

**New Program Proposal
Bachelor of Science
Nursing
Francis Marion University**

Summary

Francis Marion University requests approval to offer a program leading to the Bachelor of Science degree with a Major in Nursing to be implemented in Fall 2005. This proposal represents an administrative, academic, and fiscal transfer of the existing BSN program (with both Generic and Completion tracks) offered on the Francis Marion campus by MUSC to Francis Marion University.

In 1982, the BSN-Completion track (a “2+2” program for Registered Nurses who have already earned either an associate degree in nursing or a hospital-based diploma) began to be offered as a satellite program by MUSC on the Francis Marion campus. Since 1998, the Generic track (a full four-year program leading to the BSN degree and first-time licensure as a Registered Nurse) has also been offered by MUSC on the Francis Marion campus. Both program tracks were initiated in response to requests from the local healthcare community in Florence, especially the two largest regional hospitals.

With the support and encouragement of the Florence healthcare community, MUSC has agreed that the BSN program’s two tracks should be transferred to Francis Marion University. By a signed memorandum of June 17, 2004, the presidents of the two institutions agreed to the terms of this transfer. Although the original memorandum of June 17, 2004 calls for two years of awarding joint degrees in the BSN program, in its amended form (Fall 2004) an addendum limits the temporary awarding of “joint degrees” to those students who will graduate in 2006. The students graduating in the program in 2006 will be ones who have taken the first year of this upper-division major’s curriculum under the auspices of MUSC and the second year of the curriculum under the administrative aegis of the new Francis Marion University program. The curriculum for both years of the nursing coursework for the Class of 2006 will have been that of the BSN degree program at MUSC. Responsibility for the scores which graduates of the 2006 class make on the NCLEX will be the responsibility of Francis Marion, because that institution will have assumed all responsibility for the program in Fall 2005. As the institutions agreed in their memorandum of understanding, after the class of 2006 has graduated, the program will become recognized solely as that of Francis Marion University, including the awarding of degrees.

The Board of Trustees of Francis Marion University approved the proposal on February 4, 2005. The proposal was reviewed by an on-site team representing the State Board of Nursing on February 7, 2005. The State Board of Nursing approved the proposal at its regularly scheduled meeting of March 17, 2005.

The proposal was submitted for Commission review on February 15, 2005. The proposal was reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs at its meeting on March 7, 2005. Administrative, fiscal, academic, and legal transfer of the program from MUSC to Francis Marion University was supported at that meeting by all parties. The only substantive issue raised at that meeting related to the institution's intentions for dealing with the chemistry requirement for students entering the BSN-Completion track of the program.

Given the expected nursing shortage which has been reported, the need for more BSN-prepared nurses throughout South Carolina is considered high. This need appears especially strong in the PeeDee, given its historically low ratio of Registered Nurses per residents and also its low ratio of BSN-prepared Registered Nurses to the total population of Registered Nurses. The institution has received data from local hospitals supportive of demand for BSN-prepared nurses.

There are two purposes for the program. The first, through the Generic track, is to prepare graduates with entry-level skills, knowledge bases, and ethical values to pass the national licensure examination (i.e., the "NCLEX") for functioning as Registered Nurses. The second is to provide an academic opportunity for Registered Nurses who are graduates of either an associate degree program or a hospital-based diploma program to earn a baccalaureate degree through the "BSN-Completion track."

The need for the program is driven in part by institutional and community concerns that there be a baccalaureate degree program in the PeeDee offered under the auspices of a PeeDee institution of higher education. Presumably, control by a local higher education institution will make the program more responsive to community needs. There are also market forces driving the need for this program. Official statistics from the State's Office of Research and Statistics demonstrate a long-term trend of the PeeDee as the state's region with the lowest number of Registered Nurses per 10,000 population and the lowest percentage of BSN-prepared nurses (in relationship to ADN-prepared and Diploma-prepared nurses) in the nurse workforce.

The decision to change the locus of institutional sponsorship and administrative control of this satellite degree program led to two actions of the General Assembly during the 2004 legislative session to provide special, recurring

funding (i.e., funding beyond what the program would earn through the MRR). These special, recurring appropriations involve 1) the transfer of the recurring line item of \$481,031 which formerly went to the Medical University of South Carolina as a permanent line-item in the budget for that institution's administration of the BSN program at Francis Marion University; and 2) a new, recurring grant of \$250,000, authorized directly for Francis Marion University to administer this program. A third appropriation may be authorized during the 2005 General Assembly for special permanent state funding for this program in future fiscal years. All of these special appropriations are in addition to what the proposed program will receive under the MRR.

