



Advancing as a Nurse and Leader through RN to BSN online

WRITTEN BY | Hope Aucoin



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Jaime Taylor

GRADUATION YEAR
2022

MAJOR
RN to BSN

HOMETOWN
New Orleans

Jaime Taylor is a natural leader.

As an ADN student, Taylor launched a mentorship program at Delgado Charity School of Nursing.

In her role as ICU operations coordinator at Ochsner Baptist, she's served on the hospital's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion council, advocated for practices to prevent eclampsia in black women, and led ABLE — African Americans Building & Leading Equality.

Taylor wanted credentials that aligned with her drive to lead. Her first step was earning her **B.S. in Nursing degree online** from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Now, she's pursuing her MSN through the University's online degree program, as well.

"I started out as ADN, and I can see the need for advanced learning in the nursing profession to elevate the profession as a whole," she says. "I think that once I finish my master's, I'll probably go back and get my doctorate. I just think that nurses are super special. And for us to advance the practice and to advance nursing, in general, education is important."

Choosing Patient Care

Taylor says she's always filled a caregiver role in her family, so nursing felt like a natural career choice that would also support her community at large.

"I felt there was a need in the community for more African American Nurses and just to get that representation at the bedside," she says.

While earning her ADN through Delgado, Taylor began working as a nurse technician in the Ochsner Baptist ICU, and she's been there ever since.

"It's a privilege to be at the bedside when someone is at their sickest, so that I could be there for the family or to hold their hand when they're going through medical procedures," she says.

That includes creating a safe and open environment for patients and their families to ask questions to better understand their conditions and care.

"New Orleans has a very high percentage of African Americans. Unfortunately, that's not always represented in healthcare, especially specialized units like the ICU," says Taylor. "I think I have been very successful in showing my patients that we can speak freely here. They're able to see themselves and be understood."

Taylor has also mentored other young nurses to pursue roles on specialty floors.

"I know so many young nurses who have gone into ICU straight out of school or aspire to go into ICU after being on medical-surgical nursing, or just because they see me and see that I can do it," she says.

Leading as an RN

As Taylor began to take on more responsibilities in the ICU, she wanted to strengthen her foundation and practice. A BSN was the first step toward that goal, and Taylor needed a program that she could complete while remaining present for her three kids.

"UL Lafayette offered the most flexible program," she says. "When I started my BSN, it was at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was no way I could have gone into someone's classroom to take a course, but I was able to get my BSN. It wasn't less challenging. It was still hard work. But I was able to do that because of the program and how it was set up. I value that so much because I don't know that I could have done it anywhere else."

With courses in nursing management and evidence-based practice, the LHC Group • Myers School of Nursing RN to BSN degree program prepares nurses for leadership roles and to better understand the "why" behind patient care.

“I am able to see patient care from a manager’s perspective,” says Taylor. “I learned a lot more about behind the scenes, statistics, why we do the things that we do, why decisions are made the way that they’re made. There’s a stronger emphasis on evidence-based practice and using peer-reviewed journals, and studies to bring different practices to the bedside.”

Setting an Example

Earning her BSN online meant Taylor could complete her coursework, maintain a full-time job and still be the one to pick her kids up from school, which is exactly what she wanted.

While she used her days off while her kids were in school to tackle the bulk of her coursework, her efforts were still very visible to her children.

“They were super invested,” she says. “They’re used to seeing me with flash cards around the house. If I had a test coming up, I’d say, ‘Alright, y’all, test up on Monday,’ and they’d know that in addition to like this picnic we were going on, they were going to be playing; mommy was going to be sitting on the blanket with her flashcards.”

By showing her family the work and sacrifice required to earn her degree, Taylor hopes she’s giving her kids goals to reach for — and exceed.

“A lot of the reason why I want to go the extra mile with education is so that they will look at me as an example of how no matter the circumstances, you can absolutely accomplish anything that you’re serious about, whether that’s education or not,” she says. “I think that they see me, and they realize, ‘if she can do it with all these extra circumstances — she’s working, and she has us — then of course we can do it.’ And that’s the goal.”

Taylor was even able to incorporate her family into her coursework. As part of NURS 408 – Trends in Genetics and Genomics, Taylor’s daughter served as the basis for her final project.

“My oldest daughter was born with Beckwith-Wiedemann syndrome. It’s a very rare genetic disorder. And so, in that class, I got the opportunity to present her as my project and how far she’s come,” says Taylor. “That was my highlight of the program.”

Earning the Reward

As involved as her children were in seeing her put in the work for her degree, Taylor made it a priority for them to see the reward, as well.

All RN to BSN graduates are invited to participate in commencement exercises at the Cajundome, as well as a pinning ceremony on the University’s campus.

“We made a whole trip out of it,” says Taylor. “I felt so good — and so proud — as a mom to share that moment with my kids.”

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