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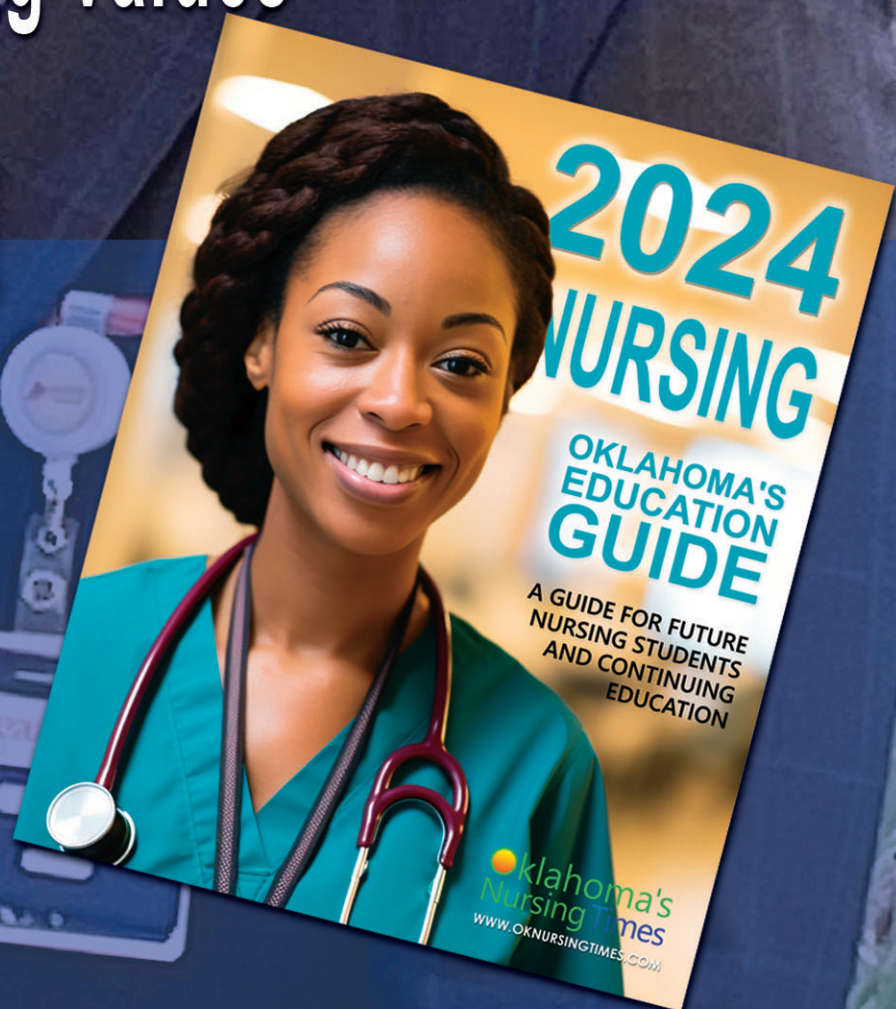
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## Built for a Challenge

Dean McGee Eye Institute redefining values

## In This Issue!

# Check Out Oklahoma's 2024 Nursing Education Guide





# James Elledge, RN director of Surgical Services

US Army Major, deployed as Deputy Command Surgeon/Med-Ops OIC/HCA Prog Mgr - JTF-B, Soto Cano Airbase, Comayagua, Honduras.

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

An environment inspiring the exchange of ideas is essential to patient care, said James Elledge, RN, director of Surgical Services at Dean McGee Eye Institute, located in Oklahoma City.

"That is where I find satisfaction from a work perspective," Elledge said.

But being administrator at the Dean McGee Eye Surgery Center constitutes most of his role.

Elledge is also a US Army Major, who was deployed as Deputy Command Surgeon/Med-Ops OIC/HCA Prog Mgr - JTF-B, Soto Cano Airbase, Comayagua, Honduras.

He began his nursing education by graduating with a degree from Oklahoma City Community College. In 2008 he earned his

Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at the Kramer School of Nursing at Oklahoma City University. He is also working toward completing a Master of Science in Nursing degree and a Master of Business Administration at OCU.

His wife had a hemorrhagic stroke in the first week of his last semester. Her stroke took him out of school when his focus centered upon the reframing of his family.

"I essentially told myself I would not reengage school until my daughters were out of high school," Elledge said. "This year my youngest will graduate. So, I will essentially be returning to school to finish off those two degrees."

Following his associate degree program, his nursing career began in the ICU and ER environment

of INTEGRIS Southwest Medical Center in Oklahoma City. Two years later, he gradually moved outside acute care while moonlighting in ambulatory care.

In 2013 he was recruited by the Dean McGee Eye Institute for the OR director job.

"I was coming off of Army mobilization to Germany, came home and worked in a surgery center in Norman as a circulator," Elledge continued.

His move to Dean McGee Eye Institute came soon after the stroke of his wife.

"I became hesitant about whether I should leave in this direction, but thought it would be a good move," he explained.

His interview for Oklahoma's Nursing Times came months after a 2023 US Army deployment to Honduras and several different countries. He returned to Dean McGee Eye Institute in December.

He returned amid major changes throughout the institute. Organizational changes began with Epic last summer. Epic Systems is one of the largest providers of health information technology, used primarily by large US hospitals and health systems to access, organize, store, and share electronic medical

records. The transition comes with benefits but has been a challenge, Elledge said. The renovation of the culture will be positive for the organization downstream.

"To me with my skill sets and what I enjoy doing in this kind of moment within an organization, is not totally redefining itself, but certainly refining itself. It is of significant interest to me," Elledge said. "I enjoy creating an environment where people understand why they're coming to work. This stems from the greater organization mission, vision values. And, as we are dealing with cultural change, part of that is the redefinition of our values. That is actually still ongoing. And so, with that, it brings purpose, direction, and guidance to where we want to be and who we want to be as a fixture within this community."

According to Dean McGee Eye Institute, "A small group of prominent Oklahoma City citizens, led by ophthalmologist Richard A. Clay, MD, founded the Oklahoma Eye Foundation in 1965 with the specific goal of establishing an eye institute."

Elledge said, "I think it is quite

Seeg ELLEDGE Page 3

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As director of Surgical Services at Dean McGee Eye Institute, James Elledge, RN, says Dean McGee's ongoing transition to Epic will enhance patient care.

## ELLEDGE

Continued from Page 2

poignant that on the threshold of that mile marker, we have been reevaluating ourselves — who we are and what we would like to become in time for that anniversary.”

Making positive organizational changes is what Elledge is all about as Dean McGee Eye Institute provides the best care and scope possible within the state and region.

“I'm here for that,” he said.

Part of the shared governance of the nursing staff is to provide better connectivity to improve

patient care opportunities, he said.

“It's not just looking to me as the administrator to get things to happen,” Elledge said. There is also buy-in by surgeons and physicians to continue quality of care through patient safety.

McGee Eye Institute is a cohesive organization with nurses, physicians, and administration, acting in a conjoined effort rather than in silo efforts, he explained.

The complexities of what a nursing career has gifted Elledge's life with enhanced critical thinking skills and independent thinking. At times he misses direct patient care.

Elledge is built for a challenge.

For more information about Dean McGee Eye Institute:

<https://dmei.org/about-employment-opportunities/>.

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# CAREERS IN NURSING: 'MILITARY BRAT' CHOOSES NURSING TO CARE FOR OTHERS

story and photo by Vickie Jenkins, Staff Writer

Integrus Health Family Care Council Crossings is where the physicians provide complete care for families. With a full range of specialties, their highly trained physicians will care for all of your health care needs.

Among the friendly nurses, you will find Bri Liggins, LPN, Certified Compliance Professional Trainer (CCP) who also performs x-rays. Bri brings six years of nursing experience to the team and has been a part of this facility for one year.

"After spending five years at OU Medical Center and a float at Saint Anthony Hospital, I must admit, I prefer working here at Integrus Health due to its smaller scale. With five outstanding physicians and a supportive team, we all get along well and always have each other's backs. Working with a smaller number of patients allows us to truly get to know them, allowing them to put their trust in our care," Bri commented.

Raised in Lawton, OK, Bri comes from a military family, when both her father and mother served. Considered herself a 'military brat' she feels fortunate to have stayed in Lawton since her parents retired from the Army. However, her two older brothers weren't as lucky; with her mother as an army nurse and her father in the medical field, they were stationed several places, resulting in constant moves for them. One brother was born in Germany and the other in Colorado. "I see myself as a bit of a matriarch, holding things together with my family, especially with my brothers," she laughed. "Someone has to keep us all in line."

"From the time I was a little girl, while other girls dreamed of being princesses or ballerinas, I wanted to become an anesthesiologist. Despite my mother's insistence, my mother was set on me following in her footsteps as a nurse, but I remained steadfast in my ambition. Excelling in math throughout

college, I obtained a degree in the subject and initially pursued a career as a math teacher. However, it didn't take long for me to realize that teaching math wasn't my lifelong passion. That's when I decided to make nursing my career. Today, here I am, fulfilling that dream. I am proud to be a nurse! While my mother would have initially preferred nursing for me from the beginning, I'll remember her words, 'I told you so,' followed by, 'your father and I are proud of you,' indicated their support for my choice."

Bri chose nursing because of her genuine support of care for others and witnessing the positive outcomes. She believes that every nurse should embody qualities of respect, responsibility, and ownership in their work. Being considerate of patients, nurses need to be considerate of patients' emotions, treating each individual with the respect they deserve. Bri finds fulfillment in advocating for patients, providing them with the extra support they need during their healthcare journey.

When asked for advice on someone entering the medical field, Bri emphasized the importance of compassion. "I advise aspiring individuals that healthcare is truly where their heart lies and that they have a genuine desire to help others. I know there will be challenges and moments of doubt but know that perseverance will pay off."

Asking Bri to describe herself overall, she replied, "I consider patience as my strongest strength. I'm kind to others, happy and responsible. I like to show others that I sincerely care about them. I show compassion with a smile."

Bri has set a goal to become a nurse practitioner with her doctorate within the next five years. She sets out with determination and drive, and it is known, when Bri sets her sights on a goal, it's evident she'll receive it. "Hopefully, there will be



Bri Liggins, LPN is also a Certified Compliance Professional Trainer (CCP) and performs x-rays at Integrus Health Family Care Council Crossings in OKC.

opportunities for nurse practitioner available here at Integrus Health," she smiled.

