Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma Nurses Association Announce New Program for Nurse Leaders

In a unique partnership with the Oklahoma Nurses Association (ONA), Oklahoma State University will provide advanced education in business, management and leadership skills designed for emerging and experienced nurse leaders. Set to launch in Fall 2025, this visionary program leverages expertise from across the OSU system in a first-of-its-kind collaboration between academic and industry leaders from OSU Nursing, the Spears School of Business and the ONA.

The OSU Nursing Leadership Program offers two innovative learning opportunities to help nurses bridge the clinician-to-executive gap. Both are aligned with American Organization for Nursing LeadershipTM competencies and can be taken independently or in succession to build upon previous knowledge.

The first track, the Nurse Empowerment Series, is a micro-credential program to equip nurses with essential leadership skills, including administrative leadership, workforce and financial management, and innovation. Learners acquire leadership competencies in a time-efficient and cost-effective way, through both online and in-person experiential learning opportunities that foster networking with peers. The Nurse Empowerment Series is accessible to nurses with or without an undergraduate degree.

For a more in-depth experience, the Nursing Leadership Graduate Certificate provides advanced leadership training. This graduate certificate can serve as a springboard to a master's or doctorate, or as a valuable, standalone achievement that facilitates professional growth.

"ONA is excited to partner with OSU on two nurse leadership opportunities," Oklahoma Nurses Association Jane Nelson said. "We want to support nurses in developing their skills to become good leaders."

ONA and OSU earned two grant awards totaling $30,000 from Upskill Oklahoma to support the creation of the program. Upskill Oklahoma, a program of the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education, forges partnerships to tailor education to Oklahoma's market needs and aims to elevate the state's talent pipeline through targeted learning with micro credentials.

The team developing the program includes Jane Nelson, CEO of the Oklahoma Nurses Association; Diane Cannon, assistant professor, and Alana Cluck, director of OSU Nursing, from the OSU College of Education and Human Sciences; Bavette Miller, chair of the Healthcare Administration Department at the OSU Center of Health Sciences; Bryan Edwards, professor of management, and Marjorie Erdmann, director for the Center of Health Systems Innovation from the Spears Schools of Business.

"Because nurse leadership demands a diverse skill set - including managing personnel and finances, overseeing clinical care and compliance, and driving strategic improvements - nurses often seek training from multiple sources," Erdmann said. "Our approach brings together experts from ONA and across OSU to consolidate the best leadership practices into a single, streamlined micro-credential or graduate certificate."

In short, the goal of the OSU Nursing Leadership program is to equip nurses with practical, immediately applicable leadership skills through a high-impact program.

"The nursing profession is facing significant challenges both globally and within Oklahoma, characterized by critical shortages impacting healthcare delivery," Cannon said. "Leadership training plays a crucial role in addressing the nursing crisis by equipping nurses with the skills needed to improve healthcare systems, support their teams, lower costs, and improve patient outcomes."

The OSU Nurse Leadership Program builds on a Bachelor of Science in Nursing launched on the Stillwater campus in 2023 to help address a nursing shortage in Oklahoma and across the country. The first class of OSU Nurses will graduate in May 2025.

For more information about the OSU Nursing Leadership Program, contact Diane Cannon at Diane.Cannon@okstate.edu or visit nursing.okstate.edu. ∎