Kent State ASHTABULA’S CLOSE PARTNERSHIP WITH CLEVELAND CLINIC

Kent State University at Ashtabula offers a degree program in nursing, respiratory therapy and a variety of other medical fields that provide a constant supply of well-trained employees for one of its closest neighbors: Cleveland Clinic’s Ashtabula County Medical Center (ACMC), which is two miles from campus. “That close proximity is a significant benefit to us,” says Leonad Stepp Jr., ACMC Healthcare system president and CEO. “The students who complete their clinical rotations here are well-educated and well-trained. Many of them join our team of caregivers after graduation. The nurses, occupational/physical therapy assistants, radiology technicians, respiratory therapists and medical assistants who graduate from Kent State Ashtabula and choose to work at ACMC are integral to our ability to provide high-quality care to our patients and our community.”

MEETING THE DEMAND FOR RESPIRATORY CARE

The two institutions are always looking for ways to collaborate. A collaboration announced in 2022 allows Kent State Ashtabula to offer an associate degree program in respiratory therapy at the clinic’s main campus in Cleveland. Participants train for the in-demand profession of respiratory care. The program also supports career growth for graduates and practicing respiratory therapists by providing a path to admission for the online Bachelor of Science degree in respiratory care Kent State Ashtabula offers.

“We are excited for this opportunity to partner with Cleveland Clinic to offer our program on its main campus,” says Yvonne George, RRT, MEd, academic program director for respiratory therapy at Kent State Ashtabula. “The pandemic emphasized the already existing need for more respiratory therapists—the ‘ventilator experts.’ We hope this partnership will provide easier access to education for individuals looking to start their professional life or who have decided to make a career change.”

Courses in the respiratory therapy program are delivered live and remotely through online instruction by Kent State Ashtabula faculty. Laboratory instruction and clinical rotations are completed at Cleveland Clinic, where students learn alongside experienced respiratory therapists. Prerequisite coursework can be completed through a combination of online and in-person classes through the Kent State system or credits can be transferred from another institution.

“We are pleased to collaborate with Kent State University at Ashtabula to offer a respiratory therapy training program at our Cleveland Clinic main campus location,” says Umur Hatipoğlu, MD, MBA, enterprise director of Respiratory Therapy at Cleveland Clinic. “This program will contribute to our mission of educating those who serve by providing our local community with an opportunity to enter a high-demand licensed healthcare profession after completing two years of training.”

—Lisa Abraham and Jason Tirotta

Learn more about the respiratory therapy program at www.kent.edu/ashtabula/rt

Kent State Works at Progressive Insurance

After several years at a large design firm in Cleveland, Shawn Beatty, BS ’05, MA ’05, from Chagrin Falls, Ohio, had the opportunity to work with the firm’s biggest client: Progressive Insurance based in Mayfield, Ohio. For 10 years Beatty, whose degrees are in visual communication design, helped design a digital version of Progressive’s annual report, featuring The Progressive Art Collection as part of the story.

Each year the company acquires approximately 200 artworks from diverse artists that provoke dialogue and debate. Over the decades, the world-class art collection has grown to encompass more than 10,000 contemporary artworks—including sculptures, paintings, photography and new media—that are installed in Progressive’s offices throughout the country.

Designing the company’s annual report was his favorite project, Beatty says. “I fell in love with Progressive as a company back then.” So a few years later, after working for another firm, when a position became available at Progressive, he jumped at the chance to join the company.

“And it is just as great from the inside as it is from the outside,” says Beatty, who is happy in his current role as associate manager, digital front-end development.

FLASHES TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS

Beatty’s tenure at Progressive Insurance makes him one of more than 700 Kent State graduates who now work at the company. Their roles include computer systems engineers, accountants, media buyers, senior recruiters and user research analysts. Progressive, No. 99 on the Fortune 500, employs nearly 42,000 people worldwide.

Gabe De León, recruiting manager at Progressive, says the company values its Kent State hires. “With help from the university’s career services, faculty and staff, we’ve had tremendous success bringing in students within our IT (Information Technology), analyst and accounting groups for both internships and entry-level roles,” De León says. “Kent State alumni are typically well-prepared and can come in and immediately contribute to Progressive’s goals.”

PROGRESSIVE RECRUITS AT KENT STATE

Progressive Insurance has consistently recruited at Kent State, visiting the Kent Campus for several career fair events each year since 2018, according to Kristin Williams, director of Career Services at the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship. The events have included campus-wide career fairs as well as industry-specific events such as the IS/IT Career Expo, the Management and Tech Fair, and Meet the Accountants Night.

“They have diverse hiring needs, and we have students with a broad range of skills and backgrounds for which there is a strong match,” Williams says. “Further, many of our students know Progressive, as they are a familiar brand in Northeast Ohio and beyond. And with so many alumni working there, this creates an affinity for hiring more Flashes.”

IT’S THE CULTURE AND THE PEOPLE

Sarah MacPherson, BA ’19, MS ’21, from Newbury, Ohio, did an internship at Progressive before beginning a full-time job there in 2022 as a usability analyst associate. She earned a bachelor’s degree in digital sciences in 2019 and a master’s degree in user experience design in 2021. Her job duties include a variety of research activities to gauge user experience and to improve Progressive’s user platform.

MacPherson applied for an internship at Progressive during the peak of the pandemic in summer 2020. Progressive was hiring when many other companies either weren’t hiring or were laying off employees.

“This showed me the security of the company and how much they care for their employees,” MacPherson says. “There is room to make mistakes and grow from them. Not every company can say the same. I’ve really enjoyed my time here.”

—April McClaren-Capeland

The first cohort of students enrolled in the Ashtabula Respiratory Therapy Associate Degree Program at Cleveland Clinic, which was first offered in spring 2023. Pictured (left to right): Victoria Smith (adjunct faculty), Joanne Ng, Jaclyn Burnside, Cassidy Pasciutti, Angela Mathwee, Diana Neiter, Umur Hatipoğlu, MD (program medical director and Enterprise Medical Director of Respiratory Therapy at Cleveland Clinic), Tammie Burgess, Crystal Lavalle, Aiko Cashwell and Karla Balasko (senior director for Enterprise Respiratory Therapy at Cleveland Clinic).

Progressive Insurance headquarters in Mayfield, Ohio.

“My favorite project at Progressive was designing the company’s annual report,” Beatty says. “I fell in love with Progressive as a company back then. And it is just as great from the inside as it is from the outside.”

—Shawn Beatty, BS ’05, MA ’05, associate manager, digital front-end development at Progressive