Recently, Bri was honored the Press Ganey Excellence Award from Integrus Health. This is given as the Pinnacle of Excellence for Patient Experience for maintaining consistently high levels of excellence.

Bri enjoys a variety of hobbies,

including family barbecues, game nights, Bingo with her mom, and watching scary movies. She also likes four-wheeling with her husband. Bri considers herself an official dog mom as she enjoys playing with her three dogs.

For more information about Integrus Health Family Care Council Crossings <https://integrishealth.org>.

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*"Jesus Christ, because I would want to know why he loves me the way he does."*



Lisa Tiger, RN

*"My mom. We would talk about my boys because she didn't get to meet them."*



Anne Alger, RN

*"Florence Nightingale about if she could see what has become of nursing and what she thought about that."*



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# 2024

# NURSING

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“Healthcare facilities across Oklahoma are experiencing a staff shortage, but we are passionate about filling this skills gap and training these crucial healthcare workers,” said Stephanie Harris, Director of Health Sciences. “We have full-time career training programs, flexible health class offerings, and customized courses to help meet our industry’s needs. We partner with leaders in Oklahoma’s healthcare industry to ensure that our hospitals, clinics, surgery centers, and medical offices have highly-trained staff to provide world-class healthcare for their patients.”

Practical Nursing is a popular program for those seeking a career as a nurse in Oklahoma. Certified Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) provide direct care to patients in

hospitals, home health, doctors’ offices, clinics, and other healthcare settings.

Students in the Practical Nursing program learn in real-world settings. They complete tasks in on-campus labs designed to mimic a hospital, complete with the machines and tools they will use as professionals.

Clinicals - often the final step to becoming certified - provide students with experience in professional settings. Students take clinicals at local hospitals where they work alongside healthcare professionals, and these experiences sometimes lead directly to job opportunities.

For those who want to pursue something different in nursing, the Respiratory Care Therapist program offers entry into an area of medicine that is increasingly in need. Due to many factors, Oklahoma has a higher-than-average number of patients who endure chronic breathing problems. The COVID-19 pandemic only made this worse.

Respiratory Care Therapists help these patients overcome the

daily challenges they face. Students learn in a hands-on environment surrounded by the tools and machines they will use professionally.

Practical Nursing and Respiratory Care are top-notch programs for post-secondary students. Still, there are other ways for students to find a career in nursing. Pre-Nursing is open to high school and post-secondary students and offers various certifications related to nursing.

Depending on the student’s plan, they can become certified as an Advanced Unlicensed Assistant, a Certified Medical Assistant, or a Nurse Aid (CNA) through the Pre-Nursing program. Pre-Nursing students can also attend the program part-time, meaning they can seek a certification while they work.

Similarly, Francis Tuttle offers Flexible Health classes to earn nursing certifications. These classes are open for a set amount of time, during which students can attend until they reach the necessary



hours.

Flex Health classes are open for CNA, Home Health Aide (HHA), Certified Medication Aide (CMA), Medication Administration Technician (MAT), Pharmacy Technician, Phlebotomy Technician, EKG Technician, and Medical Assisting (MA) certifications. These classes are also eligible for scholarship or tuition waiver programs that apply to conventional Career Training Programs.

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# RSU Building Legacy of Compassionate Nurses

The Rogers State University School of Nursing and Health Professions offers programs in nursing and pre-allied health fields. Nursing programs include the RN2BSN online program which allows registered nurses with an associate degree to complete a bachelor's degree; the traditional BSN in nursing, leading to RN licensure; and the bridge to traditional BSN entry for LPNs or paramedics to earn their bachelor's degree. Allied health sciences options include pre-athletic training, pre-physical therapy and pre-occupational therapy. The Master of Business Administration (MBA) program at RSU now offers a concentration in Healthcare Management.

With a history of over 40 years of academic excellence, RSU's nursing program provides academic rigor and a reputation that gives RSU graduates an edge in the competitive job market. Upon graduation, RSU nursing graduate NCLEX pass rates exceed the state and national average. Approximately 95% of students report having obtained an RN position before graduation. These outcomes are credited to a quality curriculum, outstanding students, and a caring and dedicated faculty. RSU's nursing faculty have more than 130 years of experience in both academic teaching and practical experience. Several low and high-fidelity laboratories are utilized to provide hands-on learning so that students are well prepared to deliver safe, high-quality nursing care in a variety of settings.

For those interested in furthering their education and increasing their employment viability in the nursing field, the RN2BSN online nursing program offers them the chance to earn their BSN in a fully online format. Registered nurses who currently have an associate degree in nursing can complete their BSN in as few as three semesters. The program has start dates in both January and August.

The program provides nursing students with the means to earn their Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), while the online format gives students the flexibility to accommodate their busy schedules. RSU's nationally recognized and fully accredited RN2BSN online program offers real-world practical experience, affordability and flexible coursework that builds upon a student's experience as an RN, preparing to advance them at their workplace, through a graduate program or even to help them find a new position.

In April 2023, Saint Francis Health System and Rogers State University announced a partnership to educate students in the nursing program at Saint Francis Hospital in Tulsa, with Saint Francis serving as an extended campus of the university where students can spend their final three semesters at Saint Francis in Tulsa as they earn their BSN from RSU. This partnership allows RSU to increase its capacity to educate nurses, with the first cohort beginning their time on campus at Saint Francis Hospital in January 2024. The opening of the extended campus at Saint Francis, as well as the recent addition of a spring cohort on RSU's main campus in Claremore, has significantly increased the capacity to graduate outstanding nurses from the RSU School of Nursing and Health Professions.



RSU consistently earns national recognition for affordability, both for traditional classes and its online programs. The university is routinely recognized for having one of the region's lowest student debt loads with nearly half of its graduates earning a degree without any student loan assistance.

The traditional BSN and RN2BSN nursing programs are fully accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). Being the only public residential university in the metropolitan Tulsa area, RSU gives students a traditional college experience. With the university's proximity to Tulsa, RSU is strategically positioned geographically, fiscally and reputationally to be Oklahoma's first choice in BSN education.

RSU is committed to building a legacy of compassionate and virtuous nurses who advocate for their patients and serve the community for years to come. For more information about RSU's nursing programs or to schedule a campus tour, visit <https://www.rsu.edu/nursing> or call 918-343-7631.



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Dr. Sharon Willis, a member of our first DNP cohort, graduated in 2023 after two years. "This program has helped me grow immensely in the nursing profession," said Willis. "I gained practical knowledge in the field and a desire to be a lifelong learner." Willis now serves as a nursing professor,



applying knowledge from OKWU's DNP program to influence the future of nursing.

Follow in Dr. Willis's footsteps and advance your nursing career. Explore Oklahoma Wesleyan University's online nursing degrees at <https://www.okwu.edu/academics/gps/>.










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The University of Oklahoma Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing is doing it all and much more to help students reach their nursing dreams.

Dean of Nursing Julie Hoff, Ph.D., MPH, RN, said the college has hired more faculty and staff and provided more student success programming in the areas of peer tutoring, mentoring, and scholarships as larger nursing classes are accepted.

“There’s been a big investment in simulation,” Hoff said. “One of the ways we accommodated these numbers is we decreased the number of clinical hours in exchange for increasing time in simulation. Simulation enables faculty to ensure certain competencies are achieved by all students regardless of learning site.”

Hoff said the added simulation time helps augment student learning when the opportunities don’t present themselves during their scheduled clinical rotations.

The last several years have also seen a more diversified faculty with advanced practice nurses coming on to strengthen the educational experiences.

“In many ways, the students love it because they can be in class one day and then be in clinical and see their faculty engaging with teams, as an advanced practice nurse, in the management of patients,” Hoff said.

Increasing quality opportunities for students throughout the state has been the hallmark of Hoff’s tenure at OU.

Hoff has made a point to have conversations with nursing leaders around the state to emphasize the importance of working together.

“We are so thankful for the clinical partners who are supporting our enrollment in Duncan, Lawton, Norman, Tulsa, and Oklahoma City. In Oklahoma City, we have strengthened our partnerships with Integris Health, Mercy Hospital, SSM Health, and VA Medical Center.



University of Oklahoma Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing students are bringing a well-rounded education into the workforce. Photos provided.

OU Health continues to be a committed clinical partner who plays a crucial role in our success. Additionally, our partnerships with Duncan Regional Hospital, Comanche County Memorial Hospital, and Norman Regional Hospital have played a crucial role in supporting our undergraduate program growth. Our clinical partnerships with Hillcrest Medical Center, Ascension St. John Medical Center, and St. Francis Health System have sustained our ability to train the future nursing workforce in the Tulsa metropolitan area. Additionally, we rely on countless community-based clinical partners that include Indian Health, tribal partners, home health and hospice agencies, behavioral health facilities, community health agencies, and K-12 schools that have allowed us to expand where students are learning.”

As more and more care inevitably moves away from the hospital into the community in the future, the challenge for nursing education will be to change along with it.

“I just think there is a real disruption in healthcare delivery,” Hoff said. “It’s still fragmented, and access is still an issue.”

Along with that will be an emphasis on flexibility for a healthcare system that isn’t known for quick change.

“We don’t have to worry about our students being flexible because they are raised in generations of constant change,” Hoff said. “We are seeing systems test new models that support the flexibility, well-being, professional growth, and positive organizational culture nurses seek. This can be challenging for healthcare systems as they are big, complex organizations that are challenged to balance financial sustainability while maintaining quality care and improving access.”

That means a wealth of opportunities for today’s nursing students to become tomorrow’s leaders.

Hoff said OU is seeing undergraduate and graduate enrollment levels increase.

In recent years, the College of Nursing has increased its effort to reach more students by guaranteeing acceptance to qualified applicants and partnerships with other entities.

Last year, OU announced partnerships with Murray State and the University of Science & Arts of Oklahoma to offer a guaranteed admission opportunity to six qualified undergraduate students majoring in nursing to pursue their Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at the OU College of Nursing’s educational sites at Cameron University in Lawton and Duncan Regional Hospital.

Since coming to OU in January 2020, Hoff said she has felt a tremendous surge of support in impacting nursing education.

