

**New Program Proposal  
Bachelor of Science in Nursing  
University of South Carolina-Beaufort**

**Summary**

University of South Carolina-Beaufort requests approval to offer a program leading to the Bachelor of Science degree with a Major in Nursing, composed of two tracks: the BSN-Completion track to be implemented in Fall 2007; and the BSN-Generic track to be implemented in Fall 2008. The program will be offered at the USC-Beaufort South campus with clinical sites at affiliated clinical locations in the Beaufort-Hilton Head area.

The Board of Trustees of the University of South Carolina approved the proposal on April 20, 2006. The proposal was received by the Commission on Higher Education on May 1, 2006. The proposal was reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs at its meeting on July 31, 2006, without substantive comment.

Beginning in 1992, the BSN-Completion track had been offered as a satellite program by USC-Aiken at USC-Beaufort. However, that satellite program was phased out in preparation for USC-Beaufort to become a four-year campus within the USC System. During the time that the USC-Aiken BSN-Completion track was operating at USC-Beaufort, a total of 60 students enrolled in it, of whom 59 graduated.

The BSN-Generic track has never before been offered by any institution in the Beaufort region of the state. This program proposal from USC-Beaufort is timely both as a response to requests from the local healthcare community in Beaufort, including the largest area hospitals, and as a response to the reported looming national and state shortage of Registered Nurses. In addition, through the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry (earlier known as the “Hilton Head Island Foundation”) the institution conducted an ambitious survey of potential students, faculty, and employers, which has generated data to show great interest among all three of these groups in favor of this proposed program.

With the support and encouragement of the Beaufort healthcare community, USC-Beaufort has developed this proposal to be implemented in a phased-in manner over two academic years, beginning with the BSN-Completion program in Fall 2007 and the BSN-Generic program in the Fall of 2008. BSN-Completion track programs do not require State Board of Nursing approval because students in these baccalaureate tracks are already Registered Nurses. However, since the BSN-Generic track is a first-time

licensure program, the State Board of Nursing review and approval of the program will be necessary.

Given the reported nursing shortage, the need for more BSN-prepared nurses throughout South Carolina is considered high. This need appears to be almost as strong in the Beaufort region as in the State generally, although 2003 statistics show that Beaufort is somewhat higher than most of the regions of the State in the percentage of baccalaureate-prepared nurses. The institutional proposal states that local hospitals are highly supportive of having more BSN-prepared nurses and of having them educated locally. The regional support for the program extends to the faculty of the nursing program at the Technical College of the Lowcountry. According to information supplied at the July 31, 2006 meeting of the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs, the Technical College's nursing faculty have a representative on the USC-Beaufort nursing advisory group and have indicated their support of both tracks of the proposed BSN program at USC-Beaufort.

According to USC-Beaufort officials at the July 31, 2006 meeting of the ACAP, all faculty necessary for offering the BSN-Completion track beginning Fall 2007 have been hired. A total of five faculty (3.275 FTE) will begin teaching in the program in Fall of 2007. This number will rise again in Fall 2008 with the admission of the first BSN-Generic cohort and will continue to rise each year until by the third year and thereafter there is estimated to be a total of 19 faculty (12.875 FTE). The faculty will be composed of the program chair, six additional full-time faculty, four part-time didactic instructors, and 10 part-time clinical instructors. All full-time faculty are anticipated to be doctorally-prepared; all part-time faculty are anticipated to be masters-prepared.

Students interested in either the BSN-Generic or BSN-Completion track may take their prerequisite courses at any regionally accredited institution prior to admission to the upper-division nursing program at USC-Beaufort. Admissions requirements for students who wish to pursue the BSN-Generic track are competitive, based upon eight criteria beyond institutional admission to USC-Beaufort. Except for two introductory courses, the program's nursing courses are at the upper-division level. Only students admitted to the upper-division in the Nursing program will be able to complete the BSN-Generic track. The BSN-Generic curriculum consists of a total of 121 credit hours of coursework divided between general education, electives, and nursing. A total of 19 new courses, all in nursing, will be added to USC-Beaufort's catalogue for purposes of offering the program of study leading to the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.

Consistent with the requirements of the Statewide Agreement on Nursing (1996 as amended 2001), admission to the BSN-Completion track will accept any currently licensed Registered Nurse in South Carolina who is in professional good standing and has earned an associate degree in nursing from any in-state or out-of-state institution. The program will also articulate the work of graduates of hospital-based diploma programs

who are Registered Nurses. The Completion track requires transfer of the academic work in general education and nursing required by the associate degree in Nursing, as well as 35 semester hours of upper-division Nursing credit hours of coursework and additional general education requirements and electives to total a minimum of 127 for the BSN degree.

If approved by the Commission, the proposed program will become the eleventh BSN degree program in South Carolina. Eight of the currently implemented programs are found at public institutions (i.e., MUSC, USC-Columbia, South Carolina State University, USC-Aiken, Lander University, USC-Upstate, Clemson University, and Francis Marion University). Two independent institutions (Bob Jones University and Charleston Southern University) also offer BSN degree programs. Approval of this program will make the public sector of higher education institutions that much more important as a source for new baccalaureate-prepared nursing graduates.