Some of the administrative functions of the proposed BSN program have already begun to fall under the aegis of Francis Marion University. While MUSC maintains its faculty contingent in Florence for the satellite BSN degree program, Francis Marion University has hired two of them to continue as faculty of Francis Marion University beginning Fall 2005. Also, Francis Marion already has hired a chairperson of its proposed program who currently is working at the institution.

The generic curriculum will consist of a total of 121 credit hours of coursework divided between general education, electives, and nursing. A total of 15 new courses, all in nursing, will be added to Francis Marion University's catalogue. All courses for the nursing major will be taught at the junior and senior levels. Admission to the nursing major will be predicated upon a student's standing as a result of his/her completion of freshman and sophomore level general education coursework. Admission to the program will only be available to students who will be upper-division students when they begin their nursing studies.

Two chemistry courses will be required for the Generic track students. This represents an important change from the MUSC curriculum, which required no chemistry courses per se. The requirement of these two Chemistry courses poses a challenge for the institution to assure common learning outcomes for the BSN graduates in the Generic and Completion tracks, since the curricula in many associate degree programs do not contain chemistry, at least as a stand-alone course in their academic programs. The institution has some time to consider solutions to this issue since the MUSC-at-Francis Marion program now has no BSN-Completion students and no BSN-Completion student is registered to begin the Francis Marion University program in Fall 2005.

Currently, there are nine institutional programs of generic BSN programs in South Carolina, all but two of which are in public institutions. Public institutions' programs are found at MUSC, USC-Columbia, South Carolina State University, USC-Aiken, Lander University, USC-Upstate, and Clemson University.

Independent institutions' programs are found at Charleston Southern University and Bob Jones University. This program will become the tenth institutional program leading to the Bachelor of Science in Nursing and the eighth public institutional program in South Carolina. Since the two private institutions' baccalaureate programs in nursing are both small, the overwhelming number of enrolled students and graduates of BSN programs in the state come from programs at public institutions.

Because no other generic BSN program exists in the PeeDee region, the program represents no unnecessary duplication of effort. One of the important features of this program is its intentional focus on providing larger numbers of BSN-prepared graduates for the greater PeeDee (including the Grand Strand) employment market. Hospitals in the PeeDee and Grand Strand regions, especially the hospitals in Florence and Darlington counties, report a growing need and employer demand for Registered Nurses entering the nursing field with the BSN. The program proposal shows a gradual increase in the numbers of nursing students admitted to the program in each of the first five years of implementation. Although initially the estimated enrollments are virtually the same as the MUSC satellite's enrollment, the new program will enroll 60% more students by the fifth year than in the first year of its implementation.

The institution has signed contracts with six faculty members (6 FTE) who will be necessary to teach in the program when it is implemented in the Fall 2005. Two of those faculty members formerly taught as part of the MUSC nursing faculty group at Francis Marion. By the fifth year of the program's implementation a total of ten (10 FTE) faculty will have been hired. In addition, a variable group of clinical faculty at a ratio of 1:8 (faculty:students) will be necessary for the program's implementation, and the number of clinical faculty will continue to climb over the first five years of the program's implementation as the number of students in the program and the number of clinical rotation groups increase.

Enrollment in the proposed program is estimated to begin at 64 upper-division students (65.06 FTE) in FY 2005-2006 and increase to 103 upper-division students (106.4 FTE) by FY 2009-2010. If enrollment projections are met, the program will meet the current CHE program productivity standards. Students interested in either the Generic or Completion track may take their prerequisite courses at any regionally accredited institution prior to admission to the upper-division nursing program at Francis Marion. Students interested in the Completion track may also take their prerequisite general education courses at another institution before transferring to Francis Marion for the upper-division program.

Institutional representatives have confirmed that, upon approval of the program, the institution will immediately seek accreditation through the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission (NLNAC). The NLNAC is one of two national professional organizations recognized to accredit BSN-Generic programs by the Federal Department of Education and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

The institution has received a significant private gift of \$5,000,000 to build a new state-of-the-art nursing facility on the campus. In the program's first year, a cost of \$5,000,000 is projected in the proposal for the new nursing building's construction. If the costs for this building's construction exceed \$5,000,000, the institution is confident additional private giving will cover them.