“I think the commitment of the University on down to the faculty and staff in the College is very notable including the legislature’s commitment and recognition,” Hoff said. “The College’s commitment to seamless academic commitment is meeting people where they are to get them to where they want to be as a nurse. The mission of the OU College of Nursing is to lead the state in nursing workforce at all levels and advance the health of Oklahomans through education, by education, scientific discovery, translating evidence into practice, and driving innovation.” As Dean, I believe it is my responsibility to realize the power of nurses and promise of nursing for Oklahoma and beyond.

For more information about the University of Oklahoma Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing visit <https://nursing.ouhsc.edu>.





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The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA HEALTH SCIENCES





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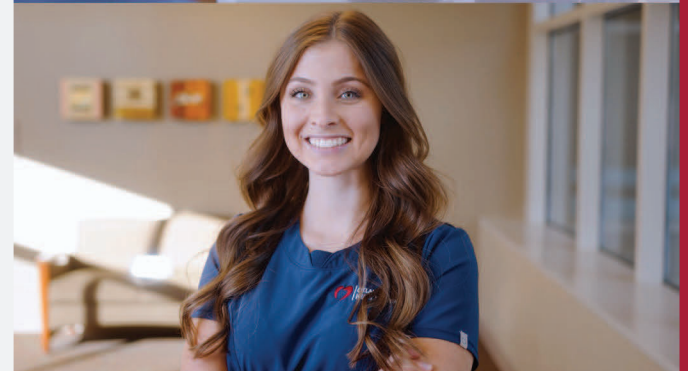
**Employee safety lifts in every room**

The Oklahoma Heart Hospital is physician owned and brings world-class medical expertise and compassion to every patient. As an Oklahoma Heart Hospital team member, you will be a part of an award-winning team of professionals devoted to providing high-quality and compassionate patient care.

Our nurses are involved in every aspect of their patients' care and provide hope, compassion and healing to patients and their families. Nurses have unparalleled opportunities to help shape the way OHH operates with the purpose of providing high-quality, safe, patient-focused care.

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AA/EOE/M/F/D/V





# Oklahoma Heart Hospital

## Shaping the Future of Patient Care

A registered nurse is the caregiver patients see most during a hospital stay, and the quality and competence of nursing staff directly affects the quality of care and overall patient experience. Oklahoma Heart Hospital takes care of the team that takes care of patients.

“Our mission is serving the state and leading the nation,” said Cindy Miller, RN, MSN, who serves as Director of Transformation for OHH. “We serve every county in Oklahoma plus many surrounding states, and we’ve also had patients travel from other countries. I think it goes without saying this is the place to work if you want to take good care of people.”

The nurse externship and internship programs at OHH help build skills and confidence for new nurses. A low nurse-to-patient ratio and nursing pod layout enable nurses to provide exceptional patient care, and the collaborative culture gives every employee a voice in shaping patient care.

### Learning Opportunities for New Nurses

The OHH nurse extern program is a fantastic opportunity for hands-on learning prior to the final year of nursing school. Full-time winter and summer externships are available, as well as non-traditional externship opportunities when needed. Some externs continue with part-time employment at OHH during their final year of school.

Recent graduates can apply to any open RN position at OHH and will be paired with a preceptor for 6-12 weeks of customized training for their specific role to ensure new nurses have the skills and confidence needed to provide outstanding patient care.

“They’re willing to educate, teach you, and show you because they know what it’s like to be in your shoes,” said Alex Greenhoward, a nurse in the PCCU. “I’ve never felt afraid to ask anybody for help. That’s big for me. It’s hard being new in an always-changing environment and not knowing who you can go to when you need help.”

### Low Nurse-to-Patient Ratio

Nurses benefit from working in a place that builds them up and puts their skill and knowledge to use. Nurses have a maximum of four patients at one time in general nursing, and as few as one or two patients in critical care units.

“The patient is the center of everything we do, and that’s important for nurses to know that they are making a difference,” Miller said. “We have the best nurse-to-patient ratios probably in the nation. That’s a big commitment to allow for better patient care and job satisfaction for our nurses.”

Designed by its physician owners, OHH’s two hospital locations use a nursing pod layout with patient rooms clustered around each nursing station. This intentional design plus fully stocked supplies in each room help streamline patient care and save time for nurses.



### Collaborative Culture to Shape Patient Care

OHH is big on communication and teamwork, and that results in high-quality, individualized care for each patient. The entire staff - including doctors, nurses, and members of the allied health and support staff teams - collaborates to continuously improve patient care. This enables nurses to care for patients in a responsive, timely manner rather than wait for approval or assistance for routine patient needs. Nurses also play a key role in creating new policies and procedures to shape the future of patient care.

### Competitive Benefits and Continuing Education

OHH takes care of its team members with a competitive benefits package that includes signing bonuses, tuition reimbursement, and much more. These benefits help attract and retain a talented, well-educated nursing staff. Continuing education supports each individual’s career goals and ensures the team is current on the latest information and techniques in patient care.

Nursing team members at OHH also love the self-scheduling approach that gives them the flexibility they need to balance work and life.

Oklahoma Heart Hospital is physician owned and designed by cardiologists. With two hospital locations and 60+ clinics across the state, OHH provides outstanding cardiovascular care to patients throughout Oklahoma and patients who travel from across the country. Learn more about nursing opportunities at OHH at <https://careers.okheart.com>.



**OKLAHOMA  
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# Oklahoma Christian University

*Where Learning Goes Beyond Textbooks*



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UNIVERSITY

Imagine a nursing program where you're known by your name, not a number, and supported academically, mentally and spiritually. Look no further than Oklahoma Christian University's School of Nursing, voted Oklahoma's Best by students themselves and accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

We offer two paths to your BSN: immerse yourself in our vibrant campus community with the on-campus track, or balance work and studies with our flexible online program.

In either track, you'll experience our signature small class sizes and culturally diverse faculty who are more than instructors; they're your mentors, invested in your success.

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At OC, your learning goes beyond textbooks. Our state-of-the-art simulation lab lets you hone your clinical skills in realistic scenarios, preparing you for real-world success. This commitment to excellence is reflected in our impressive 91% NCLEX pass rate, a testament to the quality of our program and your preparation.

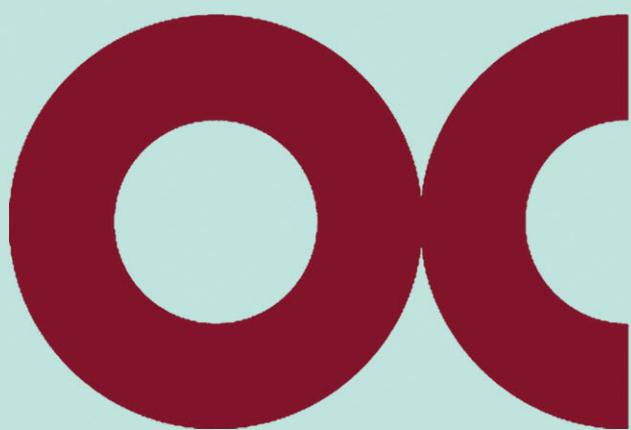
OC graduates stand out. They're



known for their clinical competence, critical thinking and strong ethical values, thriving in diverse healthcare settings and making a profound impact on lives.

Here, nursing is more than a profession; it's a calling. Contact us today to explore your unique path at Oklahoma Christian University. Discover a supportive community, exceptional faculty and an environment where you'll shine, not just survive.

To learn more about the Nursing Program at Oklahoma Christian University visit <https://www.oc.edu/academics/college-of-sciences-education/nursing>.



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**WE'RE BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CHRISTIAN LEADERS.**

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**Your education extends beyond the classroom.** We are a place where students find calling, career and community. With more than 60 student organizations, 20 NCAA DII and club sports, work-study opportunities, and a city full of restaurants, shops and entertainment, you'll find plenty to do outside the classroom.



OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



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## FACTS & FIGURES

- Choose Your Course: On-Campus or Work-Based Online
- Faculty who know you by name
- Academic, mental and spiritual support
- Accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)
- Current NCLEX Pass rate: 91%
- Student to instructor ratio: 10:1
- Culturally diverse nursing faculty
- Tutoring available
- Personal relationship with leading instructors
- Hi-tech simulation lab



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# OKLAHOMA CITY

## New Admission Criteria

In our 55-year history, OSU-OKC has committed itself to providing high-quality nursing education to help meet the workforce demands of the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area and the state. Our graduates report a 97% job placement rate and average starting salaries of more than \$60,000 per year. Our admission processes are moving away from costly pre-admission testing requirements for students and placing a larger emphasis on science GPA, which has been revealed as the most consistent predictor of student success for graduation and for success on the NCLEX-RN licensure examination.

## Career Ladder & Traditional

OSU-OKC welcomes LPNs and Paramedics looking for a pathway to being eligible for Registered Nurse licensure. With proof of active, state licensure and required prerequisite courses, LPNs and Paramedics will complete a transition course, then the final two courses in the program. Upon successful completion of the transition course, students are awarded 17 credit hours of advanced standing credit for their licensure. The coursework for this pathway is provided online. Students come to campus for testing, simulations, and laboratory experiences on Fridays. Students will complete clinical experiences on the weekends. This hybrid design was at the request of our program advisory committee to meet the needs of working adults.

## Simulation Center

OSU-OKC boasts having one of the largest and most sophisticated simulation facilities in the metro area. Students will experience realistic hospital environments with simulation mannequins that can mimic human patients. The goal was to make the learning environment as close to an actual hospital as possible to increase students' comfort when they enter our partners' facilities and begin to take care of patients. This decreases student anxiety and boosts student confidence in their ability to care for patients.

## Interprofessional Simulation

OSU-OKC nursing students, OSU-OKC paramedicine students, and OSU-Center for Health Sciences resident physicians come together to rescue, triage, and treat patients with a variety of injuries and illnesses. The goal is for these different groups to learn to work together as they will in the actual healthcare arena. Student volunteers and staff take on the role of patients and may simulate suffering anything from a traumatic injury requiring being rescued by our paramedic students to a mental health crisis and any other healthcare emergency in between. Not only do students learn to work together as a team, but they will also learn to prioritize care based on the severity of the simulated patient.

