

DBH Program Advice From a Former ASU Online Student

11 March 2015 by [Jenny Lane](#) in [Community](#) [Student Spotlight](#) [Success Strategies](#) - [No Comments](#)



Dr. Elizabeth West achieved her Doctor in Behavioral Health (DBH) from ASU Online and currently serves as a Faculty Associate at ASU. In addition to her work at ASU, she also serves as Chief Operations Officer for Health Partners of Western Ohio. To provide a bit of background on the DBH program, it prepares master's level clinician and healthcare managers for the quickly evolving medical care field to meet the growing demand for healthcare professionals with a behavioral health degree. The program provides students with a deep understanding of the primary care environment, healthcare policy and financing and business practices.

We recently had the chance to sit down with Elizabeth and learn more about her experience in the DBH program. Read on to see her advice to current and future DBH students!

Why did you choose the DBH program at ASU?

I chose ASU's DBH program because of its unique, applied nature. The combination of training in medical literacy, business and entrepreneurship and behavioral health strategies was important for me to gain comprehensive knowledge of the field, and the program requires clinic hours as part of the curriculum, which gave me real-world experience working with patients. Additionally, my professors treated me like a colleague from the beginning, and as all were practicing in their fields, the coursework was relevant and they were able to speak to current issues.

How has the degree you earned at ASU affected your personal and/or professional life?

Earning my degree has given me the expertise to implement many different models of integrated care, whether in a primary care or behavioral care setting. It has also allowed me to work with mental health agencies as I can apply my skills in a number of different settings. I always knew I wanted to work in the healthcare field and obtaining my Doctor in Behavioral Health opened many doors for me. In fact, I achieved a promotion a year or so after receiving my degree.

How did the practicum program, in particular, prepare you for job success?

My internship gave me an opportunity to apply what I learned in the classroom to a practical setting. This gave me valuable hands-on experience that helped prepare me for work after graduation and gave me a wealth of knowledge of patient care practices, as I was required to practice my skills before entering the job market.

How did completing your graduate degree help you move ahead in your current career or transition to a new one?

Completing my graduate degree made me more marketable in the health care field as I am able to speak both languages, the care side and the business side. The business skills I developed through the program have been immensely valuable to me, particularly as I recently opened a school-based health center and was able to demonstrate outcomes to the school board. Earning my Doctor in Behavior Health set me apart from many of my former peers in the healthcare field and has allowed me to obtain my current role of COO.

What was the best piece of advice you received while completing your degree that influences you today?

Your learning is what you make it. You have to be motivated and get everything out of your coursework that you possibly can to make the most of your experience. Networking and utilizing resources are also important to success and can open many doors. Lastly, a support system is imperative to balancing it all. Having a supportive husband and an understanding employer helped me manage my coursework with work and family time.

If you are interested in the Doctor of Behavioral Health Program and want to learn more, check out <http://asuonline.asu.edu/dbh>.