

College of Health Solutions launches first-of-its-kind diagnostics industry partnership to train the workforce of tomorrow

By Eden Miller, ASU News
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From 2007 to 2022, cytotechnology certification examinees diminished from 246 to 109 per year. With only 19 programs in the United States, the cytology workforce that stands at the front line of cancer screenings and diagnostics is experiencing a profound shortage. In response, Arizona State University's [College of Health Solutions](#) has launched an innovative partnership with [Labcorp](#) and [InStride](#) that provides training to build the workforce of tomorrow.

"This collaboration exemplifies how universities can swiftly address industry workforce needs. In just six months, ASU partnered with Labcorp and InStride to launch an online clinical master's program, tackling critical cytology workforce shortages. We aim to replicate this success across industries," said ASU Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer [Chris Howard](#).

Both Arizona and the United States at large have seen an uptick in demand for cytology professionals. The online [Master of Science in cytology](#) aims to fill the gap in the workforce, positioning ASU as a leader in diagnostics.

"Cytology is a key discipline in the screening and diagnosis of cancer and other conditions. Given the rapid advancement in diagnostics testing, including in cytology, Labcorp's collaboration with ASU to create dynamic and innovative learning solutions in areas like cytology enables our employees to remain at the forefront of cutting-edge science," said [Jon Meltzer](#), senior vice president of esoteric business and diagnostics labs at Labcorp.

"The idea for this program originated during our annual IMPACT summit — InStride, Labcorp and ASU leaders in the same room, discussing a challenge we all cared about. But it was more than just a conversation, it was the beginning of great collaboration and problem-solving, including a visit and tour of Labcorp's North Carolina facility to understand their needs firsthand. That's how real workforce impact happens — aligning corporate needs with academic expertise to create programs that matter," said [Craig Maloney](#), InStride's chief executive officer.

The program is the first of its kind, paving the way for future partnerships and a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs, including categorical certificates in laboratory medicine and an online pathway completion for a BAS in [applied science \(medical laboratory science\)](#). As most cytology programs are concentrated in the Northeast and Midwest, this unique collaboration provides accessible opportunities for students in Arizona and nationwide to develop the skills to advance their careers in diagnostics.

"The unique value of this partnership is the virtual yet interactive learning approach embedded in the design of ASU's cytology program. Our employees benefit from integrating their existing lab experience with ASU's didactic instruction and hands-on clinical training in a live laboratory environment, facilitating real-time learning from educators and specialists, while continuing to work in their current laboratory at locations across the U.S.," Meltzer said.

The graduate program, whose first student cohort matriculated in January, is targeted to students who are already working in a clinical laboratory and features online coursework and supervised in-person training at the students' host laboratory.

"This innovative online graduate program allows students to gain hands-on clinical laboratory experience while completing coursework flexibly," said [Kristen Will](#), associate dean and clinical professor at the College of Health Solutions.

"ASU's expertise in rigorous online education, combined with Labcorp's leadership in diagnostics, sets a national example of academia and industry collaboration."

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Main image



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