# APPLICATION TIMELINES

**FALL ADMISSION** Feb 1 - April 1 • Traditional Students & Career Ladder Students

**SPRING ADMISSION** July 1 - Sept 1 • Traditional Students & Career Ladder Students

*For more information, including program outcomes, program costs, admission points, and general contact information please visit [osuokc.edu/nursing](https://osuokc.edu/nursing).*





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CITY

# EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS

- LPN/Paramedic-to-RN track
- Traditional track
- Expanded enrollment
- Updated admission requirements
- 97% job placement rate
- Average starting salary of over \$60k

(Based on 2023 graduate reported salary data)



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OSU-OKC  
**NURSING**



# REDLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE PREPARING NURSING GRADUATES FOR WORKFORCE



Redlands Community College nursing students gain valuable experience in the campus' simulation lab.

A common desire among nursing students is to help others.

A common desire among nursing students is to help others.

"I chose to pursue a career in nursing because of my innate desire to assist others in any way possible," said Kassidy Brinlee, a Redlands nursing student and a student ambassador. "Witnessing my grandmother's battle with dementia deeply impacted me and highlighted the importance of helping others facing similar challenges."

Redlands Community College in El Reno, Okla., gives these students the start toward a successful and fulfilling career in the health care field where they impact the lives of patients and families every day. With a 100% job placement rate, Redlands offers a two-year degree program that prepares graduates to successfully take the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX) for licensure as a registered nurse and to enter the workforce immediately.

"The benefit of earning an associate degree in nursing at Redlands is that graduates are well-prepared for the licensure exam that will allow them to begin working quickly," said Dr. Jalelah Abdul-Raheem, director of Redlands' Nursing Program. "Once they have completed this stage, they are able to focus on their career as a registered nurse or continue their education at a university to earn a bachelor's of nursing degree."

Redlands has two nursing program options: the traditional RN program and a track for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs). Students

who are enrolled in the LPN-to-RN cohort earn articulation credits in the first semester, allowing them to graduate in three semesters instead of four. This helps get them out of the classroom and into the community where they can do the most good.

Hollye Edmonds has taken a different path to the nursing field. After spending 15 years as a pre-k teacher, Edmonds decided to pursue a new career that still allows her to help others.

Returning to school can be daunting, but Edmonds has found a supportive environment at Redlands. "From the beginning, I was offered help and guidance from enrolling in courses to securing financial aid when needed and every area in between. Redlands has made the process of being a student easy and has mapped out clear pathways to success and supports their students on their journey."

Redlands is a solid, affordable choice for students because of the scholarships available as well as the personal attention and opportunities it provides. The college's partnerships with several area health facilities provide students with challenging, hands-on experience during their clinical rotations.

"Fortunately, our location just outside of Oklahoma City gives our students the opportunity to serve in both rural and urban areas, exposing them to the different types of nursing care available and helping them figure out what is the best fit for them" Abdul-Raheem said.

After spending a decade in pre-hospital health care, Jeremy Pool was ready to expand his experience with a greater focus on patient care. He had previously earned an associate degree from Redlands as well as other medical certifications, so he wanted to complete the college's nursing program.

"I find the staff very helpful and down to earth and my college credits transferred seamlessly

here," Pool said. "The faculty goes above and beyond to make sure you have the tools and resources to succeed in the program. They are with you every step of the way to answer questions, address problems or concerns, and assist with test taking strategies and note taking."

With a Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant from Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI) Part A to support outreach and retention efforts and additional funding to update campus simulation labs, the Redlands Nursing Program is providing a high-quality learning experience led by dedicated and well-trained faculty.

"At Redlands, everyone is friendly, and the faculty is excited to be part of students' lives," said Dr. Abdul-Raheem. "We are committed to helping our nursing students succeed, and our faculty and staff are dedicated to supporting them throughout their time in the program."

Pool agreed, saying "I feel the faculty I work with daily make an impact on my success in their own way. Professor Newell makes lectures and test prepping always engaging and interesting, while Danaee, my success coach, keeps me accountable of my work and gives me great advice on how to approach my test taking and time organization."

The five-year cooperative grant is designed for Native American and low-income students and is 100% funded by the U.S. Department of Education as part of the NASNTI program.

Visit <https://redlandsc.edu/nursing-program> for more information and to apply for the program and scholarships. The scholarship application is due May 31.



# FIND YOUR FUTURE

## REDLANDS Community College in El Reno

### Nursing Program

- Traditional RN program
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Contact us at (405) 422-6224 or email [Nursing.Program@redlandsc.edu](mailto:Nursing.Program@redlandsc.edu) with questions.



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# Half-century success

## Northern Oklahoma College going strong

Northern Oklahoma College nursing turns half a century this year and the success keeps coming.

Northern Oklahoma College, the State's first public community college is a multi-campus, land-grant institution that provides high quality, accessible, and affordable educational opportunities and services which create life-changing experiences and develop students as effective learners and leaders within their communities in a connected, ever-changing world.

Northern offers a two-year Associate of Applied Science Degree for the RN. A two-year RN's focus is providing care at the bedside regardless of whether the bedside is located in the hospital, clinic, doctor's office, hospice, nursing home or community.

The program also focuses on how to manage care for groups of patients.

To celebrate the 50-year milestone, a two-day event at NOC Tonkawa's Renfro Center was held where faculty, staff, and nursing alums gathered to share their experiences.

The event included time with NOC President Dr. Clark Harris, attendance at a campus jazz concert, and campus tours culminating in a dinner for the attendees.

NOC is also participating in The Daisy Award, an award that recognizes extraordinary faculty. Students, faculty, staff, and alums may nominate anyone deemed worthy of the prestigious award.

NOC instructor Kim Brewer earned the award in 2022, the first year for the program at NOC.

**Fifty years of success include more than a few accolades including:**

- Top 10 Nursing Program in the state, according to Nursing Hub
- RN Associate Degree Program (Traditional Pathway or LPN to RN Pathway)
- Partnerships with RN-BSN Programs
- Academic Practice Partnerships with Paid Clinical Internships in Final Semester
- High NCLEX Pass Rates
- High Employment Rates and Employer Satisfaction

• The associate degree nursing program at Northern Oklahoma College is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).

NOC offers programs at the Tonkawa, Enid, and Stillwater campuses.

Under the direction of Dr. Nikole Hicks, NOC Nursing Division Chair, the program is rigorous and innovative.

Academic Practice Partnership opportunities are available for select students in Tonkawa, Enid, Stillwater, and Tulsa with paid clinical internships in the final semester of the nursing program.

Graduates of NOC's nursing program earn an Associate degree in Applied Science and are eligible to apply for licensure as a registered nurse. There is an entry pathway for current LPNs to enter the program with advanced standing.

NOC partners with several RN-BSN programs to provide graduates with opportunities for advanced education. Additional majors include the Associate in Science Pre-Baccalaureate/Pre-



Dr. Nikole A. Hicks, PhD, RNC, CNE, Nursing Division Chair - Northern Oklahoma College.

Professional Program.

Nursing students are also a part of the Student Nurses Association and Alpha Delta Nu National Associate Degree Nursing Honor Society.

NOC also received grant funding that will improve technology in the nursing practice and simulation labs to provide state-of-the-art equipment to prepare practice-ready graduates.

For more information, please contact the nursing program at [nursing@noc.edu](mailto:nursing@noc.edu) or 580.628.6679 or at NOC's web site at:

<https://www.noc.edu>.



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# OCU Student Overcomes Obstacles to Achieve Dreams



Amaka Okwudigbo endured quite a journey moving to the United States from Nigeria in pursuit of a career in the healthcare field.

She has overcome homelessness, food insecurity, and financial issues to fight for her career dreams.

She is currently a student with Oklahoma City University's 12-month accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program.

"I've had a lot of challenges since I've been in the United States," said Okwudigbo, who came to the United States eight years ago at age 18. "I've been homeless, and had no food, and no accommodations, but I was lucky enough to find help here at OCU. They have a food pantry and they have been really helpful with food to me. I have a place to stay. God really, really blessed me."

Okwudigbo came to the U.S. on a student visa.

"I just needed to change my environment, and someone mentioned that I should apply for a visa to see if I can further my education here in the United States and I took the risk," she said. "I first landed in Houston, Texas, and I graduated with an Associates of Science in Health, and then I moved to Oklahoma to further my education. I went to Rose State College, and I had two Associate's degrees from there, one respiratory therapy and the other one programming"

Okwudigbo credits Candace Jones, her former boss (Academic Advisor) at Rose State College, for helping her secure housing.

"She's been amazing, she gave me a roof under her house," Okwudigbo said.

After graduating from Rose State, Okwudigbo looked to expand her educational horizons.

"When I graduated with my programming degree last December, I was looking to expand my knowledge to see other options, so I started looking for schools that could give me a Bachelor's degree, which I could get very fast," she said. "I looked online and I found OCU, and when I spoke to the recruiters, the advisors at the nursing program, they were really fast with responding to me and I was like, 'I think this is the school that I am going to.'"

OCU's accelerated BSN program is the state of Oklahoma's first and only 12-month accelerated BSN. The program provides an opportunity for individuals with a non-nursing associate or bachelor's degree to earn a BSN degree in less time than a traditional baccalaureate program. This is an in-person program that consists of 56 credit hours spread over three full-time semesters during the 12-month program.

Some key features of Oklahoma City University's 12-month accelerated BSN are:

- Program consists of 56 credit hours over 12 months
- Direct transfer of previous associate or baccalaureate degree credits
- Clinical experiences at major hospital and community sites in the Oklahoma City metro area

The program will prepare you to sit for the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX-RN), which all prospective nurses must pass in order to be licensed in their state.

Okwudigbo worked her way through her previous schools, but was able to secure a scholarship to attend OCU. She hopes to find on-campus work to help with the rest of her school costs.



Amaka Okwudigbo is currently a student with Oklahoma City University's 12-month accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program.

"It's been a huge challenge, because without a job I wouldn't be able to pay for this, but I was lucky enough to get a scholarship this first semester," she said. "Even though the cost was a bit challenging for me, I was like, 'I will fight for it and I will do it,' and I am here. I am extremely proud."

Okwudigbo credits her parents for instilling her with determination and a strong work ethic.

"I grew up in an environment where we are satisfied with the little that we have, and I'm a first generation that was going to school," she said. "My parents are my backbone. I'm glad that they raised me the way they did."

Okwudigbo also thanked Gina Crawford, DNP, APRN-CNP, FNP, CNE, and Dean and Associate Professor, and Dr. Janice Carr, DNP, RN, CNE, Associate Professor, for their help at OCU's Kramer School of Nursing.

