

**University of South Carolina Aiken**  
**Asynchronous, Online RN to BSN Completion**  
**February 1, 2006**

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**Dr. Thomas L. Hallman**  
**Chancellor, USC Aiken**

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**Dr. Andrew Sorensen**  
**President, USC**

**Classification:**

**Name of Proposed Program Modification:**

Asynchronous, Online RN to BSN Completion

**Academic Unit Involved:**

University of South Carolina Aiken, School of Nursing

**Designation, Type, and Level of Degree:**

Four year baccalaureate in nursing degree

**Projected Date of Implementation:**

August, 2006

**CIP code:**

511601

**Program Modification:**

Program delivery through asynchronous online instruction in addition to traditional classroom instruction.

**Justification:**

**Purpose and objectives of the online RN to BSN completion track.**

**Background:**

In December, 2005 USC Aiken (USCA) will graduate its last class of Associate in Science in Technical Nursing degree candidates and at this time The USCA bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) generic track will be at full capacity admitting 40 students twice per year. Previous to beginning the generic track of the BSN program, USCA's baccalaureate program was strictly for BSN Completion students. At the present time, we have one BSN program with two tracks, the generic and completion tracks.

In 1988, when the BSN Completion program was initially accredited, nurses worked primarily in 8 hour shifts and USCA faculty taught baccalaureate degree completion classes to fit with the working schedules of the students. In later years, when nurses began to work primarily in twelve hour shifts, again the USCA faculty worked as much as possible to fit classes into the nurses' work schedules.

In the spring of 2001 Dr. Linda Johnston along with professors from two other USC system schools shared a \$25,000 grant from the CHE to teach a combined online nursing research course that all three schools could agree upon as being acceptable to their facilities. The research course was taught jointly for one semester and thereafter, each professor taught the online course alone at their respective institutions. Additionally, Dr. Trudy Groves wrote a successful grant application for \$7,000 to the Colleagues in Caring project to enable Dr. Johnston to develop the professional role

transition course in an online format for RN to BSN Completion students. This role transition course was offered for the first time in the fall of 2001. Dr. Johnston's two online courses and her web enhanced courses at USCA became increasingly attractive to registered nurses coming back to university to complete their baccalaureate degree in nursing because they enjoyed the freedom of being able to attend class at home for some of their class periods. A reflection of this popularity is seen in our exit survey results where BSN Completion students request "more online courses". Dr. Johnston's online and web enhanced courses are consistently enrolled to their capped number of 20 students.

The current nursing shortage affects hospital staffing patterns. Nurses are called to work when not scheduled or asked to work overtime, thereby making the nurses' working schedules uncertain. The uncertainty impacts nurses' ability to attend a traditional classroom setting course on a regular basis. Because of this phenomenon, the USCA School of Nursing is receiving more and more requests from hospital based nurses in our service area for online courses to replace the traditional classroom format. Additionally, nurses working in community based settings e.g. DHEC and school nurses who are not able to be released from work to attend traditional classroom courses are requesting an online class format so that they may pursue a BSN degree.

There are three other RN to BSN Completion programs in the state of South Carolina that use distance education technology for their BSN Completion program (Lander University, University of South Carolina Upstate, and the Medical University of South Carolina). All programs operate under the quality guidelines for online education and restrict online sections to 20 students so that the instructor may adequately respond to students in a complete and timely manner. Because there are so few online programs in the state of SC, students go to neighboring states or the University of Phoenix in order to pursue a BSN degree. The Chief Nursing Officer, at one large Midlands hospital, who is applying for Magnet status from the CCNE, reported that she was unable to obtain placement for her ADN/Diploma graduates in any of the current SC online programs. She related that the only way that she could get a number of guaranteed places per year for her nurses in a SC online RN to BSN Completion program was to pay a substantial fee for 5 years. The university in question confirmed that the information received from the Midlands hospital was correct. Clearly there is room for another online RN to BSN Completion program in the state of South Carolina, particularly one targeting prospective students in the Midlands.

The need for an additional online BSN Completion program is enormous and immediate. According to Young, Bellack, and Loquist in their 1999 South Carolina Colleagues in Caring (CIC) White Paper, the National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice recommended that by 2010 two-thirds of practicing registered nurses should have a minimum of a baccalaureate degree in nursing. Additionally, in the 1998 CIC White Paper, "Into the Future: Recreating South Carolina's Nursing Workforce for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", Young, Bellack, and Loquist recommended that two-thirds of South Carolina's nursing work force should hold a baccalaureate degree in nursing.

