

Shepherd University Board of Governors
October 12, 2006
Agenda Item No. 6

Intent to Plan for Master of Science in Nursing

Board of Governors approval is sought to plan a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree program. Following Board action, the Intent to Plan will be submitted to the Higher Education Policy Commission for its approval. Once the program proposal has been composed, it will be brought to the Board of Governors for approval, and then the program must be approved by the HEPC and the North Central Association of the Higher Learning Commission before it is implemented. Details about this degree program are included on the following pages of the agenda book.

The following resolution is recommended for adoption by the Board:

RESOLVED, That the Shepherd University Board of Governors approves the Intent to Plan for a Master of Science in Nursing and directs the President to file the Intent to Plan with the Chancellor of the Higher Education Policy Commission for approval.

Shepherd University

Master of Science in Nursing

Intent to Plan

3.7.1 Educational Objectives

Shepherd University requests authorization to plan a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program. This program would offer the role specialty of nursing education. It would prepare nurse educators for a variety of roles, including faculty members in academic nursing education programs, staff development educators in healthcare organizations, and patient educators in healthcare organizations and community agencies. The program would be housed in the Department of Nursing Education within the University.

A major goal of this program is to provide increased access to graduate education for nurses within the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia to pursue careers in academic nursing education programs as faculty members or clinical teaching assistants, staff development educators for healthcare organizations, or patient educators in healthcare organizations and community agencies.

Relationship of Objectives to Mission of Institution

According to its Mission Statement, as listed on page 12 of the 2005–2007 Catalog, Shepherd University is committed “...to developing and implementing a selected number of graduate programs.” Shepherd University understands that these graduate programs are essential if it wishes to meet the growing needs of its students, community, and region.

The University Mission shows that the University is committed to “expanding intellectual and cultural resources.” In addition, the Mission states that “Student learning is central to the culture of our institution, and finding ways to improve student learning is a continuing process.” Advanced studies through well-planned graduate programs serve as a primary means for achieving these goals.

Offering an MSN program would be consistent with the mission of Shepherd University. The proposed MSN program also would help Shepherd move toward achieving the goal of providing affordable, accessible graduate education to citizens of the State of West Virginia, especially those residing in the Eastern Panhandle, and to prospective students in the nearby counties of Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

Special Features That Make the Institution a Desirable Place to Initiate a Program

Located just 70 miles from the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas, Shepherd University's location within the Eastern Panhandle provides students with the unique opportunity to easily access the resources of nearby professional organizations in higher education, healthcare, and nursing that will enhance their learning experiences. In addition, students will be afforded the opportunity to acquire practical experience as they progress through the program by working with members of the nursing faculty and local and national healthcare organizations.

Shepherd University already offers graduate programs in education (Master of Arts in Teaching, Curriculum and Instruction), business administration (Master of Business Administration), college student development (Master of Arts in College Student Development and Administration, and music education (Master of Music, Music Education). Thus there is an established culture of graduate education on the campus that would support the offering of an MSN program and to which the new program would contribute.

3.7.2 A Brief Description of the Program

The proposed program is 38 credit hours in length, composed of courses in three areas: an MSN core, a clinical core, and the role specialty.

The MSN core comprises courses that form the foundation of all graduate nursing education regardless of specialty area. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), in its publication *The Essentials of Master's Education for Advanced Practice Nursing*, recommends that courses in the MSN core include content in the theoretical foundations of nursing practice; the use of research evidence as a basis for improving nursing practice; policy, organization, and financing of health care; health promotion and disease prevention; ethics; professional role development; and human diversity and social issues. The MSN core in the proposed curriculum would include 15 credits of coursework, including a 1-credit practicum in evidence-based practice.

The clinical core includes content that builds on undergraduate nursing courses in nursing, anatomy and physiology, pathophysiology, pharmacology, and health assessment. The MSN program clinical core includes three courses that will prepare nurse educators with advanced knowledge and skill in physical assessment, pathophysiology, and pharmacology. Master's-prepared nurse educators need advanced knowledge and skill in these content areas to competently teach nursing students, staff members, and patients and their families. The clinical core would include 8 credits of coursework.