"I want to say thank you to Dean Gina Crawford and Dr. Janice Carr for their enormous support," she said.

Okwudigbo's goal is to join the military and work in healthcare.

"I am so eager to join either the Air Force or the Army," she said. "This has been my goal since I was a baby, and I would love to, actually when I graduate, if by the grace of God, practice in the military."

For more information about OCU's Kramer School of Nursing visit <https://www.okcu.edu/nursing>.





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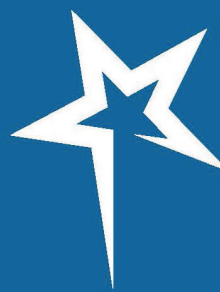
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UNIVERSITY

**Kramer School of Nursing**



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# Inaugural White Coat Ceremony Celebrates OSU Nursing Students

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Twenty-six OSU students commemorated the start of their professional nursing education at the university's inaugural White Coat Ceremony.

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The ceremony, held on April 3 in the Great Hall of the Nancy Randolph Davis Building, marked a significant milestone for the students and the nursing program at OSU. The program, developed to address a nursing shortage in Oklahoma and across the country, welcomed its first class of professional nursing students in the fall of 2023. In remarks given during the ceremony, Nursing Program Director Dr. Alana Cluck said the ceremony was meaningful to both the nursing students and OSU.

"This official White Coat Ceremony symbolizes the start of your education in the science and art of nursing," Cluck said. "When you put on your white coat, wear it with pride as you are not only representing Oklahoma State University but furthermore the nursing profession."

Although the nursing degree program is still in its first year at OSU, Cluck said she expects the 26 students recognized to be the first of many OSU-educated nurses. Eighty-six students are enrolled in the program for the fall 2024 semester, and Cluck expects the program to grow to 300 students by its third year.

Students pursuing a nursing degree must complete an additional application and pass prerequisite courses and take an exam. Cluck said the process will ensure admitted students are more likely to complete the program and pass the National Council Licensure Examination, which is required to become a licensed nurse.

Once admitted, students spend their final two years in the professional program at OSU studying and gaining hands-on experience. The program is rigorous, and by graduation, professional nursing students will have gone through two years of in-lab simulations and clinical rotations focused on critical care, medical-surgical nursing, pediatrics, obstetrics, community and leadership.

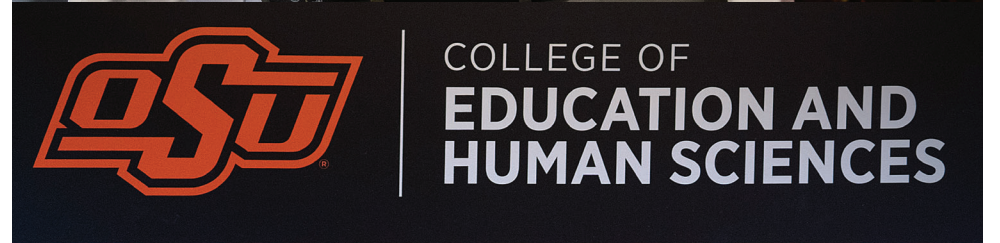
"They spend time in the lab learning and practicing skills, as well as working through simulation patient care scenarios with manikins and virtual reality," Cluck said. "Clinical rotations include long-term care facilities and hospital settings."

For students, the White Coat Ceremony represented the beginning of their health care education. However, Cluck noted that the students' new white coats carried on a decades-old tradition in the medical field and symbolized knowledge, professionalism and hope.

"These coats are worn by a multitude of medical providers as a classic symbol of medical knowledge," Cluck said. "It's as if to automatically say to a patient, 'I am here to help.'"

---

Learn more about Oklahoma State University's Bachelor of Science in Nursing at <https://okla.st/BSN>.







# NURSING

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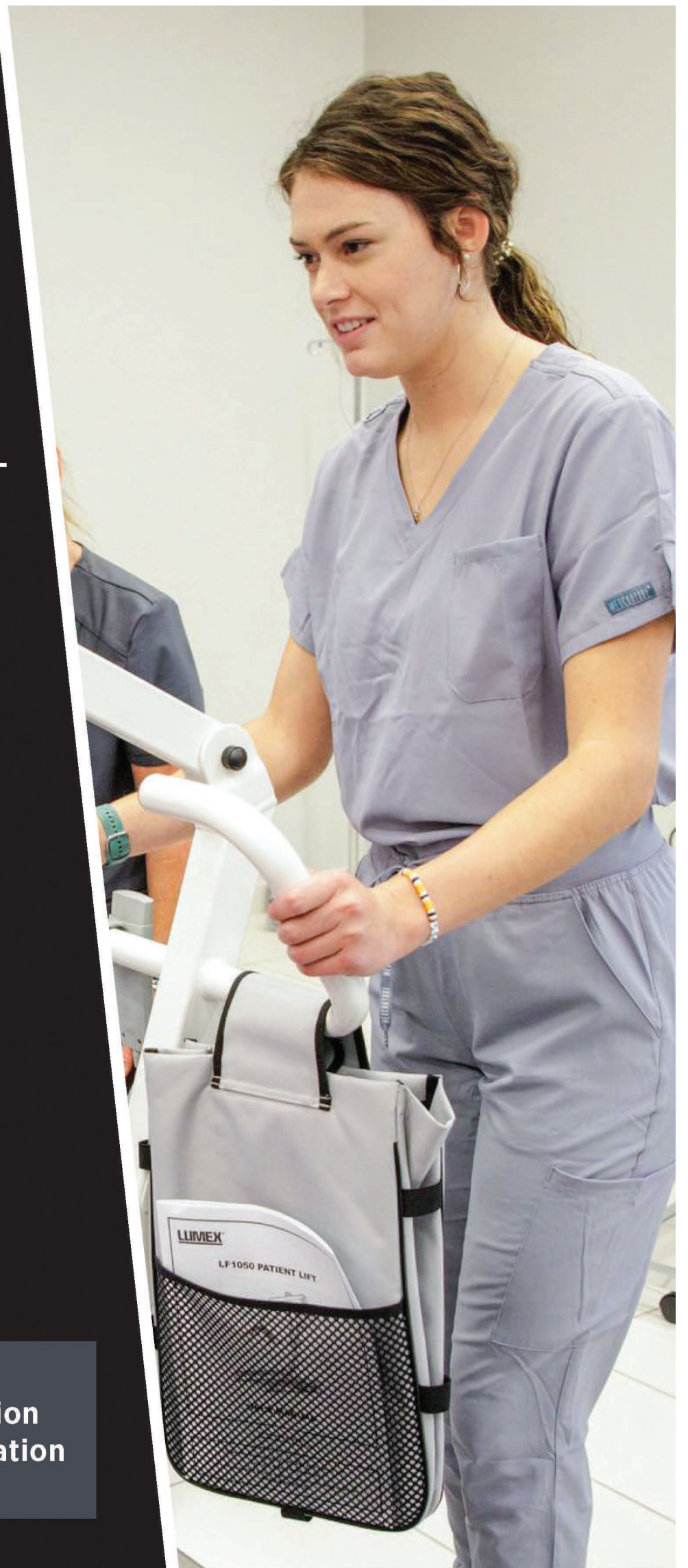
- Clinical experiences in Stillwater, Tulsa and surrounding areas
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# Bringing Innovation and Entrepreneurship to Nursing

“Be Curious” is one of the defining values of the University of North Texas System. The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth is cultivating that curiosity with the launch of its College of Nursing. Starting in fall 2024, students can expect to gain entrepreneurship and innovation skills to bring scalable solutions to the health care market.

HSC has a proud history of providing innovative solutions to pressing health care problems. HSC Next is a unique program at HSC, guiding innovators to develop and scale their health care solutions for the masses. HSC Next also works with the Techstars Physical Health Fort Worth Accelerator to connect entrepreneurs from around the world to revolutionize the physical health industry through new technology.

Nursing professionals coming to HSC will have a solid base of support for developing technologies, ideas and strategies to address health care challenges. Incoming students also will benefit from all that makes HSC a first-class health science center.

From the outset of their experience with the college, HSC nursing students will gain interpersonal connections formed with peers. The connections formed between students in different degree programs serve both patients and the larger community by creating health care teams that have known and learned from each other for years.

Students also will have access to some of the best health education facilities in Texas and the region, including the state-of-the-art Regional Simulation Lab, as well as a team of diverse, field-leading faculty. Associate Dean for Research, Tonychris Nnaka, PhD, MPH, RN, CPH, recently brought his expertise in digital health to the 2024 VIVE Conference, a leading digital health technology meeting. Assistant Dean for Clinical and Outreach Affairs Kate Taylor, DNP, APRN, FNPC, CPPS, FNAP, is bringing innovation to home-based primary care for older adults through her work with HSC’s Center for Older Adults House Calls program.

HSC understands that training the next generation of nurses, physicians and health care professionals must also be financially accessible. The UNT System has kept tuition the same since 2016, and the College of Nursing has awards and scholarships, including a developing mentorship program, to ensure that students’ education and professional development is supported financially.

As it welcomes students for the Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN to BSN) and Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) in Nursing Practice Innovation degree programs, HSC’s College



of Nursing aims to help professionals not only advance their clinical skills for better patient outcomes, but also use their unique experience to create solutions for the complex health care challenges that face urban, rural and specialized populations.

One innovation for fall 2024 is nursing microcredentials, short, affordable and intensive courses designed to train professionals in an area of acute need. Studies have shown the enormous positive impact of microcredentials on student education and outcomes. The HSC College of Nursing will offer microcredentials for health care management, correctional nursing and substance use disorder nursing, all areas of critical need across the region and state.

With an increasing general population and nurse turnover affecting the nursing gap in Texas, the time is now for an institution to prepare nurses to address society’s most pressing health challenges. As the College of Nursing adds programs, students and faculty, it will continue to be guided by the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship that has defined HSC since its beginning in 1970. HSC’s College of Nursing is proud to develop nurse innovators who are ready and willing to bring their experience, leadership and solutions to improve health outcomes in their own communities and throughout Texas.

For more information about the University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth visit <https://www.unthsc.edu/oklanursing>.





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Canadian Valley Technology Center is partnering with local businesses to offer registered apprenticeships in select programs. Each carries the approval of the U.S. Department of Labor, which provides apprentices with a nationally recognized completion credential.

