at Mercy's 25-bed critical access hospital which offers both acute and skilled care (swing bed) services in Guthrie.

His focus has always been on getting his BSN at the University of Central Oklahoma. Now just one semester stands in his way.

He's put the skills learned in the Army to good use.

"It helped a lot in the clinical side of it," Hughes said. "I was already used to doing some of the skills and was used to doing hands-on patient care. However, the rest was complete opposite."

As a medic it was Hughes' role to diagnose and prescribe. Stepping back from that was tough.

"It took me a little time to manage their care," he said.

And working part-time now Hughes wants to devote more time to growing the student association.

"The main thing I would like to really see happen is more involvement from other schools," he said. "We have a lot of schools that have delegates but never show up to events. I'd like to see more schools that haven't been involved."

Hughes encourages students from more schools to get involved and eventually run for office. Right now just four universities are represented on the board with only people from five universities running for office.

Nursing students preparing for Registered Nurse licensure or RN to BSN completion programs are invited to join ONSA. By joining ONSA you are also becoming a member of the National Student Nurse Association.

Hughes said by joining you can take advantage of leadership opportunities and product discounts that ONSA and NSNA have to offer.

Hughes now leads the Board of Directors which is the policy-making body of the Oklahoma



Military Veteran Alex Hughes is the new president of the Oklahoma Nursing Student Association

Nursing Student Association between meetings of the House of Delegates held annually.

Each board member has responsibilities in various program areas of the association and must also function as part of the organizational board of directors, sharing equally in the fiscal and decision-making responsibilities. Each board member is expected to serve the association as a whole and to represent the needs of all members.

Hughes previously served on the board as the marketing director.

There are twelve members of the Board of Directors behind Hughes including: 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Director, Newsletter Editor, Legislative Director, Breakthrough Director, Community Projects Director, Public Relations Director, and Marketing Director.

The association will begin the year on January 20th at Tulsa Community College with a leadership summit.

A panel of nurses from various fields will be doing a question-and-answer session with attendees and a guest speaker will address the event.

In February the group will partner with the Oklahoma Nurses Association for the group's annual Nurses Day at the Capitol.

To find out more about the Oklahoma Nursing Student Association go online to oknsa.net.

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Oklahoma Panhandle State University offers a unique approach to supporting the educational needs of nurses in the state of Oklahoma. Graduate nurses and alumni from 15 institutions within the state of Oklahoma are eligible for the BSN Connection Scholarship.

The BSN Connection Scholarship is helping nurses in the state of Oklahoma complete personal, educational, and professional goals by providing a path to complete a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree through discounted tuition and fees. The scholarship pays the difference in the cost of tuition and fees from the college graduated from and the cost of tuition and fees at Panhandle State.

Scholarship applicants need to have graduated from a scholarship eligible institution with an Associate Degree in Nursing, have active and unrestricted licensure to practice as a registered nurse, be an Oklahoma resident, and complete 24 credit hours at Panhandle State during a 12-month period. Students can begin classes in the spring, summer, or fall semesters. An affordable program, both full-time and part-time options are offered allowing students to set their own pace. Panhandle State tuition and fees are discounted to reflect the current tuition and fee rate at the graduate's pre-licensure program and institution rate. This is a significant cost savings for registered nurses in Oklahoma.

Panhandle State has a rich and successful history for supporting nurses over the past 20 years. The RN to BSN program at Panhandle State was founded in 1996 becoming one of the first nursing programs in the nation to offer all BSN nursing courses online. The program started with just four graduates and now boasts more than 400 graduates. This unique program focuses on the adult learner and does not require campus attendance. Graduates join the program from across the nation and help to bring new perspectives in nursing to the panhandle and state of Oklahoma. With graduates in California, New Jersey, and the Virgin Islands, students successfully complete the program while living in and outside of Oklahoma. The program is designed to meet the distinctive challenges that face busy, registered nurses balancing family, work, and outside obligations. Panhandle State's RN to BSN program approaches education using a philosophy of caring and focus on adult learners. There are no campus



attendance requirements and students are provided personalized care and attention from inquiry to graduation and beyond. Panhandle State recognizes, appreciates, and respects the need for professional nurses to balance family, work, and school.

Oklahoma Panhandle State University is accredited by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The nursing program is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing.

For more information, please contact Dr. Pamela Sandvig, Program Director at [pamela.sandvig@opsu.edu](mailto:pamela.sandvig@opsu.edu)

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