The nursing education role specialty courses include content necessary for successful performance as a nurse educator in any setting. The courses in this specialty area include content in curriculum development and revision, classroom and clinical teaching methods, and evaluation in classroom and clinical teaching. The nursing education role specialty area also includes two practica: a clinical practicum that will allow students to develop advanced clinical knowledge and skill in the clinical specialty in which they intend to teach, and a capstone nursing education role practicum that will require students to integrate the MSN core, clinical core, and role specialty competencies into the practice of the nurse educator role in a selected

setting. The nursing education role specialty area would include 15 credits of coursework, including the two practica.

3.7.3 The Institution Will Assure High Quality Standards for the Program and Maintain a Continuing Assessment of Quality

High Quality Standards

This program would be planned to meet the quality standards for master's programs in nursing set forth by the AACN in *The Essentials of Master's Education for Advanced Practice Nursing*. Additionally, as described in the next section, the program would be designed to meet the standards for accreditation of master's programs in nursing by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, Inc. (NLNAC) or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), the accrediting body of the AACN.

Essential to the quality of any master's program is an outstanding faculty. The nursing faculty at Shepherd University is highly experienced in nursing and nursing education, including experience in graduate nursing education at other universities. All but one faculty member have more than 10 years of nursing education experience each, and two have more than 30 years each. This wealth of clinical and educational expertise will serve the proposed MSN program well.

Although it is not a required credential for nurses who practice as nurse educators in any setting, professional certification as a nurse educator (CNE) is available from the National League for Nursing. After completion of the proposed MSN program and the required length of teaching experience, graduates would be eligible to sit for the CNE certification examination. The percentage of graduates who apply for and achieve CNE certification would be another indication of the high quality of the proposed program.

Assessment

National accreditation of the proposed MSN program is desirable. Currently, Shepherd University's BSN Program is nationally accredited by the NLNAC. Shepherd University would seek accreditation for the MSN program from the NLNAC or from the CCNE.

The Department of Nursing Education will develop an Assessment Plan based in part on the accreditation criteria for master's programs in nursing. We would identify three intended student outcomes and means of assessing each outcome over an 18-month period. The Assessment Plan and results will be reported to the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Department faculty, and the Shepherd University Graduate Committee, who will use the results for continual program quality improvement.

The Department would form a Graduate Program Advisory Committee comprising potential employers of the MSN Program graduates; advanced practice nurses, nurse educators, and nurse researchers who serve as preceptors for the students; and nurse leaders in the community. We would use this advisory group in a manner similar to the way in which we use our current

Nursing Advisory Committee—to serve as a focus group for evaluation of our students' and graduates' competencies, and to help us identify trends in healthcare and nursing education that would influence curriculum development and revision.

Additionally, we propose to collect data to assess how many graduates apply for and achieve CNE certification, how many are employed as nurse educators in various settings, and how many enroll in doctoral programs.

3.7.4 Other Institutions Offering Similar Programs

West Virginia University, Marshall University, Mountain State University, and Wheeling Jesuit University offer MSN programs; all except West Virginia University offer a nursing education specialty. However, we do not believe that we would be competing with these programs for our potential market. Even though distance education methods are used to deliver instruction in some of these programs, our nursing alumni have almost unanimously expressed an interest in attending a graduate program in the Eastern Panhandle, and most are not interested in a program that would require them to complete a large portion of the curriculum in a distance education format. We believe that an MSN program at Shepherd University would provide the best opportunity to meet the needs of potential students in the Eastern Panhandle.

For the 2005-2006 academic year, the total enrollment of graduate nursing students at these institutions was 333, and the total number of graduates was 67, as reported by the Association of Deans and Directors of Nursing Education in West Virginia. We believe that the State of West Virginia needs more master's-prepared nurses and that there is larger market of prospective students than the existing programs in the State can serve well, particularly in the Eastern Panhandle.