Because no other BSN-Generic program exists in the Lowcountry region below Charleston, and because of the great reported need for Registered Nurses in the region and throughout the country at this time, 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 Beaufort employment market. This proposal also contains provision for scholarship assistance to attract African-Americans, Hispanics, and males to the program, since all three groups have historically been greatly underrepresented in the nursing profession, a fact which the profession is beginning to try to redress.

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. Enrollment is anticipated to begin with 24 (28 FTE) in Fall 2007 with the admission of the first BSN students (all of whom will be in the BSN-Completion track). This figure will rise in the second year to 80 (96 FTE) with the admission of the first BSN-Generic students. By the fifth year of the program's implementation (Fall 2011), the total number of students enrolled in both program tracks is estimated to rise to 224 (224 FTE). If enrollment projections are met, the program will meet the current CHE program productivity standards.

The BSN-Generic track will prepare graduates with entry-level skills, knowledge bases, and ethical values to pass the national licensure examination (i.e., the "NCLEX") and become Registered Nurses. The BSN-Completion track will 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 for either professional advancement or preparation for graduate work in the field.

Institutional representatives have confirmed that, upon approval of the program, the institution will immediately seek accreditation through the Collegiate Council for Nursing Education (CCNE), one of two national professional bodies recognized for accrediting undergraduate nursing programs by the Federal Department of Education and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. In addition, according to the proposal, after hosting a review team from the State Board of Nursing for the program, the institution anticipates Board approval by mid-summer 2007 for students planning to matriculate in the new BSN-Generic program in Fall 2008.

The proposed Nursing program will have faculty offices, teaching classrooms and on-campus laboratories at the South Campus (i.e., New River campus). The uncompleted second floor of the new Science and Technology Building is being outfitted specifically for the nursing program's needs at an estimated cost of \$2,600,000.

All five hospitals being used as clinical sites will contribute part-time faculty, use of clinical sites and use of the equipment at these sites. According to the proposal, three sources of local funding will be available in addition to institutional tuition and fees and state funding through the MRR. These local sources are: program growth funds (through the special local tax initiative known as "TIF"), healthcare partnerships in the Beaufort area, and private individuals. These local funds are estimated to amount to \$2,514,797 and all will be available in the first year of the program's implementation, according to the proposal.

New operational costs are estimated by the institution to total \$2,830,517 in year one. These costs are estimated to decrease to \$959,215 in year two; then rise again to \$1,081,568 in year three; \$1,269,576 in year four; and \$1,289,747 in year five. In the first five years of the program, costs will be distributed in the following categories: \$525,712 for program administration; \$2,540,320 for faculty salaries; \$ 500,000 for supplies and materials; \$558,490 for library development; \$470,000 for equipment; \$105,000 for furniture; \$2,600,000 for facilities; and \$33,600 for accreditation processes. The total for all these categories, as estimated by the institution for new operational costs, is \$7,430,623 for the first five years of the program's operations.

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	Tuition	Total Revenue
2007-08	\$299,768	\$0	<b>\$299,768</b>	N/A	\$168,007	<b>\$168,007</b>
2008-09	\$1,027,776	\$0	<b>\$1,027,776</b>	\$133,087	\$576,929	<b>\$710,016</b>
2009-10	\$1,627,312	\$0	<b>\$1,627,312</b>	\$455,948	\$913,646	<b>\$1,369,594</b>
2010-11	\$2,226,848	\$0	<b>\$2,226,848</b>	\$721,849	\$1,250,364	<b>\$1,972,213</b>
2011-12	\$2,398,144	\$0	<b>\$2,398,144</b>	\$987,750	\$1,346,870	<b>\$2,334,620</b>

Supplemented by the \$2,514,797 anticipated from local public and private sources, these data demonstrate that if the new program can meet its enrollment projections and contain costs as they are shown in the proposal, the program will be able to cover new costs with revenues it generates through the MRR and local funding by the fifth year of its implementation.

In summary, through a BSN-Completion track the program will prepare at the baccalaureate degree level students who are already Registered Nurses with an associates degree or hospital diploma; and it will educate new nursing students to become baccalaureate-prepared Registered Nurses, upon graduation from the program and successful passing of the national licensure examination known as the “NCLEX”. Recruitment of students will focus on the Lowcountry region served by the institution. The need for the program is reported to be great, both in the region the USC-Beaufort campus serves and throughout the state and country. The program proposal has strong local support from the hospital and healthcare communities, which have demonstrated commitment to the program through monetary and in-kind contributions, including clinical sites, equipment, and personnel-sharing. Through scholarship assistance, the program seeks to attract qualified persons from historically underrepresented groups. The increased number of baccalaureate graduates from the program will be contribute to meeting healthcare needs and employer demand in the Lowcountry especially, and in South Carolina generally. Special private gifts and local public funds will be used to supplement tuition, fees, and the state’s investment in the new BSN program.

## **Recommendation**

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends that the Commission approve USC-Beaufort's proposed program leading to the Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Nursing through two tracks: the BSN-Completion track, to be implemented in Fall 2007; and the BSN- Generic track, to be implemented in Fall 2008, provided that no "unique cost" or special state funding be required or requested; and provided also that the Generic track receives State Board of Nursing approval prior to the matriculation of students into it in Fall 2008; and provided further that the program of study receives Collegiate Council on Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditation within the first five years of its implementation.