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Western Governors University offers online degrees in nursing

[Jamie Lampros \(/authors/jamie-lampros\)](/authors/jamie-lampros)

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LAYTON -- Taking care of patients at a long-term care facility 13 years ago sparked a desire in Jamie Pectol to become a nurse, but when she looked into nursing schools, she found a long waiting list.

"I'm married to an active-duty military member," she said. "I didn't know how much time we would have here for me to be on a waiting list, but then I found out about Western Governors and decided to apply. There was no wait to get in."

Pectol enrolled in 2008 and graduated as a registered nurse in 2011. She currently works at Rocky Mountain Allergy, Asthma and Immunology in Layton, where she works with patients who have allergies and asthma, as well as those who have a rare disease called hereditary angioedema.

"It's severe swelling of the extremities, face, throat and abdomen," she said. "When I am able to help people get back to their daily activities, it's so rewarding. I had one patient who had swelling in her hands, and she was a pianist. She's back to playing and writing music now."

Western Governors University recently helped celebrate National Nurses Week.

In the five years since the online, nonprofit university launched its first nursing program, enrollment has grown to more than 6,600 nurses, and more than 4,000 have graduated, according to a news release issued by the university.

The university's nursing programs are part of its newest college, the College of Health Professions, which also includes degrees in health informatics, which is a discipline that deals with health information systems, and healthcare management.

"WGU offers a high-quality, contemporary option for working nurses, many of whom have been waiting for an affordable accredited nursing education program that helps them progress academically," said Jan Jones-Schenk, chief nursing officer at WGU. "Our graduates are at the forefront of innovation and quality, and epitomize those attributes we are celebrating about nurses this week."

The online degree program uses a competency-based learning model, allowing students to work through materials on their own schedule. Tuition for the nursing program is charged at a flat rate of \$3,250 per six-month term, and terms can begin on the first day of any month.

"The university is great, and you are allowed to do the program in your own time," Pectol said. "There are also a lot of mentors and great support through online communities."

Pectol said she would advise anyone thinking about a career in nursing to go for it.

"You'll never regret it," she said. "it's hard and a lot of work, but it's so worth it. There are so many options available for nurses once you get through the program."

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