

Western Washington University
NEW DEGREE PROGRAM PLANNING NOTIFICATION OF INTENT

Program Information

Program Name: **RN-BSN Completion Program**

Bachelor of Science in Nursing for Registered Nurses holding a Diploma or Associate of Science in Nursing

Institution Name: **Western Washington University**

Degree Granting Unit: **Woodring College of Education**

Degree: **B.S. Nursing (BSN)** Level: **Bachelor** Type: **Science**

Major: **Nursing** CIP Code: **513811**

Minor: (if required for major) **None**

Concentration(s): (if applicable) **None**

Proposed Start Date: **Fall Quarter, 2013**

Projected Enrollment (FTE) in Year One: **20** At Full Enrollment by Year: 2015: **40 – 50**

Proposed New Funding: **self-support**

Funding Source: State FTE Self Support Other

Mode of Delivery I Locations

Single Campus Delivery

Off Site (enter location(s))

Distance Learning (enter formats) Hybrid/Blended Learning combining face-to-face and online venues

Other

Substantive Statement of Need: See Attached

Contact Information (Academic Department Representative)

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Endorsement of Chief Academic Officer

2.15.12

Date

Western Washington University

PNOI Submission: RN to BSN Program

1. Description and Rationale

The Western Washington University (WWU) mission states that it will serve the people of the State of Washington by developing the well-being of communities. Furthermore, in its strategic plan, WWU commits to building upon its strengths to address critical needs in the State of Washington. In conjunction with the WWU Nursing Task Force, Extended Education, and consultation with Dr. Mary Baroni (UW Bothell Nursing Program Director, 2002-2011) and various community organizations, **we are proposing a new degree program at Western Washington University: a completion RN to BSN self-sustaining program.** This degree will provide registered nurses in Whatcom, Skagit, Island and San Juan Counties the opportunity to continue their professional education to the baccalaureate level which is increasingly required and valued by employers. It will also contribute to meeting the goal of increasing the numbers of baccalaureate prepared nurses as called for in the Master Plan for Nursing Education in Washington State (2008: <http://www.wacenterfornursing.org/nursing-education/master-plan-for-nursing-education>) as well as the more recent IOM Report on the Future of Nursing (2011: <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2010/The-Future-of-Nursing-Leading-Change-Advancing-Health/Report-Brief-Scope-of-Practice.aspx>).

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program is directed toward the Registered Nurse (RN) who currently has an associate degree in nursing. The proposed completion program is a unique collaborative effort involving Western Washington University, Peace Health/St. Joseph's Medical Center, Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College and Skagit Valley College. Currently, persons living in the Bellingham and Whatcom County area seeking a BSN enroll in the University of Washington Bothell RN-BSN program in the Mount Vernon, Everett or Bothell locations requiring weekly round trip travel between 60-200 miles, or they may choose to enroll in an online program. As a major public university serving the northern-most counties of the North Puget Sound region, the development of this program will serve the needs of our community and contribute to the need for increased RN-BSN capacity to meet the Master Plan and IOM Report recommendations.

This preliminary proposal reflects a unique opportunity for Western Washington University to respond to regional needs for a more highly educated workforce and address recent statewide and national recommendations through an innovative collaboration including the university, regional community/technical colleges and health care industry partners. A collaborative workgroup reflecting each of the above stakeholder partners has been formed to provide expert advisement on curriculum development that is academically rigorous, regionally accessible and clinically relevant to current health care industry needs. This interdisciplinary workgroup will develop a full proposal within the timely context of the Master Plan for Nursing Education in Washington State (2008) and the more recent IOM Report on the Future of Nursing (2011). It will be further informed by the most recent American Association of Colleges of Nursing Essentials for Baccalaureate Nursing Education (AACN, 2008: <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/education-resources/essential-series>) and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education Standards for Accreditation (CCNE, 2009: <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/ccne-accreditation/standards-procedures-resources/baccalaureate-graduate>). This is a unique opportunity to develop a much needed curriculum in a collaborative fashion and guided by the timeliest advisements.