According to the Office of Research and Statistics, SC Budget and Control Board report for 2003, 22.4% of nurses in South Carolina are LPNs, and 49.8% of nurses hold an associate degree or diploma in nursing. Those nurses holding a baccalaureate degree in nursing numbered only 22.8%. The statistics for the Midlands region of SC echo the statistics of the State which show that 72.2 % of the South Carolina nursing workforce is educated at the level of an associate's degree/diploma or lower. The state of South Carolina is in dire need of baccalaureate prepared nurses to come even close to the recommendations of the SC Colleagues in Caring Project and the National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice.

The USC Aiken RN to BSN Completion program is a well respected and established program serving the Midlands of SC, the Central Savannah River Area, and the area surrounding Allendale and Walterboro, SC. The program also includes some students from Beaufort, SC who are completing their BSN with USCA.

The School of Nursing's mission is consistent with the mission of the university as a whole: preparing students with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in a rapidly changing society. Additionally, distance education under which online education is subsumed, is congruent with the mission of the university. The University of South Carolina Aiken and the School of Nursing serve and support a diverse student body of varying ages and experiences by offering distance education courses that apply to degree programs; and provide students with the knowledge and skills needed for success in a technological workplace or environment. The university subscribes to the principles of good practice for electronically offered academic degree and certificate programs developed by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE, 1995).

**Purpose:**

The purpose of providing an RN to BSN completion program in an asynchronous online format is threefold:

1. to make baccalaureate degree completion more accessible to ADN or diploma trained registered nurses in the workforce.
2. to increase the number of baccalaureate prepared nurses in the Midlands region and the state of South Carolina as a whole as recommended by the Colleagues in Caring for South Carolina Project (1998).
3. to enable nurses to become eligible for career advancement in local, state, and federal healthcare agencies as well as to be able to continue their education to become master's and doctorally prepared. In 2003, 4.6% of South Carolina's nurses held a master's degree in nursing and only 0.4% were doctorally prepared (Office of Research and Statistics, SC Budget and Control Board, 2003). We desperately need nurses to advance their degrees and become our future nursing school faculty.

## **Enrollment**

### **Admission Criteria to the RN to BSN Completion Track:**

The online program is intended primarily for students in USC Aiken's regional service area. Nurses from other areas of South Carolina who apply to the RN to BSN Completion program will be considered on a space available basis. There will be no change in the admission criteria for the traditional classroom venue for RN to BSN Completion and the online venue. The admission criteria are as follows:

1. Admission to USC Aiken
2. Associate of Science degree in nursing or diploma in nursing.
3. Completion of each of the following courses or their equivalent with a grade of C or better:
  - Math 108 (College Algebra), Statistics 201 (Elementary Statistics)
  - Biology 232 (Anatomy), 242 (Physiology), 330 (Microbiology)
  - Chemistry 101 (General Chemistry)
  - English 101 (Composition), 102 (Composition and Literature)
  - Communication 201 or 241 (Applied Communication)
  - Psychology 101 (Introductory Psychology), 310 (Developmental Psychology)
  - Sociology 101 (Introductory Sociology)
  - History 101 or 102 History of Civilization)
  - Political Science 201, History 201 or 202 (American Political Institutions)
4. Current licensure to practice as a registered nurse in South Carolina
5. Two references
6. Cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better

**All requirements must be met before admission to the BSN major will be granted.**

### **Transfer Credit:**

Transfer students must have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better. A Transfer Credit Summary will be prepared by the Admissions Office on receiving the student's official transcript. The School of Nursing will evaluate the transcript and designate acceptable nursing credits toward the BSN major as appropriate.

1. Students may transfer equivalent courses for the general education requirements. The courses must meet the University requirements for transfer credit.
2. Students may transfer equivalent courses within the nursing major. Junior and senior level BSN courses that are more than five years old cannot be applied toward the BSN degree. The courses must meet the University requirements for transfer credits.  
THE LAST 30 HOURS OF CREDIT MUST BE EARNED FROM USC AIKEN

### **Advanced Placement:**

1. General education courses identified by the University can be used for advanced placement through CLEP examination. University departmental exams may be used for advanced placement if offered by the appropriate department and if the student meets the expected testing level identified by the department.

2. Registered nurses can write the NLN exam for advanced placement in biology courses. If the student meets the expected testing level, advanced placement will be granted.
3. The BSN program offers a challenge exam for ABSN 312. If the student meets the expected testing level, advanced placement will be granted. A student desiring to write a BSN Challenge Exam must notify the course coordinator at the beginning of the semester prior to the semester the student wishes to write the exam.

