The students in USL’s Quality Management in Healthcare course are learning about the benefits of total quality management first-hand this semester.

Dr. Lani Smith, with Our Lady of Lourdes Regional Medical Center, has been named Executive in Residence this spring for USL’s new Health Care Administration option in the Master of Business Administration program.

Smith is the director of information systems at Lourdes, and is responsible for hospital-wide computer and telecommunications services. She is also heavily involved in Lourdes’ quality improvement efforts, having been responsible for its initial roll-out and implementation.

As such, she is well qualified to speak about quality management in healthcare. “The students in this curriculum are aspiring to be healthcare managers,” explains Smith. “Because I’ve had experience implementing total quality improvement in hospital settings, I feel that I can share this in the classroom setting.”

Smith is excited about the educational aspect of TQM and TQI. She says that healthcare quality is probably the single most important issue in healthcare reform today. “We have to address the quality if we want to bring costs in line. The bottom line is to deliver better quality service at a better price to the general public.”

The Executive in Residence program was established in USL’s College of Business Administration to increase the interaction of faculty and students with business leaders. It brings a senior-level executive to campus each semester to lecture to students, and interact with them and faculty on research projects.

First-hand knowledge and real-world applications are considered integral parts of the MBA experience, according to Dr. James Lumpkin, associate dean and MBA director.

“It provides a wealth of practical application and insight to our students,”

Dr. James Lumpkin

University in Providence, R.I. Smith earned a second bachelor’s degree in nursing from Cornell University, a master’s degree in education from Columbia University, and a Ph.D. in physiology from LSU.

She has published extensively in her field, including articles in Nursing Research, American Journal of Physiology, and the Journal of Healthcare Education and Training. She is active professionally, and is a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve.

Smith was previously coordinator of quality management at Lourdes, and she has held a variety of staff, managerial and teaching faculty positions in acute care hospitals and universities.

She received her undergraduate education in biology at Brown University in Providence, R.I. Smith earned a second bachelor’s degree in nursing from Cornell University, a master’s degree in education from Columbia University, and a Ph.D. in physiology from LSU.