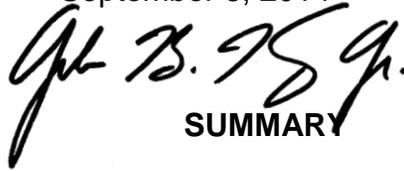




TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents
FROM: Douglas E. Lentivech 
SUBJECT: Master Plan Amendment Authorizing the State University College at Plattsburgh Branch Campus in Queensbury to Offer a Bachelor of Science Degree Program in Nursing.

DATE: September 8, 2014

AUTHORIZATION(S):


SUMMARY

Issue for Consent Agenda

Should the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment for the State University of New York College (SUC) at Plattsburgh to establish a proposed upper-division Nursing program leading to the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree at its Branch Campus in Queensbury, NY?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State Statute.

Proposed Handling

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

Procedural History

On January 14, 2014, The State University of New York (SUNY) Board of Trustees amended the State University Master Plan to authorize the SUC Plattsburgh Branch Campus at Queensbury to offer the Bachelor of Science degree for an upper-division nursing program. A master plan amendment is necessary as this is the institution's first baccalaureate program in the health professions discipline.

Background Information

The *Future of Nursing Report* recommends the percentage of nurses holding a baccalaureate degree be raised to 80% by 2020. The low percentage of nurses in the Queensbury, NY area with a baccalaureate degree in nursing reveals a critical need.

SUNY Adirondack Community College (ACC), in Queensbury, currently offers a license-qualifying nursing program leading to an A.A.S. degree. The addition of a nursing program leading to a B.S. degree would allow associate degree nursing graduates to broaden their education, improve their marketability, and further their careers. SUC Plattsburgh currently provides an online upper-division program registered at the main campus. However, a traditional classroom environment is preferred by those students who prefer a traditional learning experience. SUC Plattsburgh seeks to provide this educational option at its Branch Campus in Queensbury.

Purpose and Goals of the Program and the Relationship to the Mission: SUC Plattsburgh's mission is to be "... a public, comprehensive college that prepares students for academic, professional and personal success." With its focus on professional growth, the proposed program is closely related to the College's mission. One of the strategic priorities of SUC Plattsburgh's 2013-2018 Campus Plan is to "Build our Community Connections." This program will extend an accessible educational opportunity for nurses in the North Country and Capital Region. Articulation agreements with community colleges, particularly ACC, will promote a smooth transition from an associate degree in nursing to a baccalaureate degree promoting seamless transfer mobility between two-year and four-year institutions.

Admission Requirements: To be eligible for admission into the program, a student must meet the following requirements: graduate from an accredited associate degree nursing program; a minimum 2.5 Grade Point Average (GPA); hold an unencumbered registered professional nurse (R.N.) license and current registration in New York State; and complete the courses identified in the SUNY transfer path, including Anatomy and Physiology I and II, Composition I, Introduction to Psychology and Microbiology. Students from a two-year nursing program will be awarded up to 67 transfer credits, of which 30-34 credits are nursing course work.

Curriculum: The proposed program requires a minimum of 120 credits for completion, with a minimum of 60 required credits for the upper-division portion. The upper-division portion includes 26 nursing credits including courses in Health Assessment, Health Promotion, Nursing Research, Nursing Informatics, Nursing Theory, Public Health, and Leadership and Management. The remaining 34 credits are required nursing cognates and liberal arts courses. The program can be completed in two years (four semesters of full-time study) or six semesters over three years of part-time study. The curriculum will be offered in evening/weekend format.

Prospective Student Body and Projected Enrollment: The College plans to enroll 20 students each year in the fall. It is expected that many students will be graduates of the ACC associate degree-nursing program. Others will be local RNs who prefer classroom-based learning.

Facilities, Equipment, and Faculty: The program will be offered at the SUC Plattsburgh Branch Campus at Queensbury, on the ACC campus. Well-apportioned technology-enhanced smart classrooms are available. Computers and wireless internet are readily accessible. Students can access online databases and full-text resources from SUC Plattsburgh, as well as the extensive nursing collection at the ACC library. The proposed budget allows for the expansion of the current holdings to include resources on

health policy, nursing leadership and management, ethics and patient care quality and safety standards. All required textbooks will be maintained in the reference library. Library support services are available to students virtually 24/7 between scheduled hours of operation, and through chats, email, and text messaging.

A full time nursing faculty member will be hired for the Branch Campus for the first year and a second full-time position added in year two. Additionally, current enrollment on the main campus will allow for one full-time faculty member and one currently employed adjunct faculty member to be assigned teaching responsibilities during the 2014-2015 academic year at the Branch Campus. Thereafter, there will be a team of two full-time faculty assigned permanently to the Branch Campus. The Branch Campus Dean, Associate Dean, and nursing faculty will provide on-site administrative support. Program governance will remain within the established structure of the main campus through the Division of Education, Health, and Human Services and the department of nursing. Adjunct faculty will be used to offset the added commitment of the Chair of the Nursing Department (25%) to the program at the principle center. Branch campus faculty will participate in meetings at the main campus using online technology.

ACC has agreed to share their well-equipped nursing laboratory for teaching health assessment. In 2014-2015, the budgeted equipment money will be used to purchase otoscopes/ophthalmoscopes to augment the supplies and equipment in the current lab. Offices will be equipped for two faculty members on the Branch Campus.

Prospects for Employment/Further Education for Graduates: U.S. Department of Labor statistics indicate a significant need for nurses in the coming years. Nurses with baccalaureate level education have been shown to enhance quality of care, improve health outcomes, and lower healthcare costs. The *Future of Nursing Report* recommends the percentage of nurses holding BS degrees be raised to 80% by 2020. The low percentage of nurses in the Queensbury area with BS degrees (17% - 33% as compared to a national average of 50%) reveals a critical need. Local employers, including hospitals and community-based nursing agencies, project the need for 575 RNs to earn a BS degree to reach the 80% goal. SUC Plattsburgh intends to address local needs and national goals through this program.

Canvass Results: A canvass of the institutions in the North Country and Capital Region areas was conducted to determine the potential impact on current programs and resources and no significant objections were raised.

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 College at Plattsburgh, Branch Campus in Queensbury, NY to offer the upper-division nursing program leading to the B.S. degree.

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 B.S. Nursing program will be registered.