3.7.5 Statement of Societal, Occupational, Research, or Public Service Needs That Will be Met, As Well As Anticipated Student Demand for the Program

Societal and Occupational Needs

A growing nursing faculty shortage points to the need to prepare more nurses for these positions. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor, more than 1 million new and replacement nurses will be needed by 2012, but the total population of registered nurses is growing at the slowest rate in 20 years. A national shortage of nursing program faculty currently is restricting enrollment of undergraduate nursing students, and the faculty shortage is projected to increase with a wave of retirements over the next decade. According to the AACN, graduations from master's and doctoral programs in nursing are not producing a large enough pool of potential nurse educators to meet the demand. While doctoral preparation is the desired qualification for full-time faculty members in baccalaureate and higher degree programs, many associate degree programs in nursing, including those in this region (Blue Ridge Community and Technical College, Hagerstown Community College, Frederick Community College, and Lord Fairfax Community College) require a minimum of a master's degree in nursing for a full-time faculty position. At Shepherd, when we are unable to recruit a doctorally prepared nurse for a full-time faculty position, we hire Visiting Assistant Professors with a master's degree in nursing. Thus, a

master’s program specialty in nursing education would offer career opportunities in this region for nurses who have an interest in faculty positions in associate degree and baccalaureate programs.

Student Demand for the Program

The MSN Program would serve BSN-prepared nurses in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and the adjacent counties of Hampshire and Hardy. Additionally, this program is expected to attract out-of-state students from the surrounding counties in Maryland and Virginia. According to the WVBOERN Annual Report for July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2005, there are a total of 893 Registered Nurses (RNs) licensed in West Virginia residing in Berkeley, Jefferson, and Morgan counties, and an additional 127 RNs residing in Hampshire and Hardy counties, for a total of 1020. RNs licensed in WV who are employed in the three counties of the Eastern Panhandle total 173; an additional 18 are employed in Hampshire and Hardy counties, for a total of 191. Of the RNs licensed in WV and residing in the Eastern Panhandle, a total of 217 reported the BSN as the highest earned degree; an additional 29 reside in the adjacent WV counties, for a total of 246. The following table illustrates the distribution of RNs licensed in WV and residing and employed in the Eastern Panhandle and adjacent counties.

Nursing demographic information for the WV market area

County	Number of RN residents	Number of RNs employed	Number of RNs reporting the BSN as highest earned degree
Berkeley	586	132	142
Jefferson	248	32	63
Morgan	59	9	12
Hampshire	77	9	14
Hardy	50	9	15
<i>Total</i>	1020	191	246

Of the number of RNs residing in the WV counties that comprise our market, and who have reported the BSN as the highest earned degree, we do not know how many currently are enrolled in graduate programs and who, therefore, probably would not be prospective students for this program. However, we expect that a small number of nurses who enrolled in other graduate programs have done so because there is no current MSN program at Shepherd, and some of them might transfer into our program if it were approved and implemented.

In addition to these figures, there is an unknown number of BSN-prepared RNs residing in the WV counties that comprise our market area who are licensed by and employed in Maryland and Virginia. Even if these potential students are employed in other states, it is reasonable to expect that they would be attracted to a program at Shepherd because of the in-state tuition.

Three hospitals in the region (Washington County Hospital, Winchester Medical Center, and WVU East--City Hospital) have announced plans to apply for Magnet Recognition, a program that recognizes health care organizations that provide the highest quality of nursing care and that promote a milieu that supports professional nursing practice. Healthcare organizations with Magnet Recognition place significant emphasis on and provide support for continuing education and formal education of their nursing staff, and therefore usually have a higher percentage of nurses with a minimum of a BSN. Having at least three of these institutions in our market area should increase the number of BSN-prepared nurses in the region, thereby increasing the potential market for a graduate nursing program at Shepherd University.

There are four existing MSN programs in the region (Mountain State University, Shenandoah University, George Mason University, and Towson State University at Hagerstown, MD). Three of them offer a nursing education specialty (Mountain State, George Mason, and Towson). In competition with these programs, we believe that we would be the program of choice for nurses residing in West Virginia because of our reasonable in-state tuition.