As mentioned previously, USCA’s RN to BSN Completion program is well established and has graduated 183 BSN Completion students since 2000. Following is the break- down of graduations per year: 2000 – 34; 2001 – 39; 2002 – 39; 2003 – 24; 2004 – 34; 2005 – 13 in May and 20 BSN Completion students will graduate in December for a total of 33.

Following is the table showing projected Total Enrollment in the online program:

**Table 1: Projected Online Enrollment and Estimated New Enrollment**

<b>PROJECTED TOTAL ENROLLMENT &amp; *ESTIMATED NEW ENROLLMENT **ONLINE SECTION ONLY</b>						
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>FALL</b>		<b>SPRING</b>		<b>SUMMER</b>	
	Headcount Full time Students	Credit Hours	Headcount Full Time Students	Credit Hours	Headcount	Credit Hours
2006-07	First Online Class 20	12	20 - 2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester	10	0	0
2007-08	20 new + ***20 last semester	12+10 =22	20	10	0	0
2008-09	20 +20	22	20	10	0	0
2010-11	20 +20	22	20	10	0	0
2011-12	20 +20	22	20	10	0	0

These estimates were made using historical data and the number of students already accepted into the RN to BSN Completion program. It is also anticipated that more students will apply to our program because of the online format that will be

available. Affiliating agencies, all of which have tuition reimbursement programs, have indicated their support for an online program.

\* The table *Estimated New Enrollment* is not included because only RNs may apply to this program. Students from other majors are not eligible to apply. Therefore, Table 1 also reflects estimated new enrollments as well as projected total enrollment.

\*\* Although the School of Nursing receives many requests for online classes, some nurses prefer to take traditional classes. The traditional program will continue to be available for RNs who prefer the classroom environment.

\*\*\* 20 students will be in their final semester as the 20 new students are admitted. Students take 12 hours of nursing courses during their first semester and 10 hours of nursing courses in both their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> semesters.

**Curriculum:**

After the prerequisites have been completed, students will take the following courses:

**Table 2: Curriculum for Online RN to BSN Completion Program**

Semester 1	Credit	Semester 2	Credit	Semester 3	Credit
Professional Issues	3	Community Health	5	Complex Health Needs	3
Health Assessment	3	Gerontological Nursing	5	Leadership and Management	4
Pathophysiology (Possible credit by examination)	(3)			Ethical Legal Issues	3
Nursing Research	3				
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>12 (9)</b>		<b>10</b>		<b>10</b>

No new courses are being proposed. The courses are exactly the same as the traditional classroom courses. The only difference is the mode of delivery.

**Clinical Rotations for the Online RN to BSN Completion Program**

Since we shall be recruiting students from our partnering institutions in the Aiken, Augusta, and Columbia areas, clinical rotations will be organized and held in the same manner and at the same locations we presently use for our students in traditional classes. If a student is accepted into the program from outside our present service area, the following procedure, in accordance with the South Carolina State Board of Nursing criteria for preceptors, will be used:

- The RN student will locate a BSN or MSN prepared preceptor who has a minimum of two years clinical experience and demonstrated competencies related to the areas of clinical teaching responsibilities to oversee the clinical experience. (The preceptor must not be a personal friend of the student.)

- The student will submit the name and resume of the proposed preceptor to the USCA School of Nursing.
- The USCA clinical coordinator will contact the proposed preceptor for a telephone interview.
- If the preceptor is deemed acceptable, the preceptor will send a copy of his or her nursing license and complete the USCA preceptor information form.
- The preceptor will be oriented to the course by the course coordinator according to the procedure outlined in the USCA School of Nursing Preceptor Manual.
- According to the SC State Board for Nursing requirements, the preceptor will be assigned no more than two RN to BSN Completion students.
- According to USCA School of Nursing Policy, preceptors will be evaluated on a formative and summative basis by the clinical course coordinator and will receive a copy of the evaluation.

**Faculty:**

**Table 3: USCA School of Nursing Faculty**

List Staff by Ranking (e.g. Professor #1, Professor #2, Associate Professor #1, etc.)	Highest Degree Earned	Field of Study	Teaching in Field (Yes/No)
Professor #1	PhD	Gerontology/Ethics/Research Professional Issues	Yes
Professor #2	PhD	Critical Care	Yes
Associate Professor #1	PhD	Administration/ Gerontology	Yes
Assistant Professor #1	PhD	Pathophysiology	Yes
Assistant Professor #2	MSN/NP	Health Assessment	Yes
Instructor #1	MSN	Community Health	Yes

All faculty are currently employed by the USCA School of Nursing and will have their former teaching responsibilities reduced where necessary. However, it must be noted that with the termination of the ADN Program in December 2005, we have a sufficient number of faculty and budgeted faculty positions to begin and sustain an online program as described for RN students without requesting additional new positions.

