

Angela Kersh, RN

Prenatal education coordinator with Women's Health Center at INTEGRIS Health Edmond Hospital.

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Angela Kersh, RN, loves the continuity of care she provides as the prenatal education coordinator for the Women's Health Center at INTEGRIS Health Edmond Hospital.

She assists mothers before and after giving birth at the hospital. She also leads the bereavement team and educates mothers about lactation.

"As the prenatal education coordinator, I feel like I'm our liaison from the clinic. The patients get to know their doctor, but I'm the first person that they meet on the hospital side," Kersh said. "So, when they come to prenatal education classes, I give them the first glimpse of what they're going to experience when they come here as a patient. So, I take that job very seriously."

The Women's Health Center offers a variety of classes. Women

may tour the facility to become comfortable in the friendly home-like ambiance. Kersh will have multiple interactions with patients before they have their babies. After they deliver, she will educate mothers about the benefits of lactation.

"When they go home, I help run Milk Bar, which is our outpatient community lactation support program," she continued.

Moms come with their babies to Milk Bar, a free service on Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Babies are weighed before and after their feedings to monitor how they're doing with their weight gain.

"They come as frequently as they want to. And we have one on Sunday once a month that we do that, too," Kersh continues. "So, I like the continuity of care, that I get to meet them before we get to see them in the hospital."

She said about 10 babies

are born deceased each year at the hospital. A team provides a bereavement card, food, snacks, and mementoes for parents following the birth.

"We have weighted teddy bears that match the baby's weight, so the mom gets to go home with something in her arms," Kersh said. "We have different books about bereavement and loss."

A church provides some of the items, and volunteers make crocheted caps for the babies, blankets, and quilts. Footprints, Christmas ornaments, bracelets, keychains, are among the items parents can bring home. Kersh said these are things parents won't necessarily want at that moment. After all, they had thoughts and dreams about their baby that came to a halting stop.

"Our main goal is we want them to know that we recognize the loss and that their experience is real, no matter how old that baby was, or how small, or how big," she said. "But it's a real loss and we acknowledge that to the best of our abilities to make it an experience that acknowledges that baby they lost. We offer a little bit of sibling support as well."

Kersh has always been involved in her field of nursing since 1996, when she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Oklahoma Baptist University, located in Shawnee. As a student, she loved all the areas of nursing she was introduced to. One of those rotations was at the-Oklahoma Memorial Hospital, (OU Health University of Oklahoma Medical Center). Helping a mother at the bedside was meaningful for her. Education became her forte.

"I tell my clients I get paid to talk, which is a fabulous job to have." Kersh said.

In 1996, INTEGRIS Baptist Medical Center became her home as a nurse, being her first job in the field she loves.

"They trained me and made me the nurse that I am," Kersh said.

Being a nurse allowed her to focus on her family and balance it well. She was able to educate her children at home and do patient education in a prenatal education department throughout her career.

"I did that at Baptist and Saint Francis in Tulsa, as well as here at INTEGRIS in Edmond," she said.

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As the prenatal education coordinator for the Women's Health Center at INTEGRIS Health Edmond Hospital, Angela Kersh, RN, focuses on advocating for mothers and their babies before and after an infant's birth.

KERSH Continued from Page 2

"The jewel of nursing is you can find your niche no matter what it is. It can be so diverse and so varied."

She has discovered through nursing that she can help bring positive outcomes for mothers in labor, and when needed, provide comfort for parents with a broken heart.

Her advocacy has a broad range. She has met with state legislatures at the state Capitol and written them letters advocating for healthcare.

"I like policies and procedures. They keep us safe," she said. "I've learned that about myself."

Kersh will also advocate for her patients' best interests whenever she identifies a policy that doesn't fit a patient's needs.

Some people may be surprised when learning Kersh has never worked full time in her career. This allows her to give 110 percent when she is on campus, Kersh said.

"One thing I'm really proud of is we were the first (hospital in the state) to restart all of our prenatal classes after COVID," she said.

For more information about INTEGRIS Health Edmond visit https://integrishealth.org/locations/hospital/edmond-hospital



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CAREERS IN NURSING:

A POSITIVE VOICE - LPN SAYS KINDNESS MAKES A DIFFERENCE

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Patients always have a story. So, a nurse needs to be an empathetic people-person to be at their best in skilled nursing, said Yvonn Harris, a licensed practical nurse serving Bradford Village Healthcare Center.

