

Request for Authorization for a Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree Program at Appalachian State University

Appalachian State University requests authorization to establish a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program (CIP 51.1601).

Program Description

The Department of Nursing at Appalachian State University (ASU) is proposing a four-year pre-licensure baccalaureate degree program in nursing. This program will provide the necessary educational foundation to prepare nurses to practice professional nursing in a variety of settings including local, state, national, and global communities.

This pre-licensure program is very similar to other baccalaureate programs in North Carolina. It includes a liberal arts education in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, biological sciences, mathematics, and the arts. The curriculum is designed to meet the criteria of the North Carolina Board of Nursing and the Accreditation Standards of the Commission on Collegiate Education for Nurses (CCNE).

The projected student clientele for this program are graduating high school students, students currently enrolled at ASU who have expressed an interest in nursing, community college students, second degree students, as well as students from diverse cultural, ethnic, age, and socioeconomic strata. It is anticipated that the majority of students will be North Carolina residents reflective of ASU enrollment (11% of students are out-of-state) and that graduates of this program will be able to use their knowledge and skills in improving the health care of our state as well as of other regions in which they serve.

The total number of students being proposed for the pre-licensure nursing program at Appalachian State University is 80. This represents 40 students admitted to nursing during the summer between the sophomore and junior year and 40 students each summer thereafter for a maximum total enrollment of 80 students. All students accepted into the program will be full-time students

The proposed pre-licensure nursing program will be administered through the Department of Nursing, which is currently housed in the College of Fine and Applied Arts. The Department of Nursing will be moving to the new College of Health Sciences and Allied Professions on July 1, 2010, after an interim year in which administrative oversight will be shared between the Deans of the two colleges. Nursing classes will be taught in existing on-campus classrooms and laboratories until the new College of Health Sciences and Allied Professions building is completed.

UNC Tomorrow Relevance

The need for nurses is clearly documented in many studies. The economic downturn has temporally led to restrictions on the hiring practices of many health care facilities but the long-term need for nurses remains very high. The request for more health care workers was a recurring theme in all regions of the state.

Highlights from Data Template

The 2004 North Carolina Task Force on Nursing predicted large deficits in the number of nurses being produced in relation to the need, which could reach 18,000 by 2020, and the US Labor Department has indicated that this field will grow much faster than the average for all occupations.

UNC has eleven authorized nursing programs (FSU currently has suspended admission to its program) and in 2007-08 produced 1,121 pre-licensure graduates. The community colleges produced approximately 2,050 that year, and independents produced fewer than 200 graduates.

Outcome of Consultation with the Disciplinary Panel

The disciplinary panel was held on October 28, 2009 with participation from ASU, ECU, UNCCH, UNCG, and UNCP, and from Dr. Fred Whitt, currently at Georgia Southern University, but slated to become Dean of the College of Health Sciences and Allied Professions in January 2010. In addition, there were two prior reviews of the proposed program. Among the issues addressed by the reviews and the panel were clinical sites, skills laboratory, size of program (particularly at startup), curriculum, and the impact of the economic downturn.

ASU has an accredited RN-to-BSN program. Its coordinators made the point that they have been working closely with the hospitals and health care facilities in the region and they expect to have an adequate number of clinical sites. It was pointed out that the Board of Nursing has approved the program and agreed that provision for clinical sites was adequate. The program has a well-equipped skills lab and plans to use it extensively in its academic program. A number of curriculum issues were discussed and the program coordinators are reviewing all the suggestions to consider revision. The size of the program was considered from the point of view of the appropriate size for startup and the cost of the program. As indicated above, the goal is to eventually admit 40 students per class (at the junior level), with an annual enrollment of 80. The program coordinators are reviewing the program's size and exploring starting the program with a smaller class in its early years and gradually expanding to reach their eventual goal. This will have the added benefit of spreading out the cost of the program over a longer period in which we can expect some level of economic recovery in the state.

In the case of nursing we can address the issue of expanding other programs or starting a program. Since ASU has an RN-to-BSN program in place, there would appear to be little difference in cost to the state whether this expansion is through this new program or through spreading the students across existing programs. Given the expansion that has been going on in the system, some of the campuses are running up against limits to their further expansion, and ASU is a strong regional partner with a number of hospitals and health care facilities that would benefit from ASU's having a nursing program.

ASU has ranked the proposed nursing program as its highest priority for new degree programs.

Student Demand

While both teacher education and nursing are high-need areas, there is a major contrast between student demand for them. For teacher education we have elaborate recruitment plans while for nursing qualified students are waiting in line to be admitted at universities and community colleges. There is plenty of evidence that there is strong student demand from good students wanting to attend ASU.

Opportunities for Graduates of the Program

With such a demand for nurses, graduates have a lot of flexibility for a career in nursing in all kinds of settings. In addition to a shortage of nurses there is a shortage of nursing instructors, so going on to graduate school for a master's degree or doctorate is an excellent option. UNC now has three doctoral programs in order to attempt to address the nursing faculty shortage. While nursing is a very portable degree, the network ASU has with regional hospitals and health care facilities will provide a lot of regional opportunity for their graduates.