**Institutional Plan for Faculty Development:**

At USC Aiken, we are very fortunate to have Dr. Linda Johnston, who is a well respected and renowned pioneer of online nursing course development and teaching in South Carolina. Additionally, Dr. Julia Ball, Head of the School of Nursing at USCA, was instrumental in obtaining grant moneys from CHE and the Lander Foundation for the

asynchronous online RN to BSN Completion program at Lander University School of Nursing in 2000. Dr. Ball also has extensive experience in teaching online courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels at the Medical University of South Carolina. Both Dr. Johnston and Dr. Ball are able to mentor faculty members in course translation from onground to online formats. Also available to faculty are the various online workshops provided by the National League for Nursing through which the School of Nursing is fully accredited. For online course preparation, faculty members may apply for summer funding to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

**Institutional Definition of FTE:**

FTE or full-time equivalent is a numerical value expressing a percentage of time in hours and of funds related to a particular position authorized by the General Assembly. It is considered to be 1.0 for a 12 month, full-time employee; and 0.75 for a 9 month, full-time faculty member.

**Table 4: Unit Administrative / Faculty / Staff Support**

<b>UNIT ADMINISTRATIVE/FACULTY/STAFF SUPPORT</b>						
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NEW</b>		<b>EXISTING</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>	
	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE
<b>Administration</b>						
2006-07	0	0	1	1	1	1
2007-08	0	0	1	1	1	1
2009-09	0	0	1	1	1	1
2009-10	0	0	1	1	1	1
2010-11	0	0	1	1	1	1
<b>Faculty</b>						
2006-07	0	0	6	6	6	6
2007-08	0	0	6	6	6	6
2009-09	0	0	6	6	6	6
2009-10	0	0	6	6	6	6
2010-11	0	0	6	6	6	6
<b>Staff</b>						
2006-07	0	0	2	2	2	2
2007-08	0	0	2	2	2	2
2009-09	0	0	2	2	2	2
2009-10	0	0	2	2	2	2
2010-11	0	0	2	2	2	2

As described previously, the ADN Program will end in December 2005 and therefore, no new positions will be required.

**Physical Plant:**

No further physical space will be required for the online program.

**Equipment:**

Laptop computers will be required by faculty so that they may work from home or while away at meetings or conferences. The lap top computers for online faculty will be financed through USC Aiken Partnership Funds available to the School of Nursing, account number 1B1783.

**Technology:**

According to Mr. M. Lemons, Vice Chancellor for Informational Technology, the Blackboard system utilized at USC Aiken is well able to accommodate the proposed Online RN to BSN Completion program of study.

**Library Resources:**

USC Aiken has over 180 online nursing journals that maybe found at <http://atoz.ebsco.com/home.asp?id=3723&sid=112023467&txtKeyword=nurs%2A&SF=Titles&page=1>. This collection is adequate for both online and traditional students in the RN to BSN Completion program.

**Accreditation, Approval, Licensure, or Certification:**

The USC Aiken School of Nursing received full accreditation with no contingencies by the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission in 2004. Their next visit will be in 2012. Additionally, in 2004, the USC Aiken School of Nursing received a full 8 years approval from the South Carolina State Board for Nursing.

Graduates of the program modification will not be required to take a licensure examination since they are already registered nurses and proof of current South Carolina licensure is required to begin the program.

**Table 6: New Costs to the Institution and Sources of Financing :**

<b>ESTIMATED NEW COSTS BY YEAR</b>						
<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
Program Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0
Faculty Salaries Summer Stipends	10,500 3 faculty	3,500 1 faculty	0	0	0	14,000
Graduate Assistants	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clerical/Support Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supplies and Material	0	0	0	0	0	0
Library Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0
Equipment – 5 Lap top computers for online instructors	\$7,500	0	0	0	0	\$7,500
Facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (Identify)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>						21,500

The lap top computers for online faculty will be financed through USC Aiken Partnership Funds available to the School of Nursing, account number 1B1783.

Faculty Time for course development will be funded through grants from the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs office, if available, or through USC Aiken Partnership funds.

