

On the Cover

OC's RN-BSN program is opening doors to new beginnings for bachelor's degree nursing students

In 2007, Olympic College became the third community college in the nation, and the first in Washington state to create a Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program. A little over a decade later, the RN-BSN program has graduated 238 students. By completing their bachelor's degree, graduates gain knowledge needed to fill roles in leadership, evidence-based practice, and community health.

Many nurses first earn their associate degree, which prepares them to complete the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX) to become a licensed Registered Nurse (RN). More and more students are continuing their education and earning a BSN before entering the field. This makes sense given that the Institute of Medicine (2010) *The Future of Nursing* set a goal for 80% of nurses to have their BSN by 2020.

"RN-BSN education broadens a nurse's practice in community health, leadership, research and evidence based practice to name a few areas," Associate Dean of Nursing, Dr. Gerianne Babbo said. "An editorial in *Medical Care* (Aiken 2014) provided compelling evidence that employment of a largely BSN nurse workforce can return financial value to institutions and third party players, as well as better outcomes for patients."

A quick Google search reveals hundreds of BSN programs throughout the country, which is great news when considering that the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates a shortage of nearly 4.3 million nurses, physicians and other health human resources worldwide, which they attribute to "decades of underinvestment in health worker education, training, wages, working environment and management." Adding to the challenge is an aging Baby Boomer population, which could reach 61 million people ages 66 to 84 by 2030.

It is clear that nursing, and health care in general, are growing fields with good job prospects. However, many prospective RN-BSN students, particularly those who attend community college, are place bound due to work and family responsibilities and are not able to relocate to earn a BSN, which is just one of the many reasons why it is so important that community colleges like OC offer this curriculum. Among the many benefits of earning a

bachelor's degree locally is cost. In 2017, the College Board estimated yearly tuition and fees at public four-year college is \$9,410; and \$32,410 to attend private universities. Compare that to the average cost of tuition and fees at a community college like Olympic, which is \$3,440*. Add other

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RN-BSN Student Neslie Lebita

common fees such as room and board, books and supplies, personal expenses, and transportation, which can total more than \$10,000 annually and you see that learning locally at a community college such as OC offers a fantastic value proposition.

More important than cost is the quality of education you will receive. We know from talking to our students, that OC offers a first-class education experience, and the program has accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). RN-BSN students such as Neslie Lebita, featured on the cover of *The View*, appreciate the holistic approach to the curriculum, which aided her in developing well-rounded abilities.

"The RN-BSN program helped me improve not only my comprehension abilities, but it also helped me enhance my writing abilities," she said.

Many of our students come away from the program with a broadened worldview and a greater understating of the roles nurses can play in the community as well.

"The program motivated me to want to make considerable changes in our community and inspired me to open my heart to more knowledge and resources available to all the nurses worldwide," Neslie says. "Moreover, the RN-BSN program prepared me to become a better advocate, not only for our patients but also for the rest of the individuals in our community."

Students in OC's RN-BSN become part of a community that extends well beyond the boundaries of Kitsap County. In 2017, the OC nursing program was inducted

into Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) Honor Society of Nursing. The organization includes a distinguished group of colleges including University of Washington (Seattle, Bothell, & Tacoma), Seattle Pacific University, Pacific Lutheran University, and Northwest University, in addition to many others across the country.

The RN-BSN program's greatest asset is without a doubt the faculty. Recent graduate, Victor Sandoval, credits his professors for empowering him to reach new heights in his education.



Victor Sandoval recently completed the RN-BSN program at Olympic College.

* Average cost per credit full course load 12+ credits is \$98.53 for associate degree level courses. Average cost per credit full course load 12+ credits is \$176.43 bachelor degree level.

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"The nursing faculty are excellent. Being from another country and English being my second language, I was hesitant to start the RN-BSN program. But then, the nursing faculty helped me overcome my fears, and helped me embrace my profession on a whole new level," he said. "Now, I am competent and

motivated to continue my education in the nursing profession. OC's RN-BSN program opened the doors to a new beginning."

To find out more about OC's RN-BSN program, visit Olympic.edu/nursing, or contact program advisor, Sue Riddle, to schedule an appointment today.

RN-BSN Program Recruiter/Adviser

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Introducing OC's new *Welcome Center*, where prospective and new students get one-on-one help from the experts!

Applying for college can be a daunting experience. There are many considerations and processes that a new student must overcome before stepping foot in the classroom. Prospective students must complete the application, submit financial aid forms, and schedule orientation and advising appointments just to name a few. To help with this process, Olympic College recently launched a Welcome Center, which is part of the college's one-stop shop for student services – The Ranger Station.

Located in the Humanities and Student Services Building (Building 4), the Welcome Center offers personalized one-on-one assistance for completing all of the steps needed to enroll. Department Manager Casey Reed and Student Success Navigator Elsa Krier are admissions experts with years of experience at major colleges like Michigan State University and the University of Idaho. They are already helping new students and are looking forward to assisting you as well.

"The addition of the Welcome Center is a fantastic enhancement to the services we already provide at Olympic College," says Casey. "Having worked with a broad range of students from all backgrounds, I am excited to help OC students complete the admissions process so they can focus their energy on their programs of study."

Visit the Welcome Center webpage and contact us today to schedule an appointment.

Welcome Center

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Welcome Center staff Elsa Krier and Casey Reed (left to right) are helping new students navigate the college admissions process.