Eligible programs are Medical Assistant, Medical Coding Specialist and Vision Care Technician. Apprenticeships must be industry driven and feature a structured training plan with a mentor, and they must guarantee progressive wage increases as skills increase.

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Use Microsoft Office Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook to prepare for success in business careers and college. In-program options: Accounting, Administrative Assistant, Medical Office Assistant.

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### Biomedical Sciences

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- College-prep
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Students utilize hands-on activities in anatomy, cell biology, genetics and diseases prior to advanced medical studies.

### Medical Coding Specialist

Cowan Campus / Yukon  
(Adults only)

- No direct patient care
- No needles ... No blood
- 1,000 hours

Students perform patient check-ins and assist outpatients with billing. Learn medical anatomy and terminology, administrative medical assisting, coding for inpatients and outpatients and medical insurance. Prep for the Certified Professional Coder exam.



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  - Required clinical rotations
  - Complete in 18 months
  - Pass rates near 100%
  - Approved by the Oklahoma Board of Nursing
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### Surgical Technology

Chickasha or Cowan / Yukon  
(Adults only)

- 1,356 hours
- 500+ clinical hours

Students prepare to deliver quality patient care before, during and after surgeries. Experience a variety of surgical procedures and clinical settings.

### Vision Care Technician

Cowan Campus / Yukon  
(Adults & high school seniors)

Developed in coordination with the Dean McGee Eye Institute ... experience diagnostic testing and clerical skills. Students record patient information, clean and maintain ophthalmic instruments, assist during patient visits and provide instruction for corrective lenses.

### Medical Assistant

Cowan Campus / Yukon  
(Adults only)

- Leads to Registered Medical Assistant (RMA) certification

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Canadian Valley Technology Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Title IX Coordinator: [ridgewayt@cvtech.edu](mailto:ridgewayt@cvtech.edu); 504 Coordinators, [504@cvtech.edu](mailto:504@cvtech.edu), 405-262-2629, 6505 E Hwy 66, El Reno, OK 73036



# Discover Your Path to Nursing Excellence at Southwestern Oklahoma State

Are you considering a career in nursing? Look no further than Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU), one of the best universities in Oklahoma known for providing top-quality programs. With 14 nationally accredited academic programs, SWOSU is a senior regional university that offers an exceptional education.

The SWOSU School of Nursing has a reputation for excellence, offering five different nursing programs to fit the needs of all students. If you're looking to start your nursing career, the traditional BSN program taught on campus is an excellent option. Alternatively, if you're already an RN looking to advance your career, SWOSU offers four online degrees, including an RN to BSN degree and graduate degrees in nursing education and nursing administration.

But the nursing programs at SWOSU don't stop there. The university also offers online professional programs in Health Information Management and Information Management at the graduate level. Additionally, SWOSU has two contractual agreement programs for Occupational Therapy Assistant and Physical Therapist Assistant Programs in partnership with Caddo Kiowa Technology Center.

SWOSU is proud to have six nationally accredited programs in Health Information Management, Nursing, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Physical Therapist Assistant, Radiologic Technology, and Medical Laboratory Technician. The university's professionally and academically qualified faculty are dedicated to mentoring students and helping them achieve their goals.

At SWOSU, students have access to a diverse selection of academic college courses and are rated as one of the most affordable universities in the region. Additionally, SWOSU's location in Weatherford is conveniently located on Interstate 40, less than one hour west of the Oklahoma City metro area. Whether you're a commuter or a traditional student, SWOSU provides accessibility and convenience.

SWOSU's nursing program is more than just traditional classroom learning. The university also boasts a nursing simulation lab that provides hands-on experience in a controlled environment. The lab features high-tech manikins that can simulate a wide range of medical conditions and scenarios, allowing students to practice and develop their clinical skills in a



safe and supportive environment.

SWOSU's nursing programs have a strong emphasis on community service and engagement. Nursing students can participate in various community-based programs and initiatives, such as health fairs and clinics, providing valuable service to the local community while also gaining practical experience and skills.

SWOSU's nursing faculty are experienced professionals who bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the classroom. They are dedicated to helping students succeed and are committed to providing a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Additionally, the university offers a range of scholarships and financial aid opportunities to help nursing students achieve their academic and career goals.

In summary, SWOSU's nursing programs provide students with a comprehensive education that prepares them for a successful career in nursing. With a strong focus on hands-on experience, community engagement, and academic excellence, SWOSU's nursing programs provide students with the skills, knowledge, and experience they need to make a positive impact in the world of healthcare. Join us at SWOSU and pursue your dreams of becoming a nurse while receiving a top-quality education. We are dedicated to helping our students succeed. For more information on SWOSU's nursing programs visit:

<https://www.swosu.edu/nursing>.







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- No Clinicals Required



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- Must have a 3.0 GPA (SWOSU grads with 3.0 or above are guaranteed admission)
- 3 Starting Points Per Year
- No Clinicals Required



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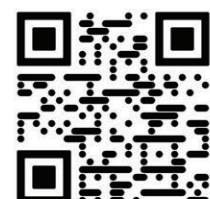
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# Graduates Among Best in State, Nation

For more than 50 years, the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) has provided Oklahoma with highly skilled and educated nurses. Graduates of UCO's nursing programs are known for being some of the best nurses in Oklahoma, as well as the nation.

For more than 50 years, the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) has provided Oklahoma with highly skilled and educated nurses. Graduates of UCO's nursing programs are known for being some of the best nurses in Oklahoma, as well as the nation.

Accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), UCO bachelor's and master's programs prepare tomorrow's nursing leaders through various settings, which helps meet the demand at all levels of nursing services needed in Oklahoma. Central offers traditional and nontraditional programs to support any student wanting to pursue a nursing career or further their nursing education.

## Traditional Nursing Program, B.S.

Central's traditional, on-campus nursing program is for students who are not yet licensed to practice nursing as an RN.

When Abbie Yates, a senior in UCO's traditional nursing program, transferred to Central, she could instantly feel that Central's nursing professors were invested in her education and success. "The professors at UCO take the opportunity to get to know their students and create connections. Nursing at UCO is a well-oiled program that is constantly improving based on the needs of their students," said Yates. As she approaches graduation, Yates knows she will be prepared to enter the workforce. "UCO has one of the highest number of clinical hours compared to many nursing schools around Oklahoma, and I believe it better prepares us for entry into practice."

## Online RN to B.S. in Nursing Track

Central's RN to B.S. track is available 100% online for RNs who want to further their nursing education. Upon successful completion, nurses earn a Bachelor of Science in nursing. With both part- and full-time options available and for as low as \$8,500, Central's program is designed to provide flexibility for students, with the option to complete the track in as little as 10 months.

## Fast-Track B.S.

For those who have earned a traditional bachelor's degree in another field and are ready for a career in nursing, Central's Fast Track in nursing is for them. The fast-track program can be completed in just 16 months and provides the flexibility of hybrid



courses. Upon successful completion, students will have earned a B.S. in nursing.

After Kanece Ham started her career in neuroscience research, she realized she wanted to combine her love for neurology and the complexity of the brain with helping people in their lives. That is when she decided to pursue Central's fast-track program to become a psychiatric nurse. "When researching programs, I was excited to see that UCO had a fast-track program, which would allow me to get my degree in nursing within 16 months-providing me the ability to reenter the workforce and begin working in the meaningful way I always had aspired to do," said Ham.

## Online M.S. in Nursing

The Master of Science in nursing degree program at UCO offers working RNs flexibility through fully online courses with both part- and full-time options available. The program can be completed in as little as 16 months, if pursued full time. The online Master of Science in nursing can be completed for as little as \$15,000. Nursing graduate students can choose from two tracks - nursing education or nursing leadership.

Micaela Carothers is a cardiac nurse who graduated from UCO's traditional nursing program. The compassion and dedication she received from UCO nursing faculty inspired her to continue her nursing education at Central. The M.S. in nursing provided her with the flexibility she needed to succeed. "With the program being online, the classes are very flexible around my workdays," said Carothers. "I feel that I am effectively able to meet the class expectations and continue working without feeling overwhelmed."

## The Future of Nursing

All UCO nursing programs offer real-world instruction from supportive nursing faculty who are experts in their fields. Graduates from UCO nursing programs are recognized within the health care community for their knowledge, professionalism and leadership potential. Central prides itself as a smart investment for success and for preparing future leaders in an opportunity-rich environment. For more information about Central's nursing programs, visit <https://www.uco.edu/cms/academics/nursing>.



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# Ranger Pride *Northwestern grows healers*

Leslie Collins, DNP, MS, RN still remembers the conversation with her Northwestern Oklahoma State University mentor.

"They said you educate every day and I think you could make a difference in students' lives," Collins recalls.

From there, she took a job in her alma mater's nursing program skills lab. Thirteen years later, she's chair of Northwestern Oklahoma State's Charles Morton Share Trust Division of Nursing.

And she couldn't be more proud of the impact her faculty has on students.

"I love it because of our ability to make a difference, to be one-on-one with the student and really help them," Collins said. "I stay here because of the faculty and our administration. Our administration's support is like no other."

"It was a starting point for me and I love being that starting point for students."

Northwestern Oklahoma State University is a public regional university that has received national acclaim for its combination of

a high quality academic program and affordability. While Northwestern primarily serves the vast geographical area of northwest Oklahoma and the Panhandle, its students come from more than 40 states and 20 countries.

Northwestern offers a bachelor's of science in nursing, an **online RN-to-BSN program**, as well as a hybrid BSN-to-DNP program.

Collins matriculated from Northwestern not only debt-free but with a solid nursing foundation forged by instructors who poured into her.

"I think it makes all the difference in the world, specifically when it comes to nursing," Collins said of the personalized instruction she received. "It's something we do at Northwestern across our degrees and programs and it makes a difference in the student. It makes them know they are more than a number. It's about their education and what they need."

"We find more and more students need to know the way they learn so they can continue to be lifelong learners, far past their graduation. That's so important for nursing and we can work with them one on one to help them be more successful. Caring

is a component that is threaded throughout our program, we feel it is important for students to be caring in nature and to learn resiliency in this process. We hope this, and have seen in the past, will translate into what type of nurse they become."

Collins said many Northwestern students go on to practice in rural settings, but others go on to larger facilities.

There's a common thread in the employer feedback Collins receives.