Bradford Village offers long-term care, skilled nursing, and therapy to young and older patients from Edmond and beyond.

"A lot of times they will say, 'I just want someone to listen to me," Harris said.

Patients come from all different backgrounds and lifestyles. Something happened to them to bring them to skilled nursing. So, nurses need to listen to their patients' stories to better serve them. And most patients don't leave their sense of humor at home.

"We actually have a skilled nursing patient now that has us laughing every day," Harris said. "She just tells jokes all the time. You go into her room and it's like, 'Good morning. How are you?'" Harris continued. "She's like a people person, always a joy to be around. She's always smiling with the things she says and how she says it."

Harris has become a well-seasoned LPN ever since she graduated from Francis Tuttle Technology Center in Oklahoma City in 2015. She has served Bradford Village residents and skilled nursing clients for a year after previously working there as a CMA and CNA.

Her primary focus is skilled nursing but works in long-term care if needed. About 15-20 patients fill the skilled nursing unit. The difference is that skilled nursing has a quicker pace than long-term care. There is also a higher turnover of patients. But she likes the learning challenges that both long-term care and skilled nursing offer.

"I guess you get to know those patients a little bit more because you're seeing them every day in longterm care," she explained.

Harris continues her nursing career at Bradford Village because she likes the synchronized flow of teamwork among the staff and upper management.

"They seem to care about the employees, and I like that. They'll come and help. They're very friendly," Harris said.

The certified nurse aides are the backbone of care, she continued. She credits nurse aides for often being the first to sense changes in long-term care residents' health.

"I really admire their hard work and dedication to the patient by showing up every day," Harris said.

Harris brings a positive voice when advocating for patients.

LPNs across the US are skilled in monitoring vital signs and administering insulin or other medication. They also provide wound care for simple cases when the wound care nurse is not available. They assist patients with eating, dressing, and bathing.

They communicate changes in patient behavior or health status to nurses, physicians, and family members. And they assist in maintaining accurate patient records.

Harris' diligence and caring spirit does not go unanswered as patients express their gratitude.

"We just had a lady that left about a week ago. She came back and was like, 'I love all you guys here. You're so friendly.' She brought little mittens for everybody and told everybody thank you," Harris said. "They do that often, like bring cookies or little trinkets, or bring gifts of appreciation."

Harris has always felt a need to take care of people. She was built to help people endure. As a youngster, she would help her great aunt by cleaning her house.

"I just loved hearing those stories. Same thing here. I just love it when patients come and they tell us what they did when they were younger," she said.

Harris recalls when a woman came to the skilled nursing and therapy unit. She was always wanting to deal with the phone. So, Harris asked the woman's family about her history. Harris was intrigued when learning that her patient was a former telephone operator.



Yvonn Harris, LPN, Bradford Village Healthcare Center, says being a nurse answers her calling to help others.

"She was always fidgeting with the phone in her room. When she was out at the nurses' station, she was fidgeting with the phone dials," Harris said.

Being a nurse has made Harris more patient. There is an underlying subtext in people's lives that others are not aware of, she said.

"We're all trying to come together and make it a good day, basically," Harris said. "So, it takes patience. I could come to work and maybe not had the best morning or whatever. Well, maybe they have had a bad night. So, I just have to take a deep breath and be patient. Listen to know what they're going through."

Nurses feel enriched by knowing they are helping others become their personal best. Nurses who endure have an open heart and want to be a friendly face, Harris said.

She wants those considering a nursing career to know they can be a positive voice benefiting humanity.

For more information about Bradford Village Healthcare Center, visit https://www.bradfordok.com/.



Nurse Resident - Emergency Room

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Dr. Helina Hoyt joins OU College of Nursing as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

The Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences welcomes Dr. Helina Hoyt, as the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Dr. Hoyt brings over 16 years of experience serving San Diego State University Imperial Valley, where she played a pivotal role advancing nursing education, practice, research, and innovation in the rural, border region of Imperial County, California. As the Associate Director for the SDSU School of Nursing and Co-Founder of the SDSU Imperial Valley RISE (Research, Innovation, Student Engagement) Center, she has demonstrated her Dr. Helina Hoyt. commitment to fostering novel academic nursing



pathways, student engagement, and student success at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

Throughout her career, Dr. Hoyt has been dedicated to enhancing nursing student knowledge, skill, and empathy through immersive technologies, promoted health equity through multi-disciplinary scholarship, and was integral in facilitating her county's designation as a California Accountable Community for Health. Dr. Hoyt brings a deep understanding of acute and communitybased nursing care having practiced across multiple settings. She completed a BSN at Azusa Pacific University, a MS in Community Health Nursing with School Nurse Specialization from San Diego State University, and a PhD in Education from Claremont Graduate University and San Diego State University. "We are delighted to welcome Dr. Hoyt and confident that her experience and passion will greatly contribute to the continued growth and success of the Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing, said Julie Anne Hoff, dean of the college.

