

Tulane partners with Ochsner Health System on leadership certificate programs

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Tulane Provost Robin Forman, Ochsner Health System Executive Vice President Robert Hart, and Ochsner Health System President and Chief Executive Officer Warner Thomas participated in the launch of the Physician Leadership Program, a new certificate program from Tulane's Department of Health Policy and Management.

The changing healthcare market challenges physicians, nurses, and administrators to stay on top of best-practices. The Department of Health Policy and Management is helping health system leaders meet the challenge with new graduate certificate programs in leadership.

Seventy-three physician and administrative leaders from Ochsner Health System are forming the first cohort for the hybrid online and in-person training. Participants attend in-class one Friday each month, with online support and interaction in between those meetings. By the time they complete their coursework in Spring 2020, they will have attended courses in five thematic areas: Leadership and Innovation; Business Trends, Models, and Payment Systems; Relational Communication and Professionalism; Accounting and Financial Management; and Performance Improvement and Organizational Learning. Each course runs for four months.

“We have a long history in executive education,” says Mollye M. Demosthenidy. “I think there’s a real need as the healthcare market changes to think about ways to equip leaders who are already in practice

to lead their organizations into the future. That will look different as the market changes.”

Mollye M. Demosthenidy, clinical associate professor of health policy and management

Mollye Demosthenidy, clinical associate professor of health policy, and colleagues developed the concept for the program, and then connected with the Ochsner Foundation about implementing it. Even though she knew the content the team developed was forward thinking and applicable to the ever-changing healthcare market, Demosthenidy says she was pleasantly surprised by the level of interest Ochsner employees showed in the training opportunity.

“The response shows there is a real demand for this. It’s indicative of what is happening in the market. These physician and administrative leaders today need a business acumen and relational skillset that they didn’t necessarily get in their professional training,” she explains, offering the example of a nurse who is promoted to lead the NICU – and who now needs to understand management, payment models, and other aspects of organizational operations that she may not have been taught in school or continuing education.

The New Orleans-based Ochsner Health System, the largest not-for-profit health system in Louisiana, elected to institute a physician leaders cohort of 33 to be trained separately from the 40-person administrative leadership cohort. The physicians will receive the Graduate Certificate in Physician Leadership while the administrative leaders will receive a Graduate Certificate in Administrative Leadership.

Ochsner Health System employees make up the first group to receive the training, and the long-term plan is to scale up and offer the training on a larger scale to a wide range of organizations and individuals, says Demosthenidy.