




TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

FROM: Douglas E. Lentivech

SUBJECT: Master Plan Amendment Authorizing State University of New York College of Technology at Delhi to Offer a Master of Science Degree Program in Nursing Education

DATE: May 12, 2014

AUTHORIZATION(S): 
SUMMARY

Issue for Consent Agenda

Should the Board of Regents approve the proposed master plan amendment for the State University of New York College of Technology at Delhi (SUNY Delhi) to offer a graduate program in Nursing Education leading to the Master of Science (M.S.) degree?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State statute.

Proposed Handling

This question will come before the full Board at its May 2014 meeting where it will be voted on and action taken.

Procedural History

On January 14, 2014, the State University Board of Trustees amended the master plan of the State University of New York to authorize SUNY Delhi to offer the M.S. degree program in Nursing. A master plan amendment is necessary because this is the College's first program at the master's level.

Background Information

SUNY Delhi has a long history of providing nursing education to serve local and statewide healthcare needs. The College has offered a license-qualifying associate

degree nursing program since 1983. In addition, the College offers an upper-division RN-BSN nursing program and a license-qualifying multiple award BSN program in distance education format. The programs are accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).

Purpose of the Program and Relationship to the Mission: The proposed online M.S. program in Nursing Education is congruent with the College's mission to support student success "through academic achievement, civic engagement, and experiential learning." It supports the College's strategic goal of "delivering programs that overcome geographic barriers and provide students maximum flexibility in pursuing their degrees, through technology." This initiative is also consistent with SUNY's strategic plan for an *Open SUNY*, an educational pipeline for New York State residents for quality educational programs delivered in an online format.

Admission Requirements: Criteria for admission require that a prospective student be a graduate from an accredited baccalaureate nursing program with a minimum of 3.0 GPA and hold an unencumbered NYS RN license and current registration. Applicants need to submit two letters of recommendation, a personal statement, and curriculum vitae and demonstrate computer literacy skills.

Curriculum: The proposed 42 credit program incorporates standards based on the *Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing* (AACN, 2011) and the *National League for Nursing Core Competencies of Nurse Educators* (NLN, 2005). The curriculum will include nine (9) credits of advanced science courses including pathophysiology, physical assessment, and pharmacology; twelve (12) credits of theory courses in research, health policy, and leadership for quality improvement; thirteen (13) credits of education courses focused on curriculum and instruction, measurement and evaluation in education, and teaching and learning theory; and eight (8) credits of practicum courses which include 150 hours of practicum and a capstone project. Online courses will be capped at 20 students per section and the curriculum is designed to be offered in seven-week sessions year round.

Prospective Student Body and Projected Enrollment: The College projects that total program enrollment will grow from 40 students in the first year to 180 students within five years. Approximately 80 percent of the enrollment is projected to be part-time. A significant share of matriculated students will include graduates from the registered baccalaureate programs in New York State. The College anticipates that a sizeable number of its B.S. in Nursing graduates will remain with the College for graduate study.

Facilities, Equipment and Resources: The infrastructure for online learning is in place including the learning management system (Moodle), student support services, and centralized advisement. Instructional design and technology services are currently available to support faculty and students with the technological aspects of the online classroom. Computer information resources are available to students via phone, email and in-person seven days per week. Off campus faculty members will be provided with a Virtual Private Network (VPN) that extends the campus IT services off-site. Campus-

based faculty will be provided with office space in the newly renovated building that houses the School of Nursing.

The College's Resnick Library is a member of a national library consortium that provides student support 24/7. Additionally, students have access to the resources of SUNY Connect, a joint initiative of SUNY's Office of Library and Information Services and the libraries of the 64 SUNY campuses to share collections and services. Currently, students can access 317 nursing e-journals and 602 e-journals in Education. With a strong nursing collection locally, the College is prepared to provide \$20,000 in additional resources for graduate students.

Faculty and Staff: The College has the capacity to staff the M.S. program with its diverse and experienced faculty. The Dean of the School of Nursing, who holds a Ph.D., will remain the chief nursing administrator. Three of its current nursing faculty who hold doctorate degrees and graduate teaching and research experience will be transitioned to the graduate program from their current assignment in the B.S in Nursing program. Additional faculty members have been hired to replace the transitioning faculty. The College is committed to adding four new faculty lines to meet the growth of the program to 180 students in five years. As is the case for the online B.S. in Nursing program faculty, the full- and part-time graduate nursing faculty and professional staff will hold regularly scheduled meetings using various technologies (SKYPE, MeetME, Adobe Connect, BigBlueButton) to discuss programmatic issues such as course design, assessment, advisement, technological support, student governance, and support services. Faculty will teach exclusively in the graduate program and have a workload equivalent to nine credits per semester. The College is prepared to recruit faculty with terminal academic or practice degrees. Graduate advisors dedicated to the graduate students will be required to have a minimum of a master's degree and three years of experience, and will establish learning plans for each registered student upon admission.

Student Employment Prospects: According to a Special Survey on Vacant Faculty Positions released by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) in 2012, 1,088 full-time and 693 part-time faculty vacancies were identified in a survey of 603 nursing schools with baccalaureate and/or graduate programs across the country. Schools cited the need to create an additional 104 faculty positions to accommodate student demand. The data shows a national nurse faculty vacancy rate of 7.7%. Most of the vacancies (58.0%) were faculty positions requiring or preferring a doctoral degree with 32.4% of the vacant positions requiring a master's degree. A major reason precluding schools of nursing from hiring additional full-time faculty is that qualified applicants are unavailable in the school's geographic region. Given the well documented and acute shortage of nurse educators, the College's proposed M.S. in Nursing Education will help address this critical need. The proposed program will enable graduates to contribute toward employment demands as nurse educators and prepare them for doctoral studies.

Canvass Results: A canvass was conducted of all institutions in the Southern Tier Region. There were no objections to the proposed program.

Recommendation

The Department has determined that the proposed program meets the standards of registration as set forth in the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. It is recommended that the Board of Regents approve the amendment to the master plan of the State University of New York to authorize SUNY Delhi to offer the M.S. degree in nursing.

Timetable for Implementation

If the Board of Regents approves the master plan amendment, the Department will transmit it to the Governor with a recommendation for favorable action. Following gubernatorial approval, the program will be registered.