



CPE REPORT

Eastern Kentucky University News for the Council on Postsecondary Education



EKU STUDENT NURSES GIVING VACCINE SHOTS TO FIGHT COVID-19

Eastern Kentucky University's seventh-semester senior School of Nursing students are getting hands-on experience like no other students in the history of EKU's nursing program have gotten before. "This is an unprecedented time in the history of public health and the nursing profession. Not since the 1918 influenza pandemic have we experienced a global pandemic on such a scale," said Dr. Melanie Adams-Johnson, associate professor and clinical coordinator in the School of Nursing.

Forty-six senior bachelor of science nursing (BSN) students are administering COVID-19 vaccines across EKU's service region this semester. In addition to serving in Baptist Health's vaccination clinic inside EKU's Perkins Building, students are also working in mass vaccination clinics across Fayette and Powell counties. These experiences are all provided as part of their clinical rotations. These service-learning experiences include onsite support and collaboration among EKU faculty, public health departments and hospital partners. EKU students have been part of the national COVID-19 response since July 2020, but specifically began giving vaccinations "at the regional clinics shortly after the vaccines were made available to our communities in January," Adams-Johnson said.

The student experience is about more than just "giving a shot," though that is an important, impactful part of fighting COVID-19.

"Nurses (current and future) have a unique role. Nurses comprise the largest component of the healthcare workforce in the United States and across the world. The healthcare system cannot operate without competent, professional, healthy nurses who are ready and willing to deploy to care for populations—both inside and outside the walls of the hospital," Adams-Johnson said. "Nurses have always been on the front lines of developing, managing and delivering care to populations in often unconventional practice settings (such as community settings, churches, parking lots and sports arenas). During this past year, our students have had an opportunity to experience and observe the diversity of nursing roles in very tangible ways."

Adams-Johnson said students are studying the "determinants of health" in real time, and with recognizable outcomes. "They can see and experience social, political and environmental factors that influence why more cases of disease but fewer deaths occur in one area versus another. It's our responsibility as nurses—as patient advocates—to use data and clinical experience to reduce health disparities and vulnerabilities in our patient populations. For example, we are using data to make decisions about why the overall case numbers of minorities are lower yet the deaths are much higher," she said.

EKU ADDS INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN, GLOBAL HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM ONLINE DEGREES, NEW DATA SCIENCE CERTIFICATES

Students will have two exciting new opportunities to pursue as Eastern Kentucky University launches an online bachelor's degree in global hospitality and tourism, and an online master's degree in instructional design and learning technology in Fall 2021.

"Although they are in different disciplines, both of these degrees provide students with a wide range of skills to help them be nimble and adaptive in their respective fields," said Dr. Jerry Pogatshnik, executive vice president for academic affairs & provost. "The hospitality industry's rebound from the global pandemic will hinge on leaders with the adaptability and foresight needed to evolve the industry. Likewise, the current climate has highlighted like never before the need for high-quality digital learning opportunities driven by highly trained, knowledgeable experts in instructional design and learning technology."

Eastern Kentucky University is also offering a new certificate program in applied data science. Applied data science is an evolving and in-demand field. Glassdoor ranks it as the third highest in-demand profession in its 50 Best Jobs in America report for 2020.

The certificate requires 26-27 credits in statistics, mathematics, applied fields and computer science.

"The ability to manage and analyze large, complex data sets is a big asset for those entering today's workforce. The Department of Mathematics and Statistics worked with various departments from all across campus to produce a highly interdisciplinary certificate in applied data science. The certificate is designed to provide students with a strong foundation in data analysis while giving them options for their field of application," said Dr. Lisa Kay, professor of statistics.

EKU's applied data science certificate is an interdisciplinary initiative to produce data scientists at the undergraduate level in central Kentucky and enhance data science skills in general.



EKU NAMED TOP TEN SCHOOL BY MILITARYFRIENDLY.COM

Eastern Kentucky University has earned a Top Ten ranking, the highest possible, from Military Friendly® (militaryfriendly.com) in the Large Public category. EKU received a Gold ranking last February, but several veteran and military student-focused initiatives in the last two years moved EKU into the Top Ten. EKU is the only university in Kentucky to earn Top Ten distinction in this category for the 2021-22 rankings released recently by Military Friendly® (militaryfriendly.com/schools/).

"As an institution we are extremely proud to earn this achievement. We have always and continue to stand ready to serve our military veterans and their families. We are dedicated to their success in helping them achieve their goals and dreams," said EKU President Dr. David McFaddin. "We know our veterans are dedicated to their studies, their communities and their country, and that's what being a Colonel means at EKU."

Eligibility is based upon a core set of outcome data, namely degree transfer, advancement, graduation and/or job placement. Supplementing this data are responses from participating colleges Military Friendly® deem to be critical in helping veterans thrive on campus—and later in the workplace, with Top Ten rankings going only to the highest-performing institutions in these six categories: Academic Policies and Compliance, Admissions and Orientation, Culture and Commitment, Financial Aid and Assistance, Graduation and Career, and Military Student Support and Retention. Eastern was the only institution in its category to score a perfect 100 in the Culture and Commitment category.