"They speak on how well-prepared our graduates are," Collins said. "Also, they speak about how professional they are, how caring they are and how they work well with the teams. Not only are they a good nurse, prepared and ready for patient care but they're also good team members and ready to make a difference in the nursing world."

Collins said the university is looking at expanding its offering to help meet existing needs throughout

healthcare, in whatever setting that may be.

"I feel like we do a really good job of ensuring students put patients and their families first and we also include how to have self care as a nurse and how important that is," Collins said. "For so long, it's been all about the patient and the client and it should continue to be, but we also have to remember we have to care for ourselves as well."



For more information about Northwestern Oklahoma State University, visit <https://www.nwsu.edu/school-of-professional-studies/nursing>.



# Northwestern<sup>TM</sup>

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Strengthen your skills, impact lives and take your nursing career to the next level at Wichita State University. Our accredited bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs prepare tomorrow's leaders for nursing practice in a variety of settings and help meet the demand for all levels of nursing services. We offer traditional and nontraditional programs, giving our students a variety of ways to earn a degree in nursing.

Our undergraduate programs prepare students for professional nursing positions in a variety of healthcare settings and provide a foundation for graduate study in nursing. We offer a bachelor's degree in nursing (BSN), including an accelerated 13-month program, fully online registered nurse (RN) to BSN program and the **Wichita State/Kansas State University Pathway to Nursing Program**, a unique dual degree program that gives students the opportunity to earn both a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree from K-State, and a BSN from Wichita State. We also offer a guaranteed placement program

for high school students that provides an opportunity to be guaranteed entry into our competitive traditional undergraduate nursing program.

Our graduate programs develop nurse leaders for roles in advanced practice careers. Our full or part-time master of science in nursing (MSN) program offers two concentrations: Nursing Education (**fully online**) or Nursing Leadership and Administration. We also offer a **doctor of nursing practice degree (DNP)** with two program entry points; post-baccalaureate or post-master. The post-baccalaureate program has Nurse Practitioner specializations in the areas of Family Nurse Practitioner, Adult Gerontology Acute Care (the only program of its kind in Kansas), Psychiatric/Mental Health, as well as the DNP advanced curriculum. The online post-master program provides students already nationally certified in a specialization opportunities to advance their knowledge in multiple areas, including healthcare systems, policy/politics, and evidence-



based practice.

Our quality programs exceed national pass rates on the Registered Nurse national exam and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse professional certification exams.

Wichita State provides students with unparalleled access to applied learning experiences. Our location in Kansas' largest city means students benefit from opportunities to make connections and work beside some of the best professionals in their fields through clinical rotations and community outreach. Our state-of-the-art applied learning labs have simulation manikins that can realistically simulate a variety of symptoms and scenarios, including childbirth, seizures,

blood pressure problems and bleeding. The lifelike actions of the manikins give students a realistic learning experience in a safe environment.

Our programs offer individualized faculty advising, diverse applied learning opportunities in Kansas' health care hub, high post-graduation employment rates and exceptional success in advanced careers. A nursing degree from Wichita State will give you the knowledge and practical skills for high-paying, high-demand nursing careers in diverse health care settings such as hospitals, primary care clinics, nursing and residential care facilities, schools and government.

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- ➔ Exceptional success in advanced careers

The baccalaureate degree in nursing, master's degree in nursing and Doctor of Nursing Practice at WSU are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education ([www.ccnaccreditation.org](http://www.ccnaccreditation.org)).



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# NCLEX-RN Pass Rates Soar at WOSC

The last few years have been undeniably rough on the nursing profession.

The pandemic brought lasting change to the profession and forced nursing education to change.

But students and educators at Western Oklahoma State College of Nursing have thrived, showing significant improvements in NCLEX-RN first-time pass rates in all four programs.

In fact, the Altus campus and the online LPN-to-RN program had 100-percent first-time pass rates in 2023.

Diane Fairchild, MSN, RN is the Director of Nursing at WOSC.

She sees the superior pass rates as proof her college's programs are adapting and thriving.

She has a good idea why.

"The dedicated faculty focus on critical thinking and clinical judgment in both the classroom and the clinical area," Fairchild said. "(Nursing education) has changed dramatically because of Covid. Nurses think differently about going into the field. Covid has impacted nursing tremendously.

"I think we're seeing overall somewhat of a decline in those who are interested in entering the field. I think Covid has made us take a step back and some students are afraid."

The NCLEX-RN changed formats in April 2023 adapting to a more critical thinking format. The "next generation" testing focused on a clinical judgment model and evolving case studies.

Nationwide, the current first-time RN pass rate for U.S.-educated students sits at 88.56 percent. Oklahoma's pass rate is slightly lower.

Fairchild said the profession has seen an exodus of nurses leaving the bedside since Covid for a variety of reasons. That puts an even greater focus on training the next generation of nurses.



"It's also driven those who truly have the desire to care for patients, I think Covid has driven some people with the desire to care for others into nursing because they want to do what they can to take care of people in those moments. They want to make sure that patients are not alone when end-of-life is near."

Western Oklahoma State has one of the only ADN programs in southwest Oklahoma.

Established as Altus Junior College in 1926, it is the oldest original municipal two-year college still in existence in Oklahoma.

The Nursing Program at Western Oklahoma State College was established in 1981 and has been preparing qualified nurses for many years.

The WOSC nursing program is offered at three campus sites: Altus, Lawton, and Elk City. Western's ADN program has several program tracks.

Face-to-face classes for both general and advanced standing entry students are available as well as online classes with a face-to-face clinical component for advanced standing students. Students in the face-to-face track take daytime classes at all three campuses.

"One of our major goals is to meet the needs of southwest Oklahoma by having a high-quality nursing program and having nurses go into our communities to stay and meet the nursing needs of the people in that community," Fairchild said.

"We have to meet student needs. Students have different study habits from students many years ago. Our students need more active learning and education with emphasis on clinical judgment and soft skills," Fairchild said. "I see an increased need for communication with other healthcare providers and with patients. Patient teaching is vital in nursing. Nursing instructors and faculty need to meet those needs by encouraging better communication skills and critical thinking."

WOSC NCLEX-RN pass rates for the LPN-to-RN track had already met or exceeded the requirements of the Oklahoma Board of Nursing for the past several years.

She credits the faculty for adapting quickly to meet the students both during and after the pandemic.

"Many of the instructors spend more time with students, helping individually with tutoring. They have come up with more active lessons in the classroom so the students are more engaged. They go into clinicals and teach at the bedside, not just in the classroom. Overall, they just love their students and they express that to them.

"When students struggle, they build them up instead of tearing them down."

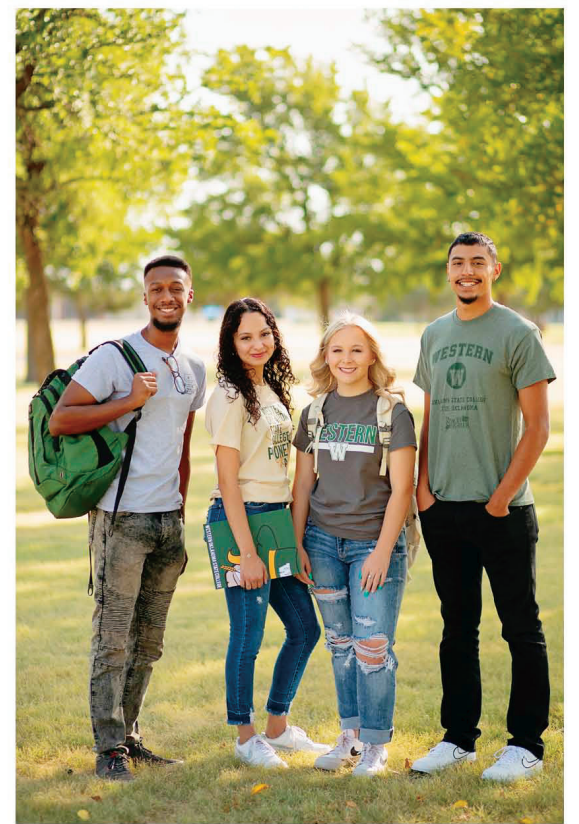
For more information about the Western Oklahoma State College of Nursing program visit <https://www.wosc.edu/nursing>.

An advertisement for the Oklahoma Nurses Association (ONA). It features a group of four diverse healthcare professionals in scrubs. The text includes the ONA logo, the slogan "We are stronger together" in a blue script font, and the American Nurses Association (ANA) logo. At the bottom, it says "ONLY \$15/PER MONTH" and "JOINANA.ORG".



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# Graceland University School of Nursing

Whether you are beginning a career in nursing or advancing your career, we are dedicated to preparing you as a professional nurse to meet the health care needs of your community.



Established in 1895, Graceland University has a long history of educating future leaders, healers and engaged global citizens. That mission continues within the Graceland School of Nursing. Our nursing program offers prospective students a variety of undergraduate and graduate level degrees offered face-to-face on our Independence, MO campus and online. The School of Nursing's outstanding faculty and staff are eager to assist you in reaching your educational goals.

Graceland University's history of educating nurses dates back more than 50 years. The Division of Nursing became the sixth academic area of Graceland in 1969 when administrators of the diploma nursing program at the Independence Sanitarium and Hospital in Independence, Missouri, collaborated with Graceland to move its educational base into the four-year collegiate setting.

## A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING DEGREE OFFERED IN THE WAY YOU WANT IT.

The School of Nursing offers an **accelerated 18-month face to face BSN-RN program** in a commuter campus setting and for the busy RN, we have online options to pursue your **RN-BSN degree**. You will complete your pre-nursing requirements at a community college, on the Graceland residential campus in Lamoni, IA, or at another accredited university or college of your choice prior to transferring to the School of Nursing in Independence, MO.

The Nursing curriculum is carefully designed to integrate professional education with liberal arts and sciences. The program accommodates students beginning their education in nursing as well as

students eligible for advanced placement. Our asynchronous online RN-BSN degree includes specific areas of study allowing registered nurses to earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) in approximately one year with an organized and supportive learning environment. Faculty and student support counselors at Graceland University in Independence, Missouri, are there to help you from application to completion of the online RN to BSN program. The result is a quality nursing degree that will put you in high demand, our students graduate with nearly 100% job placement.

## A MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING DEGREE FOR A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD.