The two major hospitals in Florence have also indicated willingness to support the program financially. In March 2005, Carolinas Hospital announced a gift of \$500,000 over the first five years of the program's operations; McLeod Regional Medical Center has stated that it, too, will be pledging a contribution to the program's operations.

In addition to the private gifts for the proposed program, the General Assembly has approved two special, recurring state appropriations for the BSN degree program to be offered by Francis Marion. Over the program's first five years, these recurring funds are conservatively estimated to amount to \$3,690,155. Additional special funding from the General Assembly may emerge in the budget approved during the 2005 legislative session.

New operational costs exclusive of the construction of the building are estimated by the institution to total \$1,438,614 in year one. The categories for these first year operational costs include program administration (\$89,000), faculty salaries (\$395,000), supplies and materials (\$88,500), clerical support (\$114,000), library (\$30,000), equipment (\$220,998), facilities, academic, institutional and student services (\$351,616), and fringe benefits (\$149,500.) These costs are estimated to rise to \$1,873,118 by year five, and include program administration (\$104,116), faculty salaries (\$640,660), supplies and materials (\$88,500), clerical support (\$133,363), library (\$26,600), equipment (\$10,000), and facilities, academic, institutional and student services (\$600,344), and fringe benefits (\$229,535.)

The total estimated by the institution for new operational costs is \$7,979,730 for the first five years of the program's operations. This estimate does not include the \$5 million for funding construction of the new building.

Shown below are the estimated Mission Resource Requirement (MRR) costs to the state associated with implementation of the proposed program for its

first three years. Also shown are the estimated revenues projected under the Mission Resource Requirement and the Resource Allocation Plan as well as student tuition.

Year	Estimated MRR Cost for Proposed Program	Extraordinary (Non-MRR) Costs for Proposed Program	Total Costs	State Appropriation, Special State Appropriations, Private Gifts	Tuition	Total Revenue
2005-06	\$1,818,223	\$5,000,000*	\$6,818,223	0 \$694,068 \$5,100,000	\$170,455	\$5,964,523
2006-07	\$2,758,198		\$2,758,198	\$633,393 \$694,068 \$100,000	\$193,463	\$1,620,923
2007-08	\$3,212,754		\$3,212,754	\$719,090 \$694,068 \$100,000	\$235,767	\$1,748,925
2008-09	\$3,667,310		\$3,667,310	\$876,967 \$694,068 \$100,000	\$278,566	\$1,949,601
2009-10	\$3,667,310		\$3,667,310	\$1,035,283 \$694,068 \$100,000	\$278,566	\$2,107,917

*estimated for building costs

These data demonstrate that if the new program meets its enrollment projections and contains costs as they are shown in the proposal, the program will not be able to cover new costs with revenues it generates through the MRR, special state appropriations, and private gifts by the fifth year of its implementation. Nevertheless, the institution is committed to offering this program and takes the position that the necessary funds to offer it are available.

In summary, the program will prepare students who major in it to be able to function as Registered Nurses, upon successful passing of the national licensure examination known as the "NCLEX". The proposed program by the fifth year of its implementation will have begun to add appreciably greater numbers of enrolled students than those in the MUSC satellite program at Francis Marion. This increase will be useful for helping to meet the PeeDee's and South Carolina's healthcare needs. The transfer of the program is accompanied by an increase by the state in special appropriations.

The program will be less costly than its predecessor because of lower MRR costs to the state. The administrative transfer and the special appropriations for state funding are expected to support a larger number of enrolled students, produce a larger number of graduates, and increase the percentage of first-time pass rates of students on the NCLEX. In those ways, the program will yield more graduates capable of immediately becoming “RN”, and, thus, resulting in more and better nursing care in the PeeDee. The PeeDee is the region of the state with the greatest discrepancy between social need and BSN-prepared nurses per population unit.

Recommendation

The staff recommends that the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commend favorably to the Commission approval of the program at Francis Marion University leading to the Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Nursing, to be implemented in Fall 2005, provided that no further “unique cost” or special state funding be required or requested other than those which might have been appropriated in the 2004 and 2005 legislative sessions; and provided also that—with the exception of the conferral of “joint degrees” by MUSC and Francis Marion on May 2006 graduates of the BSN program--Francis Marion University shall confer the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree in all future years.