Resource Implications

Resource Needs: Nursing is one of our most expensive programs, classed in the highest cost category with engineering. A primary cost driver is an accreditation requirement that clinical work has to be closely supervised with small groups of students. In fact, the ratio is 1-10 but in most sites for safety and other reasons there are even more restrictive ratios. A skills lab with expensive equipment and a staff to assist students is required in addition to the usual instructional faculty. When the program is fully ramped up the estimate is that they will need four additional faculty and up to 12 clinical instructors; the existing faculty comprises four ranked faculty and two lecturers.

Funding for the Program: Since ASU is operating an RN-to-BSN program that provides the additional work for a bachelor's degree to students who have graduated from a community college program and passed the licensing test for the RN, it has a nursing faculty in place and an infrastructure for adding a pre-licensure program.

Estimated Cost to the State Based on the University Funding Formula: The current students in the RN-to-BSN program constitute the basis for current state funding according to the number of student credit hours generated. The level of funding generated by the program in the near term will depend on the size of the pre-licensure program. The pre-licensure program coordinators estimate that the program will generate \$1.3 million in new state funding. This is tricky to estimate since if a student were going to major in the sciences and switch to nursing the incremental cost of the program would be less.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve Appalachian State University's request for a Bachelor of Science degree program in nursing (CIP 51.1601), subject to the availability of funding.

General Information Template for Academic Program Review

Degree Area and Level:

B.S.N. (CIP 51.1601) at Appalachian State University

Addressing UNC Tomorrow:

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program directly applies to UNC Tomorrow Recommendation 4.5.2 that states, "UNC should educate more health professionals."

Role of Program in Relation to State and Regional Needs:

Based on the Brief produced by the Task Force on the North Carolina Nursing Workforce Report in May 2004, "The overall goals for nursing education are therefore: (1) producing the numbers of nurses needed to meet the state's needs; (2) creating opportunities for every practicing nurse to advance her/his education credentials; thereby (3) elevating the overall level of education of the entire North Carolina nursing workforce." Additionally, the Task Force concluded that, long-range forecasts of RN supply and demand in North Carolina predict a shortage of anywhere from 9,000 nurses in 2015 to almost 18,000 by 2020.

US Labor Department Analysis:

- *Summary* - Employment of registered nurses is expected to grow 23 percent from 2006 to 2016, much faster than the average for all occupations. Growth will be driven by technological advances in patient care, which permit a greater number of health problems to be treated, and by an increasing emphasis on preventive care. In addition, the number of older people, who are much more likely than younger people to need nursing care, is projected to grow rapidly.

http://www.occsupplydemand.org/OSD_UnitOfAnalysis.aspx?CLUSCODE=129A-08&ST=NC&PathNo=1

- *Summary Data* – Source: U.S. Department of Labor and America's Career InfoNet

Occupational Projections - North Carolina							
SOC code	Occupation	Employment			Average Annual Openings		
		Est 2006	Proj 2016	Change	Growth	Replace	Total
29-1111	Registered Nurses	79,327	104,428	31.6%	2,510	1,310	3,820

Wage Trends - North Carolina							
SOC Code	Occupation	Median Annual Wage					Change
		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
29-1111	Registered Nurses	\$46,710	\$48,270	\$50,200	\$51,860	\$54,120	15.9%

Availability of Program Statewide (Degrees Awarded in Last 3 Years):

Number of Degrees Awarded			Academic Year		
			2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
ECU	Nursing	BSN	187	203	217
FSU	Nursing	BSN	2	8	74
NCA&T	Nursing	BSN	46	59	56
NCCU	Nursing	BSN	42	41	42
UNC-C	Nursing	BSN	88	57	89
UNC-CH	Nursing	BSN	171	202	220

APPENDIX E

UNC-G	Nursing	BSN	101	87	110
UNC-P	Nursing	BSN	0	35	28
UNC-W	Nursing	BS	69	66	90
WCU	Nursing	BSN	54	54	48
WSSU	Nursing	BSN	148	292	147

Number of Degrees Awarded		Academic Year		
		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Barton College	BSN	26	35	27
Duke University	Accelerated BSN	51	56	52
Gardner-Webb University	BSN and RN to BSN	42	32	45
Lenoir-Rhyne University	BS Major in Nursing	35	33	39
Queens University of Charlotte	BSN and RN to BSN	31	43	33
Community College System	Associate Degrees	1,951	1,982	2,051

Available in Online or Distance Format from UNC institutions:

While RN to BSN programs at ECU, UNC-Chapel Hill, UNC Pembroke, WCU, and WSSU are available through distance education, no pre-licensure BSN program in NC is available online.

ASU Campus Degree Programs added in the past three years:

- *Bachelor*
 - BA Sustainable Development (06/13/2008)
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 - BS Environmental Science (06/13/2008)
 - BA Appalachian Studies (06/13/2008)
 - BA Womens Studies (06/13/2008)
 - BA Global Studies (06/13/2008)
 - BS Actuarial Sciences (01/11/2007)
 - BA Dance Studies (11/10/2006)
- *Master*
 - N/A
- *Doctoral*
 - N/A

ASU Degree Programs discontinued in past three years:

- *Bachelor*
 - BS Social Science Education (03/20/2009)
 - BS Clinical Laboratory Science (03/20/2009)
- *Master*
 - MA Social Science Education (06/13/2008)
- *Doctoral*
 - N/A