The BSN is a professional program that builds on a foundation of knowledge in science, humanities and related professional disciplines. The curriculum will accommodate students by offering the program in a hybrid/blended format that will include regular face-to-face class sessions augmented by online coursework. The curriculum will assure that each of the most recent AACNE Essentials for Baccalaureate Nursing Education are met through a collaborative career pathway that incorporates both Associate Degree and RN-BSN coursework:

- 1) Foundation in liberal education
- 2) Organizational/systems leadership for quality care/patient safety
- 3) Scholarship for evidence-based practice
- 4) Information management/application of patient care technologies
- 5) Healthcare policy, finance and regulatory environments
- 6) Inter-professional communication/collaboration to improve patient health outcomes
- 7) Clinical prevention/population health
- 8) Professionalism/professional values
- 9) Baccalaureate generalist nursing practice

Preliminary conversations with the newly formed workgroup have begun to identify how each of the nine AACN “Essentials” will be collectively assured across the two-year Associate Degree preparation (Bellingham Technical College, Skagit Valley College and Whatcom Community College), through transition to practice (Peace Health/St. Joseph’s Hospital and the new RN-BSN program at Western Washington University). For example, the “Foundations in Liberal Education” may be jointly met by opportunities at the community/technical colleges as well as Western Washington University either consecutively or through possible dual enrollment opportunities. Generalist practice will largely be met through the pre-licensure Associate Degree programs and further supplemented in the RN-BSN program as it relates to clinical prevention, population health and professionalism/professional values. Core essentials addressed specifically in the RN-BSN program will focus on organizational/systems leadership, scholarship for evidence-based practice, information managements, policy, finance and regulatory issues. Opportunities to highlight inter-professional communication/collaboration will be enhanced through strong partnerships with practice partners. In addition, the RN-BSN program will position graduates for further graduate studies including preparation for much needed nursing faculty roles in our region.

11. Need for the Degree

A major driver for creating a higher percentage of BSN-prepared nurses is to improve quality of care. A growing literature over the last 8-10 years provides increasing evidence linking better patient outcomes in facilities having greater percentages of baccalaureate and higher prepared nurses (Aiken, Clark, Cheung, Sloane & Silber, 2003); Eastabrooks, Midodzi, Cummings, Ricker & Giovannette, 2005); Tourangeau, Doran, McGillis, Hall, O’Brien, Pringle, Tue & Cranley, 2007); Van den Heede, Lesaffre, Diya, Vleugels, Clarke, Aiken & Sermeus, 2009). It has been argued that BSN-prepared nurses provide stronger leadership and demonstrate better decision-making and other positive professional traits. Baccalaureate prepared nurses also have a broader range of career opportunities. They are frequently preferred by hospitals, hospice centers and ambulatory clinic settings and more easily advance into specialized areas such as public health, school nursing, palliative care and management positions. Baccalaureate preparation also provides necessary preparation for continued graduate study which is consistent with the IOM recommendation to increase the number of masters and doctorally prepared nurses (IOM, 2011).

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommends that 80% of the RN workforce hold a BSN by 2020.² Across Washington state, 43% of RNs have this level of training, and at the local hospital, Peace Health/St. Joseph’s Medical Center (PH/SJMC), only 37% of RNs have earned their BSN. The average age of RNs employed by PH/SJMC is 48, of which approximately one-third average age 55 or older.³ PH/SJMC will see current RN staff needing to attain a BSN and will also hire new staff who will thread their education directly through to BSN attainment. Additionally, PH/SJMC aspires to attain Magnet Recognition Status from the American Nurses Credentialing Center, the gold standard for hospitals. To achieve that status it must substantially increase the number of BSNs on staff. Representatives from PH/SJMC estimate that it will take at least five years to bring their nursing workforce up to the level required for magnet status. One of the challenges facing nursing – locally, regionally and nationally - is assuring access to higher education opportunities. Helping local healthcare agencies with their aspirations to increase the number of BSNs would certainly reflect Western’s commitment to serve its community and state.