Nursing program Exceeds State and National Licensure Pass Rates

The OSU-OKC Nurse Science Program continues to exceed state and national licensure pass rates.

For the 2023 calendar year, the OSU-OKC Nurse Science Program had a 90.24% first-time pass rate on the NCLEX-RN licensure exam. program's graduates continue to pass at a rate exceeding state and national averages (Oklahoma - 87.48%, National – 88.56%).



In April 2023, the NCLEX-RN exam was updated, with more focus on clinical decision making. Since changing to the new format, OSU-OKC has a 97.60% first-time pass rate (April 2023 – Jan 2024). Tracy Edwards, Nurse Science program director, shared, "It is amazing to see the culmination of faculty preparation, the evolution of how the program engages with students, and the students' hard work and dedication to their studies. I could not be more proud of our faculty and our graduates!"

The Nurse Science Department offers a program of study leading to an associate in applied science degree. Graduates are eligible to take the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurse licensure (NCLEX-RN). The course of study includes classroom and laboratory instruction on campus, as well as supervised clinical experience at affiliating health agencies.

Applications are now open for both the Traditional and LPN/Paramedicto-RN pathways through April 1, 2024. For more information visit https:// osuokc.edu/nursing or via email at okc.nursing@okstate.edu.











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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2023 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

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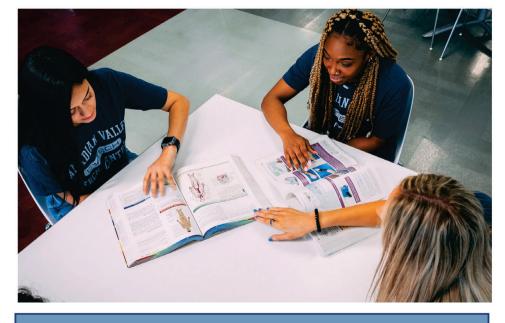
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Murray State College, SouthernTech Receive Regents Business Partnership Excellence Award

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education have recognized the collaboration between Murray State College and SouthernTech with a Regents Business Partnership Excellence Award. The annual awards are designed to highlight successful partnerships between higher education institutions and businesses that are cultivating the higher education learning environment.

Murray State College and SouthernTech have joined forces to change the educational landscape for students in southern Oklahoma. Leaders have integrated streamlined processes and established educational pathways with student success at the forefront, such as addressing the nursing shortage head-on.

"We're in this to transform the

region and improve the quality of life for our neighbors," said Dr. Tim Faltyn, Murray State College President. "We are pulling together proven education institutions as partners so that we can provide clear pathways for students who wish to excel in healthcare fields of study."

State College and Murray SouthernTech are collaborating with the Ardmore Development Authority (ADA) in a series of South-Central Workforce Summits, addressing opportunities and barriers workforce development. partnership has gathered experts and resources to aid those impacted by the Michelin plant wind-down that was announce in October 2023. In partnership with the ADA, Murray State College and SouthernTech are working to establish clear pathways for



SouthernTech Superintendent Dr. Eric Ward and Ardmore Development Authority Vice President Andrea Anderson accepted the award.

affected employees: reemployment, education, entrepreneurship and retirement.

"Together, we are finding solutions that meet these employees where they are, to get them where they want to be," Faltyn said. "Our goal is to help them be successful and maintain the ability to care for their families and live in our communities."

Twenty-seven business and higher education partnerships throughout the state were recognized with Regents Business Partnership Excellence Awards in a ceremony on March 7 in Edmond. Institutions involved in the partnerships receive an economic development grant that may be applied to tuition of an employee from the partner business, internship for a current student, faculty externship or enhancement through equipment, materials or supplies.

For more information about the Regents Business Partnership Excellence Awards program and to view this year's honorees, visit https://okhighered.org/econ-dev/RBPEA





Deer Creek Students Investigate Forensic Education at UCO

The University of Central Oklahoma hosted students from Deer Creek High School for an inside look into the W. Roger Webb Forensic Science Institute (FSI) and programs, Monday, March 11.