Our market would be, at least initially, nurses who are employed full-time or half-time in local or regional healthcare organizations, and who would be interested in attending graduate school on a part-time basis. For that reason, we anticipate offering one or two courses per semester initially, scheduling classes in the evenings or offering selected online courses in an asynchronous format. A part-time student in this program would complete it in 8 semesters, including 2 Summers, taking 4-6 credits per semester for 6 semesters, and completing one 3-credit practicum in each of the final 2 semesters.

Acknowledging that a new graduate program will attract an initially large number of inquiries and applications because of pent-up demand, we believe that we can reasonably expect to enroll a cohort of 10 students each year, 9 of whom would be in-state residents. Enrollment and budget projections for the first 5 years of the program operation are included in Appendix A.

3.7.6 Additional Resources Needed to Offer Program

Faculty

No additional full-time faculty positions will be required to initiate a Master of Science in Nursing program. All initial course needs can be met with the existing faculty. We would hire adjuncts and Clinical Teaching Assistants as necessary, either to teach specific MSN Program courses or to teach courses in the BSN Program so that a full-time faculty member could teach an MSN course.

A Program Coordinator with released time to manage the program operations will be necessary. As each cohort of students progresses in the program and enrollment grows, we would need additional full-time faculty lines to enable us to offer all of the graduate courses needed by the MSN students while offering the BSN Program courses. As enrollment figures increase, the University would need to hire an additional faculty member who could dedicate 6 credit hours per semester to teaching within the program. In its fifth year, this position will be replaced with one full-time teaching position.

Staff

At least initially, our current staff members (1 full-time and 1 part-time) will be sufficient to manage the clerical work generated by the new program. If enrollment growth exceeds our projections, we may need additional clerical support.

Facilities Requirements

The new academic building on the Shepherd University campus was designed to provide adequate classroom, laboratory, and office space to accommodate the needs of this program in addition to the existing Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. MSN Program classes will be offered primarily in the evening hours; classrooms, labs, and seminar rooms will be available at these times. In the third year of the program, there will be a need for additional office space for the part-time faculty member position, with this position eventually becoming a full-time position; the need for this office was anticipated in the design of the new academic building, and it will be available when it is needed.

Library

The Scarborough Library at Shepherd University currently has many database and print resources to support a graduate program in nursing. There will be a need for some additional resources to meet the needs of the students and faculty in this program. Our reference librarian surveyed 10 graduate nursing programs in Spring, 2006, to determine typical library resources. Based on the information acquired, she identified some additional databases that would be beneficial to the students and faculty. In addition, she identified needs for some additional media and print resources and for updating of some existing print materials. The cost for the additional resources would be approximately \$7,000.00 in the first year, with minimal additional costs in subsequent years to update resources as needed.

Enrollment and Budget Projections

	First Year	Second Year	Third year	Fourth Year	Fifth Year
Number of Students served through the offerings of the program	10	10	10	10	10
Three-semester headcount	30	30	30	30	30
FTE/Year	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5
Student Credit hours Generated in academic year	190	190	190	190	190
Income by year (90% instate @\$235 10% outstate @ \$335)	\$46,550.00	\$46,550.00	\$46,550.00	\$46,550.00	\$46,550.00

Operating Requirements and Expenses

FTE Positions

Administrators	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
Fulltime Faculty	0	0	0	0	0
Adjunct Faculty	0.75	1	1	1	1
Graduate assistants	0	0	0	0	0
Clerical	0	0	0	0	0
Professionals	0	0	0	0	0

Personnel Costs

Administrators	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Fulltime Faculty	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Adjunct/Overload Faculty	\$18,000.00	\$24,000.00	\$24,000.00	\$24,000.00	\$24,000.00
Graduate Assistants	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Non Academic Personnel	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Clerical					
Professionals	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Salaries	\$21,000.00	\$27,000.00	\$27,000.00	\$27,000.00	\$27,000.00