The *WCN Master Plan for Nursing Education in Washington State*⁴ makes several recommendations that magnify the need for increasing access to higher education for nurses in our state and will be incorporated through the development of our full proposal:

- Ensure that all RNs newly licensed in WA State hold or obtain a BSN within 10 years of initial licensure beginning in 2020 (#16)
- Expand capacity of BSN and RN-BSN programs in institutions of higher learning across the state, both public and private (#13)
- Expand dual admission to A.D.N. and BSN programs (#1)
- Create closer collaboration among educators, researchers and clinicians to promote evidence-based practice and practice-relevant research (#20)

The following table summarizes data adapted from Skillman, Andrilla, Tieman & Doescher (2008) showing initial nursing education and highest degree attainments in Washington state and workforce development areas in the Northern Puget Sound: WDA 3: Whatcom, Skagit, Island & San Juan Counties WDA 4: Snohomish County and WDA 5: King County. Our region has a higher percentage of nurses whose initial preparation is at the diploma or associate degree level and fewer numbers of nurses who continue on for a BSN than the state average and proximal WDA regions of Snohomish and King Counties.

Nursing Education – WA State, WDA3 (Whatcom, Skagit, Island), WDA4 (Snohomish) and WDA5 (King)

	Washington State	WDA 3	WDA 4	WDA 5
Initial RN Education diploma or ADN.	60.8%	69.3%%	63.3%	49.4%
Highest attained degree BSN or higher	51.4%	45.7%	49.2%	62.0%
RN-BSN Access - Current	WSU, , WGU, U of Phoenix, Walden On-Line programs	UWB-Mount Vernon at SVC	UWB-Everett at the University Center	UWB-Bothell, Seattle Pacific University

111. Relationship to Other Institutions

Four associate degree nursing programs are offered in the northern counties including Everett Community College (Snohomish), Skagit Valley College (Mount Vernon and Whidbey Island), Whatcom Community College (Whatcom) and Bellingham Technical College (Whatcom). The University of Washington, Bothell program offers RN-BSN access in both Mount Vernon (on the Skagit Valley College campus) and in Everett (at the University Center on the Everett Community College campus). It remains the northern most public university offering on-site access to RN-BSN education in the three northern most WDA regions in the Northern Puget Sound. Working nurses in the Northwest Region (WDA 3) also have access to public on-line options such as through Washington State University and private on-line programs such as the University of Phoenix, Western Governor’s University and Walden University. If approved, the Western Washington University hybrid/blended learning RN-BSN program will provide another critically needed alternative for working nurses in the region and reflect Western Washington University’s mission to develop the well-being of communities and contribute to critical needs of the state. This proposed new degree program seeks to compliment and extend the current capacity of RN-BSN education in our region and state.

IV. Relationship to HECB Master Plan

The HECB's most recent regional needs assessment (2011: *HECB (2011) Regional Needs Assessment*: <http://www.hecb.wa.gov/sites/default/files/RegNeedsAnalysis-Binder.pdf>) recommends future expansion of academic programs to target majors that are both high demand and provide sufficient income for self-sufficiency. This recent assessment noted Nursing at the top of the list of such degree programs in eight of the nine WDA regions of the state including WDA 3 which includes Whatcom, Skagit, Island and San Juan Counties. This preliminary proposal to develop an RN-BSN program at WWU is consistent with this important HECB recommendation.

In addition, this proposed program would be one step in addressing the HECB assessment that while WDA 3 has a higher rate of student participation in community/technical colleges than the state average, there are more limited transfer opportunities for community college students in our region. Since the majority of potential RN-BSN admissions will come from our regional community and technical colleges, this proposal will contribute to increasing transfer opportunities.

Needs Assessment

According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2011: <http://www.acn.nchee.edu/media-relations/DegreeComp.pdf>), RN-BSN completion programs provide an efficient pathway for diploma and associate degree prepared nurses to advance their careers. RN-BSN programs recognize the pre-licensure studies that prepared graduates for entry into practice and provide additional course work necessary to further enhance the professional skills necessary for effective ongoing nursing practice. Courses are designed to enhance critical thinking, clinical decision-making and provide professional development, preparation for a broader scope of practice and greater insights into the cultural, political, economic and social justice issues affecting health care. RN-BSN programs are growing in importance with increased preferences by many professional employers for BSN preparation. It is expected that this demand will be further increased by the IOM Future of Nursing Report (2011) that recommends increasing the number of baccalaureate prepared nurses to 80% and doubling of the number of Masters and PhD/DNP prepared nurses by 2020. Just recently, the NY State Legislature re-introduced a bill that would require all nurses to have or attain a BSN degree within 10 years of initial licensure. Many believe that this bill may pass this year in light of the IOM report and if so, many other states are expected to follow this trend.

