



## ▲ ▲ ▲ A WAY WITH WORDS ▲ ▲ ▲ ONCOLOGY NURSE PURSUES CAREER IN WRITING AND PUBLIC SPEAKING

Through much of her career working with cancer patients, Julie Leach has been fascinated by the profound power of language.

During her decades of experience, she found that words, when used properly — to educate and empower — can instill comfort and confidence in her patients and their families during the times when they need it most.

*“You watch a patient who comes in initially just frightened and maybe angry, maybe has family members who are frightened and angry as well,” she said, “and you watch them transform over the space of two or three visits into a patient who is strong and very knowledgeable.”*

Throughout a nursing career that spanned more than three decades, Julie learned to appreciate the power of education and speech, and she began to take on public speaking engagements to inform people about cancer prevention, treatment and effects.

But she found that her natural leadership skills and associate degree could only take her so far. While she had led a productive career, spending much of her time in leadership roles, she had reached a ceiling.

So when she thought through her goals and decided to pursue a career in oncological writing and public speaking, the University of Arizona online Master of Science in Nursing Clinical Systems Leadership program was a natural fit.

### Hitting the Digital Books

The program had practical benefits — for example, she could fit coursework around her busy schedule, and it was more affordable than other similar programs she considered. But she was equally compelled by its focus on leadership, which she believed would help her break into public speaking, writing and political advocacy.

And for someone as interested in leadership and information as Julie, one of the best benefits of the online MSN was that she had full access to the University of Arizona online library.

Although Julie had decades of experience, she felt holding just an associate degree held her back. The online RN to MSN provided a clear path to a master’s-level expertise without requiring her to earn a bachelor’s in between. It also illuminated new career options.

JULIE LEACH (MSN '14)  
MANAGER-HAWAII PACIFIC ONCOLOGY

*“The night that I logged on and was doing a literature search for a paper, my husband had to come in and turn the computer off because I kept going from one article to another to another and I just couldn’t stop,” she said. “It was amazing what was out there, what was available.”*

Given her long-term goal to write and speak on nursing, Julie found the online library to be an invaluable resource. In addition to helping her develop research and fact-finding skills, it gave her the chance to dive into a variety of nursing literature, which expanded her knowledge of and interest in the field.

*“I didn’t know what I didn’t know,” she said. “It wasn’t until I was in the thick of it that I realized how much more I wanted to know.”*

## A Seat at the Table

Now 56, Julie has earned her master’s degree, and she’s accomplished her goal of speaking professionally on oncology. Moreover, she feels like her master’s degree has helped her develop the right skill set to carry her forward in her nursing career.

*“It actually opened up my eyes to a lot of things, and I think gave me the confidence to do things that I thought I wanted to do and didn’t think I’d be respected enough to do,” she said. “It’s given me the wherewithal to ask the right questions, to look at the financials, to know the law and to know where to go if I need assistance.”*

For example, as her hospital makes the transition from public to private, Julie said she has the knowledge to ensure that she remains highly involved in the process.

Brimming with confidence and drawing from a deep well of literature and research, Julie feels like she is ready to become a leader in her organization as she prepares for the next step in her career.

*“We all felt to some extent — every one of us in that class — that we had been leaders in our positions,” Julie said. “But we were stifled just a little bit by only having our associate degrees. This program helped us make connections and gave us the ability to understand technology better and use those tools to have a seat at the table.”*

