



**TO:** The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

**FROM:** Douglas E. Lentivech

**SUBJECT:** Master Plan Amendment: Siena College, upper level  
Bachelor of Science in Nursing

**DATE:** March 14, 2016

**AUTHORIZATION(S):**

### **SUMMARY**

#### **Issue for Consent Agenda**

Should the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment to authorize Siena College to offer its first baccalaureate-level program in the Health Professions, an upper level BS Nursing program?

#### **Reason(s) for Consideration**

Required by State Regulation.

#### **Proposed Handling**

The question will come before the full Board at its March 2016 meeting where it will be voted on and action taken.

#### **Procedural History**

A Master Plan Amendment is necessary as this is the institution's first program at the baccalaureate level in the health professions discipline.

#### **Background Information**

Siena College is seeking approval of an amendment to its master plan to offer an upper-division nursing program leading to a Bachelor of Science degree. This program is designed to deliver baccalaureate nursing and liberal arts education to nurses who have earned their associate degree in nursing and who have successfully passed the licensing exam (NCLEX-RN). Using a caring science curriculum, this program focuses on educating nurses to work with individuals, families, groups or communities from a health promotion perspective and an ethic of caring. The program supports lifelong

learning to promote excellence in academic and professional practice for both students and faculty. The addition of a nursing program at the College is aligned with the mission and vision of the Franciscan and Catholic institution.

The proposed program would require the completion of 61 upper level credits including 28 credits in the nursing discipline, 27 credits in liberal arts/core courses and 6 credits of electives. The 28 credits of upper-division nursing curriculum are aligned with the AACN (American Association of Critical-Care Nurses) Essentials of Baccalaureate Education, IOM (Institute of Medicine) and QSEN (Quality and Safety Education for Nurses) competencies for nursing. There are two precepted clinical courses in the curriculum with a total of 135 clinical hours. Utilizing a creative schedule and a hybrid classroom experience, students will be able to complete their bachelors (2 years full-time, 3-4 years part-time) while working.

Siena College will admit registered nurses who graduated from an Associate Degree nursing program. The RN student must meet all the general Siena College Transfer Admission requirements for admittance into the Nursing Program. The requirements for admission of a transfer-nursing student also include a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher and a minimum of a C in all courses. Official transcripts, letters of recommendation and current registration of the professional nursing license are necessary in order for their application to be considered complete. The registration and license must be maintained throughout the program. The nursing program will admit students in both the fall and spring terms. The College anticipates the enrollment during the first year of operation to be approximately 20 FTE students and during the fifth year of operation to be approximately 60 FTE students.

Siena College has the necessary classroom space, conference space, multimedia/computer rooms, online resources, and library facilities for the program. At Siena College, all classrooms are equipped with teaching technologies, and this program will also be utilizing the online learning platforms at Siena College (Blackboard Learn, Learn Smart and Digication ePortfolio). The new state of the art, fully equipped Health Assessment Lab will be used for students in the Health Assessment and Promotion course to practice and perform advanced physical assessments. The College is committed to providing an excellent learning experience for the nursing students.

The Director of the Baldwin Nursing Program will have oversight of the development and implementation of this program and will be teaching two courses per academic year. In addition to the existing full-time faculty teaching the Liberal Arts and Science courses, one full-time doctorally prepared nursing faculty and one part-time adjunct faculty member will be hired during the first year of the program to teach the junior level nursing courses. During the second year, two full-time doctorally prepared nursing faculty and one part-time adjunct faculty member will be hired to teach the junior and senior level nursing courses.

A canvass of the institutions of the Capital region was conducted to determine potential impact on current programs and resources. Responses from five institutions were received. Letters of support have been received from three institutions, including two local associate degree programs that wish to provide their students a seamless progression to baccalaureate education. Two responses indicated concerns related to

the need of the proposed program, and the ability to hire qualified faculty, and lack of clinical sites, including community-based sites.

The lack of qualified faculty is a national problem and not specific to the capital district. The response from Siena College described a practice of attracting faculty from a national pool. Regarding the need of the proposed program, *the Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health (Institute of Medicine, 2010)* established national goals to have 80% of nurses prepared at the baccalaureate level by 2020. In order to meet this goal, associate degree prepared nurses will need access to upper-division programs leading to the Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing at sufficient levels. Siena College will fill a need in the Capital Region to prepare more nurses at the bachelor's level through this proposed program. In terms of clinical sites, the College responded that the clinical component will not be using the much sought-after hospital clinical units. Several clinical sites within and surrounding the Capital district (Ellis Medicine/Hospital, St. Peter's Health Partners, Saratoga Hospital, Albany Medical Center and Visiting Nurse Service) have written memorandums of understanding showing both support for the program and agreement to create affiliation agreements for the student's clinical experience. In addition, the College indicates a plan to create opportunities for students to have clinical placements in community-based clinical sites.

### **Recommendation**

VOTED, that the Board of Regents approve an amendment to the master plan of Siena College to authorize the College to offer baccalaureate level programs in the health professions, including an upper level Nursing program leading to the B.S. degree. This amendment will be effective until February 28, 2017, unless the Department registers the program prior to that date, in which case the master plan amendment shall be without term.

### **Timetable for Implementation**

If the Board of Regents approves the master plan amendment, the Department will register the upper division B.S. Nursing program.