Through an exclusive concurrent enrollment partnership announced earlier this year between UCO and Deer Creek Public Schools, UCO will offer a variety of concurrent classes on the Deer Creek High School campus beginning in fall 2024. As part of the partnership, students will have the opportunity to take college-credit forensics course work at Deer Creek High School.

"The University of Central Oklahoma takes tremendous pride in our top-tier, nationally recognized Forensic Science Institute," said UCO President Todd G. Lamb.

"Through our concurrent course work offerings with Deer Creek Public Schools, we are expanding the university's commitment to forensic science education at all levels. This program offers Oklahoma high school students an invaluable opportunity that sets them on a path toward success as they enter college and consider pursuing a degree in forensic science."

UCO's FSI is devoted to providing a world-class, academic experience to all students through a unique multidisciplinary program. The institute is a comprehensive training and research organization

The University of Central in all aspects of evidence collection, ahoma hosted students from preservation, analysis, reporting er Creek High School for an and testimony.

"This innovative partnership with UCO aligns with our unwavering commitment to create the best possible academic environment for our students. We continually look for opportunities to empower our high schoolers for success beyond graduation," said Jason Perez, Ed.D., superintendent of Deer Creek Public Schools.

"This unique partnership not only integrates college-level forensic science instruction seamlessly into our school day, but also presents an opportunity for our students to earn college credit at the same time. We are excited to see this program come to fruition in the fall."

Interested Deer Creek students received an introduction to forensics and the UCO FSI from Mark McCoy, Ed.D., interim director and dean of the FSI, as well as a tour of the state-of-the-art facilities and participated in a mock crime scene investigation in the new Crime Scene House.

"I am pleased we will offer Deer Creek High School's concurrent enrollment students the opportunity to take our Introduction to Forensic Science course," McCoy said.

"This comprehensive course will provide students with an overview of contemporary crime laboratories and investigative methodologies. Students who take the course will emerge prepared to make impactful



contributions to their future academic interests."

The institute has overseen the undergraduate and graduate forensic science programs at Central since 2009. The UCO FSI has seen significant growth from its inception—from fewer than 100 students in 2009, to nearly 1,000 forensic science majors. It is the largest forensic science education

program in the country and is ranked as a top institution in the nation for forensic science. The FSI recently was approved to offer Central's first doctoral degree—the Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) in forensic science—which will begin in fall 2024.

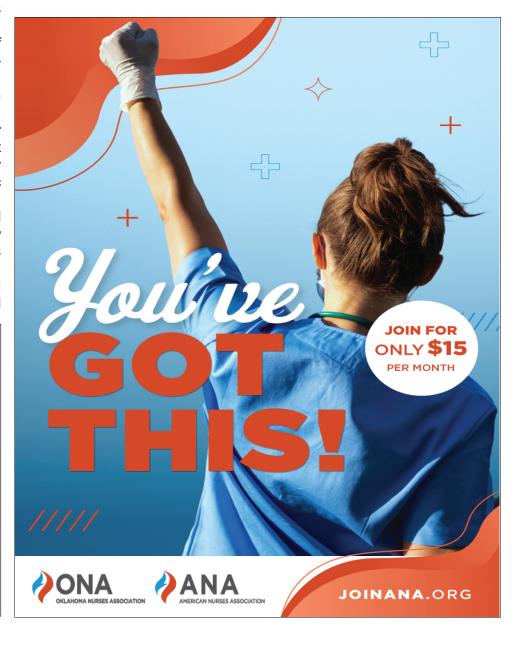
For more information about UCO's FSI, visit https://www.uco.edu/fsi/.



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Dr. Rodney Hanley Installed as NSU'S 20th President

Dr. Rodney Hanley was formally installed as the 20th president of Northeastern State University at an investiture ceremony Friday afternoon.

Hanley is a first-generation college student whose life's work has focused on making higher education accessible to as many students as possible.

"To come from a working-class family as a first-generation college student, to join the military as a way to pay for college, to have worked my way up from student, to postdoc, to professor, to dean, to provost and now being entrusted to lead this great institution—it's a powerful statement about the importance and relevance of universities as places of opportunity and advancement," Hanley said.

Prior to his appointment at NSU, Hanley served various in administrative and academic roles at the University of North Dakota, Lakehead University and University of Winnipeg. He also served as provost and vice president for academic affairs at Fisk University and most recently as president at Lake Superior State University.