**S.C. Commission on Higher Education  
Notification of Change in Academic Program Status**

**After approval by Chief Instructional Officer,**

Four- year institutions please send completed form by mail to:

Director of Academic Affairs  
S.C. Commission on Higher Education  
Division of Academic Affairs  
1333 Main Street, Suite 200  
Columbia, SC 29201

Or, fax to:

(803) 737-2297

Technical Colleges please send completed form by mail to:

Associate Director for Instruction  
State Board for Technical & Comprehensive Education  
111 Executive Center Drive  
Columbia, SC 29210

**1. a. Institution:** University of South Carolina Aiken

**b. Implementation date for change:** August, 2006

**2. Degree awarded, major, and concentration, if applicable:** BSN

**3. Site of delivery:** USC Aiken

**4. Mode of delivery (distance, traditional, both) and percentage of coursework offered by each mode:** Distance/Traditional 90% 10%

**5. CIP Code** (confirmed by CHE) 511601; **Site Code** (assigned by CHE)50801; Site identifier for Internet Courses taught at USCA 88000

**6. Nature of change and summary of the rationale for and objectives of the program (Please include the number of credit hours the change entails.)**

Provision of an online RN to BSN Completion Program for ADN/Diploma RNs.

- To make baccalaureate degree completion more accessible to ADN or diploma trained registered nurses in the workforce.
- To increase the number of baccalaureate prepared nurses in the Midlands region and the state of South Carolina as a whole as recommended by the Colleagues in Caring for South Carolina Project (1998).
- To enable nurses to become eligible for career advancement in local, state, and federal healthcare agencies as well as to be able to continue their education to become master's and doctorally prepared. In 2003, 4.6% of South Carolina's nurses held a master's degree in nursing and only 0.4% were doctorally prepared (Office of Research and Statistics, SC Budget and Control Board, 2003). We desperately need nurses to advance their degrees and become our future nursing school faculty.

**7. Curricular display:** courses in the major (prefix, number, and title); information on general education and electives requirements; number of credits required for graduation

## Admission Requirements

- \*\* Application for Admission to BSN Program    \*\*Two References    \*\*South Carolina RN License
- \*\* The Following Courses are Required Prior to Beginning BSN Nursing Courses

Completion of each of the following courses or their equivalent with a grade of C or better:

<u>Course</u>	<u>Credit Hours</u>
1. ABIO 232 Anatomy.....	4 _____
2. ABIO 242 Physiology.....	4 _____
3. ABIO 330 Microbiology.....	4 _____
4. ACHM 101 General Chemistry.....	4 _____
5. AEGL 101 English Composition .....	3 _____
6. AEGL 102 English Composition/Literature.....	3 _____
7. APSY 101 Introductory Psychology.....	3 _____
8. APSY 310 Developmental Psychology.....	3 _____
9. ASCY 101 Introductory Sociology.....	3 _____
10. Applied Speech.....	3 _____
11. AMTH 108 Math/ Logic.....	3 _____
12. ASTA 201 Statistics.....	3 _____
13. AHST 101 or 102 History of Civilization.....	3 _____
14. APLS 201,AHST 201 or 202 American Political Institutions	3 _____
	<b>(46)</b>
 Basic Nursing Education (ADN or Diploma)	 <b>25</b> _____

## Degree Requirements

### ❖ General Education Requirements\*

6. Humanities.....	3 _____
7. Humanities.....	3 _____
8. Humanities.....	3 _____
9. Electives.....	8 _____
	<b>(17)</b>

### ❖ Nursing Major Requirements\*\*

1. ANRS 308 Professional Issues <i>Online</i> .....	3 _____
2. ANRS 307 Health Assessment <i>T 1-3:15/lab 3:30-5</i> .....	3 _____
3. ANRS 312 Pathophysiology <i>T 9-11:50</i> .....	3 _____
4. ANRS 315 Community Health <i>T 9-11:50</i> .....	5 _____
5. ANRS 415 Gerontological Nursing <i>W 9-11:50</i> .....	5 _____
6. ANRS 413 Nursing Research <i>Online</i> .....	3 _____
7. ANRS 414 Ethical Issues in Nursing <i>M 2-4:30</i> .....	3 _____
8. ANRS 420 Complex Health Issues.....	3 _____
9. ANRS 411A Leadership & Management <i>W 1-3:30</i> .....	4 _____
	<b>(32)</b>

### Total Credit Hours Required to Graduate

**120**

- \* At least 3 credit hours must be in non-Western world studies

\*\* RN to BSN Completion program as it is presently offered. With program modification all course would be offered online. The Health Assessment course will have a requirement for classes at USC Aiken School of Nursing for the assessment examination.