The world of nursing is constantly changing, and Graceland's programs have evolved to keep up. Based on our decades-long experience in RN-BSN distance learning, our Master of Science in Nursing degree programs combine online directed asynchronous learning with a short on-campus focus session.

*All programs are fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)*

First introduced in 1994, Graceland offers **Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)** program. The FNP program track prepares the RN to care for individuals and families in a wide variety of health care settings, including clinics, community-based settings, long-term care facilities, and hospitals.

The **Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP)** program was developed to prepare today's RN to assess and manage acutely ill patients within the in-patient or hospital setting working across departments from hospital environments such as ER, ICU, acute care and many other specialties.

As Graceland's newest MSN offering, the **Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)** program will prepare you to work across the lifespan with pediatric to geriatric patients providing mental health care and substance abuse treatment in all types of healthcare settings in both rural and urban communities in a field that is not only growing, but extremely needed in today's world.

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In 2021, the U.S. News & World Report ranked Graceland University's Master's in Nursing online programs #1 in the nation. To learn more about the Graceland School of Nursing, visit our website at [www.graceland.edu/nursing](http://www.graceland.edu/nursing).



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# Post University Supports Nursing Careers

As a nurse, the one thing you don't do is stand still. You are always going, doing, helping, thinking, solving, and saving. Your nursing career shouldn't stand still either.

Post University could help you move forward from RN to BSN, from BSN to MSN, and even from MSN to DNP.

## Designed To Fit Your Busy Schedule

Your life as a nurse is busy. That is why the nursing programs at American Sentinel College of Nursing & Health Sciences at Post University are designed with your flexibility and convenience in mind. Classes are 100% online, have flexible log-in times, and most are available in either Term-based or SIMPath competency-based, which allows you to work at your own pace. You can even start when you are ready with monthly or bi-monthly start dates.

## Dreaming of Being a Nurse Practitioner?

Do you have a passion to become a nurse practitioner? Then consider Post University. Its Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program offers

three nurse practitioner specializations, including Family Nurse Practitioner, Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner, and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner.

The Post University MSN program with nurse practitioner specializations is programmatically accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and is for nurses seeking a practice-focused degree to expand their skills and potential opportunities.

Already have your MSN? MSN-prepared nurses interested in becoming nurse practitioners could earn a second MSN at Post University in the same amount of time as most certificate programs-- in as few as eight courses-- and prepare to sit for the nurse practitioner certification examination.

## A History of Excellence

Post University was founded in Connecticut in 1890. Over its many years it has expanded its academic programs to meet the growing needs of students in business, education, public service, arts, sciences, nursing, and more. The American Sentinel College of Nursing and Health Sciences at Post University provides post-licensure nurses the opportunity to seek advanced-level nursing degrees. The Master of Business Administration-Healthcare, Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, and Master of Science in Counseling and Human Services programs are designed to train students to meet additional needs of healthcare systems.

With flexible study, competitive tuition rates, and personal support, Post



University is committed to helping you achieve your nursing goals.

Take the first step towards an advanced degree today by contacting your Oklahoma-area Post University representative, Tiana Naretta, at [tnaretta@post.edu](mailto:tnaretta@post.edu).

For more information about Post University visit <https://post.edu>.

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As a nurse, you never stand still.  
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**MSN Nurse Practitioner specializations:**

- > Family Nurse Practitioner
- > Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
- > Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner



The DNP program is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). The baccalaureate degree program in nursing and the master's degree program in nursing at Post University are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).





Request more information today





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# Staff Make the Difference at The Uniform Shoppe

Jody Weise grew up in the back of a station wagon, traversing highways and byways as her parents built The Uniform Shoppe brand.

She remembered at the time the last thing she wanted to do was grow up selling scrubs and apparel.

But what she didn't know was all those trips and those relationships her parents forged would leave a lasting impression.

Sixty-two years later, Weise says her company's lasting success is the result of those relationships, in particular, the ones the family has with their employees.

"Our Customers like that we offer a wide variety of brand names, styles, prices and colors," Weise said of customers. "A lot of people also come because they like to shop with the people who work with them when they come in."

"They can get the uniforms anywhere. If they need navy blue they can go anywhere to get navy blue. We get a lot of comments and reviews about when walking in to The Uniform Shoppe our associates make it such an easy way of finding what they need. They don't have to do anything but walk in and they get personal attention to help find what they are looking for."

"Many of our customers come back because of our employees."

Large stores and large selection have always been the hallmark of The Uniform Shoppe as trends continue to evolve.

"But it's our employees that really keep them coming back," Weise said. "I think our most important product is our employees. It's been like that for a long time. I've been doing this for 44 years and it was happening before that."

Weise says it's her mom and dad that started that personal touch philosophy when they traveled to hospitals and clinics sizing employees and offering them an outstanding selection.

"My parents went out and made connections with people, established relationships with people. Long-time customers trust what we do. They have confidence in that we're not going to steer them in the wrong direction or take advantage of them in any way," Weise said.

Nowadays, there's not a lot of customer service out there. It's buyer beware.

"I have such a wonderful staff of dedicated employees," Weise continued. "There's so much devotion and loyalty our staff has for the company."

Since 1962, The Uniform Shoppe has been a family affair.

Albert and Elaine Weise opened The Uniform Shoppe in Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

They traversed the Oklahoma highways and backroads bringing comfortable, affordable quality to nurses at their facilities.

Riding in the back seat was Jody.

She learned the business from the best and now co-owns and manages the Company.

While the styles on the rack may change, little else has changed about this Oklahoma gem.

The Tulsa location moved around the corner to 6044 S. Sheridan Road a while back and the Oklahoma City store is still located at 10503 N. May Avenue.

The Uniform Shoppe has hands-down always had the largest stock of scrubs for nurses, health care workers, day care workers - every profession that requires durable yet professional attire while working with people.

Service has always been the focus.

"We work with many schools to get their students started on the right track - nursing, dental, cosmetology, culinary, veterinary, physician assistants, physical therapy, chemistry, health careers and information, paramedics, lab tech, nutrition, occupational therapy, pharmacy, radiography, respiratory and surgical," Weise said. "We've even had quite a few adolescent classes of 'future leaders' going into scrubs and lab coats".

And behind it all is the staff. All told, there is decades of experience at your service whenever you walk through the doors.



Lori, Traci, Chloe are among the folks in Oklahoma City and Tulsa ready to help with your needs.



Service and selection have made the difference at The Uniform Shoppe for more than 60 years. Photos provided.

Even growing up watching her mom and dad and her aunt and uncle, Weise never really believed she would go into the family business.

Every time the family took a trip there would have to be a stop at a uniform company or store. Working her way to the top of a big company in Houston, Weise always felt something was missing.

A fire at one of the Tulsa stores brought her back home.

"I've been here ever since and every day is a new day," Weise said. "Who knew we would be in business this long. Who knew a mom and pop like this would endure during the good and bad, the pandemic, the economy - who knew we would still be in the business with our same family."

The Uniform Shoppe is located in Tulsa at 6044 S Sheridan Road, and in Oklahoma City at 10503 N May Ave. or visit online at

<https://theuniformshoppe.com>.





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\*Length of time required to complete degree will vary depending upon student's transfer credits.

## CONTACT INFO

Dr. Amy Richards | arichards@rsu.edu | 918-343-7641

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# Mercy Health Love County Hospital Closed After Severe Damage from Weekend Storms

*Marietta hospital hit by tornado, ER destroyed*

Mercy Health Love County hospital in Marietta was hit by a tornado around 11:30 p.m. Saturday causing significant damage to the 25-bed critical access hospital. Mercy co-workers moved 10 patients to safety before the tornado hit and, thankfully, no one was injured.

After the storm, all patients were transferred safely to other area hospitals. Mercy Love County hospital and the clinic on campus are closed for the foreseeable future. The building is not safe for patient care.

"We are so grateful for our heroic co-workers who moved patients and visitors to safety before the storm hit," said Scott Callender, administrator of Mercy Health Love County. "We regularly train for severe weather, so our co-workers were ready and knew what to do."

Leaders from across Mercy visited impacted areas on Monday to ensure Mercy is doing everything possible for co-workers and the community.

Around 150 Mercy co-workers serve in Marietta. Mercy's human resources



and local operations teams are working together to support Mercy co-workers impacted by the storm across southern Oklahoma. Many also experienced personal damage to their homes and vehicles.

"Our focus is taking care of our

people because they are so crucial to our organization," said Catherine Codispoti, Mercy's chief people officer. "We want our co-workers to know their jobs are secure and we are working through plans to support and redeploy them while

we work through next steps in Marietta."

Mercy leaders are working on how to continue providing care to a community in need. More details will be shared as they develop.



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# U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT AWARDS "BEST OF" RATINGS FOR 24 LEGEND SENIOR LIVING RESIDENCES



U.S. News & World Report has named 24 residences of Legend Senior Living among its "Best of" for 2024 in their respective categories. Legend, a senior living provider based in Wichita (KS), regularly places among the nation's top companies in the annual U.S. News ratings. The family-owned company owns and operates 54 senior living residences in six states, offering independent living, assisted living (personal care), memory care, and rehabilitation.

"We're very proud of Legend's showing in the 2024 ratings, increasing by nine over last year," said Matt Buchanan, President of Legend Senior Living. "It's especially gratifying that these ratings are based directly on the surveys of the

residents of our communities and their families.

It's one important indicator that our compassionate Legend professionals are working hard to fulfill our mission to serve seniors. This places us at the top among the country's largest, most prestigious providers."

Best Senior Living ratings are based on U.S. News's in-depth analysis of consumer-satisfaction data derived from extensive resident and family surveys. U.S. News analyzed more than 200,000 resident and family surveys at nearly 4,000 senior living communities to produce their Best Senior Living ratings. U.S. News separately evaluated each location in independent living, assisted living, and memory care. Fewer than half of

the communities that participated in the evaluation process earned even a single award.

Legend's "Best Of" performance comes on the heels of a growth period for the company, which has added 13 residences under the Legend banner in the past three years. Legend residences have been certified as Great Places to Work® and are

also recognized among the Top 25 Senior Living residences by Fortune Magazine.

Oklahoma residences awarded are: Edmond's Legend at Jefferson's Garden, Arbor House of Mustang, Arbor House of Norman, Rivermont Independent Living of Norman, Acclaim Living in OKC and Green Tree in Sand Springs.

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