With decades of experience in higher education and a strong background in strategic planning, Hanley brings a wealth of expertise to his role in NSU's highest office. extensive knowledge encompasses areas such as student and faculty relations, community engagement, tribal relations, financial management, enrollment strategies and fundraising efforts.

Hanley was named NSU's 20th president by the Regional University System of Oklahoma Regents last summer and began serving in his new role on Aug. 1, 2023. He is joined in Tahlequah by his wife Sara and sons, Harry and Edward.



Dr. Rodney Hanley delivers his presidential remarks at his investiture ceremony on March 1.

The ceremony was led by NSU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Carla Swearingen, as master of ceremonies. Remarks were presented by representatives from across the university and state.

"It is just an absolute delight to welcome to the state of Oklahoma. a talented academic leader like President Hanley," Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Chancellor Allison D. Garrett said. "I look forward to working closely with President Hanley in the years to come, and with all of you here at NSU, as we continue to work to produce amazing graduates for the state of Oklahoma."

Cherokee Nation Deputy Principal Chief Bryan Warner spoke on the importance of NSU and Cherokee Nation's shared history of providing higher education to the region. He noted the occasion as not only marking the change in leadership for NSU, but also reaffirming the enduring partnership between the institution and Cherokee Nation.

"Together, Dr. Hanley, let's celebrate this new era," Warner said. "Our two entities are forever bound, and so let us make that relationship stronger. We share your commitment to education, to preservation, to progress. Together, we can light the way for a brighter future for all of northeast Oklahoma."

Other guest speakers at the ceremony included Dr. Nathan Green. NSU Faculty Council

presidential investiture President; Darin Kight, NSU Staff Council Chair; Asa Robbins, Northeastern Student Government Association President; Suzanne Myers, NSU Alumni Association President; Chrissi Nimmo, NSU Foundation Chair; and Jane McDermott, RUSO Chair.

McDermott also led the presidential charge and, with the help of Hanley's wife and youngest son, bestowed the presidential medallion on NSU's new president. The medallion serves as a symbol of the rights, responsibilities and privileges Hanley holds in this position.

In his remarks, Hanley laid out his vision for the university focusing on goals that include expanding programmatic and course offerings that contribute to the economy of Oklahoma, a recommitment to first-generation and financially disadvantaged students, а of continuation steadfast partnerships with tribal nations, including the Cherokee Nation, and lastly a rededication to the institution's academic mission and academic excellence.

"I am filled with gratitude for the trust you have placed in me to lead this incredible institution," Hanley said. "With your support and collaboration, I am confident that we will not only uphold the rich legacy of Northeastern State University, but we will write a new and inspiring chapter in a storied history."

Attendees gathered in the University Center for a reception following the ceremony.



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- PhD and RSN-PhD





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OBU Reduces Summer Tuition Rates by More Than 50%

The cost of undergraduate classes for OBU's 2024 summer term will decrease to less than half the regular tuition rate.

A broad range of undergraduate summer courses will be offered at a rate of \$350 per credit hour to assist students in affordably earning credits they need between the spring and fall semesters. Most courses will be offered online

OBU's new reduced summer tuition rates are where accessibility and affordability meet.

"By lowering the summer tuition rate, we believe we are giving more students access to the high-quality education we offer at OBU," Dr. Larinee Dennis, OBU Co-Provost and Dean of Business, Health, Science, and Education, said. "We have committed to offer more online courses to try and meet the various needs of both current and incoming students."

This also eliminates the hassle of applying to another college and transferring credits back to OBU.

Core and supportive core classes will be emphasized, but academic divisions also will offer strategic courses that are needed for their students. A full list of summer 2024 courses will be published before registration opens in April.

"One of the biggest advantages of taking summer courses through OBU is the faith-integration for which the school has always been known," said Dr. Micah Meek, Associate Dean for Online, Nontraditional, and Graduate Education. "Students often take summer courses through community colleges, and while these are still great classes, they are not taught from a Christian worldview. A large number of our



students come to OBU for faith integration, and now they don't have to compromise on that distinction during the summer."

These courses can be used to retake classes (also known as credit recovery) and to meet prerequisites for programs. They are also an opportunity to get ahead, allowing a student to possibly take fewer credit

students come to OBU for faith hours during the fall or spring integration, and now they don't have semesters or to graduate early.



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