At the state level, the Washington Center for Nursing (WCN) released its Master Plan for Nursing Education in 2008 with a similar recommendation. Through state-wide collaboration across all levels of nursing education, Associate Degree Nursing programs are providing strong encouragement to students to view their initial pre-licensure RN education as the first of a series of steps in their professional career trajectory that needs to include the BSN. Numbers of applications to existing programs have significantly increased over the last three years making admission to existing programs more competitive. The need to further expand RN-BSN capacity in the state is strongly urged by the WCN Master Plan (2008).

At the local level, Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College, Skagit Valley College and Peace Health/St. Joseph's Medical Center representatives have expressed a strong desire for Western to offer an RN to BSN program in Bellingham. WCC and BTC alone currently graduate enough RNs, up to 100 per year, to provide a base enrollment for a BSN program at Western. Skagit Valley College graduates an additional 60 students annually who would have options to matriculate either at WWU or through the ongoing UW Bothell option in Mount Vernon. This is in addition to the many working nurses employed at Peace/St. Joseph's Medical Center and other health care employers in the WDA 3 region.

Qualified candidates are being placed on waiting lists for existing programs and those in the Bellingham/Whatcom county area who gain admission are traveling between 30 (to UWB Mount Vernon location) and 100 miles (UW Bothell campus) one-way to participate in an on-site program or enroll in a fully on-line option. Existing programs currently have capacity that is far below the regional and state demand. There is a growing

need for increased RN-BSN program capacity in this state and Western Washington University is prepared to contribute to this capacity building in the northwest region. The expected result will be increased access for ongoing career development for new graduates and working nurses which in the long run will contribute to the health and well-being of our community.

¹*AACN Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice (2008)* <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/education-resources/essential-series>

Aiken, LH; Clarke, SP, Cheung, RB, Sloane, DM & Silber, JH (2003). Educational levels of hospital nurses and surgical patient mortality. *JAMA*, 290 (12): 1617-1623.

Eastabrooks, CA, Midodzi, WK, Cummings, GG, Ricker, KL & Giovannetti, P. (2005). The impact of hospital nursing characteristics on 30-day mortality. *Nursing Research*, 54 (2): 74-84.

HECB (2011). Regional Needs Assessment

²*IOM Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health, Recommendations – 2011* <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2010/The-Future-of-Nursing-Leading-Change-Advancing-Health/Report-Brief-Scope-of-Practice.aspx>

³Meyer, Diana, RN, MSN, CCRN, CEN, FAEN, Clinical Nurse Specialist, PeaceHealth/St. Joseph's Medical Center. Personal communication.

Skillman, SM, Andrilla, HA, Tieman, L. & Doescher, MP. (2008) Demographic, Education, and Practice Characteristics of Registered Nurses in Washington State Final Report #120: WWAMI Center for Health Workforce Studies: University of Washington.

Tourangeau, AE; Doran, DM, McGillis Hall, L, O'Brien Pallas, L., Pringle, D, Tu, JV & Cranley, LA (2007). Impact of hospital nursing care on 30-day mortality for acute medical patients. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 57 (1): 32-44.

Van den Heede, KE, Lesaffre, KE, Diya, L., Vleugels, A, Clarke, SP, Aiken, LH & Sermeus, W. (2009). The relationship between inpatient cardiac surgery mortality and nurse numbers and education level: Analysis of administrative data. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*. 46 (6): 796-803.

⁴*(WCN Master Plan for Nursing Education in WA State – 2008* <http://www.wacenterfornursing.org/nursing-education/master-plan-for-nursing-education/>