

DePaul University offers online RN-to-MSN program

By Sheryl DeVore
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William Cody, RN

Registered nurses with an associate's degree in nursing will have the opportunity to advance their careers by enrolling in a unique online degree program through DePaul University in Chicago.

The RN-to-MS in Nursing program offers a way for nurses to earn BSN and MSN degrees from the School of Nursing in DePaul's College of Science and Health, as well as a graduate certificate in health administration or health professions education from Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, North Chicago, Ill. Classes begin in January, and the program can be completed in two to three years.

"This accelerated, streamlined program responds to the need for nurses to continue their education to meet the challenges of ever-changing healthcare as well as to offer full-time working nurses the flexibility to pursue their education," said William Cody, PhD, RN, CNE, FAAN, director of the DePaul University School of Nursing. "The certificate from Rosalind

Franklin University of Medicine and Science is unique. It means that the graduate has gained, in approximately three years, a total of two degrees and a graduate certificate."

DePaul and Rosalind are responding to meet a national need for RNs to be educated at higher levels to provide care within hospitals, clinics, providers' offices and other venues. "Research strongly suggests that lives are saved by every additional nurse with a higher academic degree," Cody said.

DePaul and RFUMS worked collaboratively to create the program, which includes a stop-out option that enables students who need to leave before earning their master's degree and graduate certificate.

"But we want them to take the whole package because they already will have completed 38% of the work needed to get the master's," Cody said.

Students choosing the healthcare education path will be trained in clinical content, healthcare systems and innovative online and computer simulation modalities, in addition to traditional classroom teaching. Those choosing to go into healthcare management will be trained to become experts in evaluating evidence-based outcomes and translational research, and also will learn the effective use of technology and cross-cultural communication.

“We have found that online programs are very palatable to working nurses,” Cody said. “One of the main reasons given by associate degree nurses who don’t return to school is they don’t have the time to make it work.”

Online schooling gives nurses the flexibility to earn their advanced degrees, he said, but they also will have to complete practical in-the-field work as part of the program.

“DePaul’s RN-to-MS in Nursing program is an excellent example of how our two universities are bringing the power of collaboration to bear on the nation’s pressing healthcare challenges,” Jim Carlson, PhD, MS, PA-C, dean of the College of Health Professions at RFUMS, said in a news release.

Sheryl DeVore is a copy editor for Nurse.com.