

**Request for Authorization to Establish a
Master of Science in Nursing at University of North Carolina at Pembroke**

University of North Carolina at Pembroke requests authorization to establish a Master of Science in Nursing degree program (CIP 51.3801).

Program Description

University of North Carolina at Pembroke's Master of Science in Nursing program is designed to prepare nursing professionals in one of three specialty concentrations: nurse educator, clinical nurse leader, or rural case manager. Students will build expertise in a specialized area of nursing practice while enhancing their skills in theory and research for use in professional practice. Graduates of the program will be able to synthesize and apply evidence based knowledge, integrate information technology in decision-making to improve health outcomes, assume leadership roles in coordinating and improving health services for culturally diverse populations, and adhere to ethical, legal and other professional standards for nursing practice.

Students can enter the program through one of two pathways. The first pathway is for individuals with a BSN. They will be required to complete 39 hours (15 hours of core courses, 24 hours in specialization area). Core courses include advanced nursing concepts, research methods for evidence-based practice, advanced pathophysiology, advanced health assessment and clinical decision-making, and advanced concepts in pharmacology. All concentration areas require a practicum course and a research or action project. The second pathway is an RN-MSN pathway that requires 157 hours for completion. Students must meet undergraduate prerequisite requirements, complete the BSN core courses, and then move into graduate level coursework. Participants will earn the BSN along the way. The program will be delivered via blended face-to-face and online instruction.

Mission Relevance

The Master of Science in Nursing program aligns with University of North Carolina at Pembroke's mission and core values to prepare graduate students for success in an increasingly technological global society and for service to the local region. The program also aligns with the Strategic Plan (November 2012), specifically creation of new degree programs to meet regional needs (Goal 1.3).

Student Demand

University of North Carolina at Pembroke used information from several survey efforts to assess student demand. The 2010 Southern Regional Area Health Education Center survey of 100 area nurses found 88% of respondents were interested in attaining a master's degree in nursing; clinical nurse leader was one of the concentrations with highest interest. To determine interest in the RN-MSN pathway, nurses at two large regional hospitals were surveyed regarding interest in continuing their education. Of the 245 respondents without baccalaureate-level training, 89% expressed interest in returning to school for the BSN. A NC Board of Nursing database was used to locate nurses from surrounding counties and assess interest in returning to school and in particular specializations. Of the 283 respondents with less than baccalaureate degree preparation, 65% were interested in continuing their education. Of the 244 respondents with baccalaureate preparation, 58% were interested in continuing their education. The nurse educator specialization was of highest interest among both responding groups.

Societal Demand and Opportunities for Program Graduates

While current and projected nursing shortages are documented in many reports, the University of North Carolina at Pembroke program fills a specific regional need. A 2007 report of the American Association

of Colleges of Nursing reports that master's level graduates comprise 75% of the full time faculty in baccalaureate level nursing programs and 83% of the faculty in associate level nursing programs. The University of North Carolina at Pembroke service region is home to six associate degree nursing programs but only one is accredited in part due to a shortage of master's level prepared faculty. University of North Carolina at Pembroke can also help address the need for a more diverse nursing workforce that more closely matches population demographics.

Resource Implications

University of North Carolina at Pembroke estimates five additional faculty will be needed over the next four years to deliver the program. Two faculty will be added in the first year, with one of those individuals serving as the full-time director of graduate programs. A full-time administrative assistant is also needed by the fourth year. Some funding is available through the Anne Reynolds Belk Endowed Nursing Professorship and the Brenda A. Brooke Endowed Distinguished Professorship to support needed positions. In the event that enrollment increase funding is not available, the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs has committed to locate resources to support the program needs. Tuition revenues, external funding sources, and private contributions may also be sought and used in combination with institutional sources.

Internal reallocation of resources will meet needs for library resources and supplies. The nursing program moved into the new Health Science Building in 2012, which is projected to meet the needs of the growing nursing program through 2020.

Collaborative Opportunities

University of North Carolina at Pembroke and East Carolina University are both located in areas of eastern North Carolina with high health disparities and an urgent need for highly skilled nursing professionals. Leaders from the two nursing programs have agreed to share faculty resources, design and implement a plan to educate nurses to become faculty, and initiate faculty development activities to enhance the pool of highly qualified nursing professionals who teach and practice in the region. The collaborative partnership also provides a seamless way for University of North Carolina at Pembroke graduates to further their education and earn a doctoral degree through East Carolina University. Initial discussions have focused on facilitated admission of University of North Carolina at Pembroke graduates from the existing BSN program and proposed Master of Science in Nursing program into the Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.) program at East Carolina University, upon approval. Other discussions are underway regarding the sharing of clinical faculty and course offerings.

Outcome of Consultation with Disciplinary Experts

The proposal was reviewed by more than twenty-two faculty and graduate program administrators from ten UNC campuses. Reviewers noted strong alignment with institutional mission. Reviews acknowledged the distinctiveness of the proposed Rural Case Manager concentration but noted demand for the concentration may not be as high as for others proposed. University of North Carolina at Pembroke provided support letters from area hospitals, public schools, health departments, and the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina for all proposed concentrations, including the Rural Case Manager. The Rural Case Manager concentration is anticipated to fill a local need, as more than 81% of University of North Carolina at Pembroke's BSN graduates in the last six years remained and are practicing in the largely rural southeastern region. University of North Carolina at Pembroke also noted alignment with the Center for Rural Health Innovation proposed by AHEC in the ongoing Strategic Directions process.

APPENDIX N

Reviewers also asked questions to gain a better understanding of the sufficiency of existing faculty to instruct and advise research projects in each of the three proposed concentrations. The Department of Nursing includes several tenured faculty with or currently completing terminal degrees in nursing and education who are actively engaged in research and publication and able to lead the nursing education concentration. The Department of Nursing acknowledges that additional expertise for the Clinical Nurse Leader and Rural Case Manager concentrations must be added through the projected faculty hires.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve University of North Carolina at Pembroke's request to establish a Master of Science in Nursing degree program (CIP 51.3801).