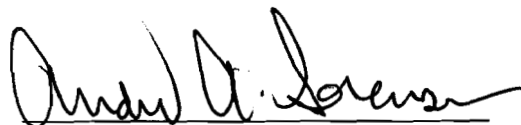


**University of South Carolina  
College of Nursing**

**Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree  
Program Modification**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew A. Sorenson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**Andrew A. Sorenson**

Classification:

Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Degree

To be offered by the USC College of Nursing on the USC Lancaster and USC Salkehatchie campuses

USC College of Nursing

Baccalaureate, 4-year program

Proposed Date of Implementation – Fall Semester 2008

CIP Code.....511601

Program Modification

The purpose of this program modification is to offer the existing Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program on two campuses within the University system (USC Salkehatchie and USL Lancaster). Place-bound students will be able to complete their general education requirements and pre-nursing courses through their respective regional campus, then seek admission to the Columbia campus for their upper-division courses. All courses will be taught on the two regional campuses. The total number of credit hours remains unchanged – at 128 semester hours – 64 at lower division and 64 at upper division. The proposed date of implementation is Fall Semester 2008.

**Justification of Need for the Proposed Program Modification**

Nurses comprise the largest percentage of the South Carolina healthcare workforce. By the year 2020, researchers with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) predict the projected supply of nurses will increase by 11 percent, whereas the demand for that same time period is expected to increase by 48 percent. The South Carolina Hospital Association reports the current RN vacancy rates range up to 18 percent within the state. Close to 75 percent of South Carolina RNs are over age 40 and will be eligible to retire within the next 2 decades. Employers of registered nurses (RN) in the state recruit up to 40 percent of their RNs from out of state. Exacerbating the shortage is an anticipated increase of over 500 new beds opening within the next two years. As a result of these factors, South Carolina is faced with insufficient numbers of students in the pipeline to replace those retiring. Additionally, there will not be enough nurses to fill those new jobs which are created to meet the state needs – therefore, the projected gap between supply and demand will continue to widen.

The Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) reports that over 1,100 qualified students were turned away from South Carolina nursing programs due to a lack of faculty. The South Carolina Deans and Directors Council reported 52 full-time faculty positions open in the fall of 2006, with a minimum of 100 more expected to be eligible for retirement by 2010. The supply and demand ratio within the faculty ranks is already out of balance and not expected to improve unless colleges and universities rethink the traditional methods in which nursing students are taught.

Adding to this critical nursing needs scenario are the research data documenting that the basic education of RNs is a more critical factor than many realize. Dr. Linda Aiken's research team has presented data showing that units staffed with higher numbers of RNs have better patient outcomes. Additionally, the data show that increased percentages of baccalaureate and higher degree nurses further improve these outcomes. About 74 percent of registered nurses in South Carolina have an associate degree in nursing, with national accrediting bodies and nursing organizations recommending that 66 percent of registered nurses in each state should have a baccalaureate degree. A top priority for South Carolina needs to be the development of strategies for cost-effective ways to increase the numbers of BSN graduates.

The state of South Carolina currently has nine BSN programs and 13 Associate Degree programs. Most of these report faculty shortages and the inability to admit all qualified students making application. The

strategic question that must be addressed over the next few critical years is whether or not it is cost-effective to continue to open new nursing programs when the already-existing programs have difficulty finding and keeping qualified faculty members. Would resources be better utilized by creative expansion of existing programs in conjunction with better use of internal resources and enhanced collaborations with the service sector and other public/private business partners?

The University of South Carolina is prepared to address these challenges. The above facts support the efforts of USC leaders – working within a system – to seek creative and innovative methods and partnerships to expand the numbers of baccalaureate-prepared nurses to better meet the current and future health care needs of the public. USC is in a unique position to offer this proposal for a program modification that directly addresses these priorities.

The USC College of Nursing has an accredited nursing program offering the baccalaureate degree, but has limited admissions into the upper division courses due to insufficient numbers of faculty. When approached by potential funding partners from the private sector, leadership teams determined that the best use of additional funding would *not* be to simply expand the USC Columbia campus nursing program, but to seek ways to better utilize partnerships between Columbia, service sector partners and the USC Regional Campuses – specifically USC Salkehatchie (USCS) and USC Lancaster (USCL). These sites were chosen for two reasons: 1) local needs assessments indicating a severe shortage of BSN prepared RNs to work in local care facilities; and 2) private partners willing to provide the necessary funding for the proposed program expansion(s).

The USC Regional Campuses bring the resources of the entire University to citizens throughout the state. One aspect of their mission focuses on provision of the first two years of undergraduate education in preparation for upper division courses through the USC Columbia campus. Utilizing resources throughout this system, offering USC Columbia courses taught by USC approved faculty becomes an avenue for streamlining articulation from the regional campuses to the main campus academic programs.

The purpose of this request for program modification is to provide for the offering of nursing courses on the USCS and USCL campuses in order to promote access for students into the USC CON and to allow USCS and USCL to offer the lower level pre-nursing courses required for the Baccalaureate of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree.

Early indicators show that there is huge interest in this program modification with ample supply of lower division students who will be competitive for admission into upper division. The College of Nursing plans on admitting up to 32 qualified students per year (16 from the USCS campus and 16 from the USCL campus) beginning in Fall 2008. This expansion of the Columbia program, utilizing both existing and new resources within the USC system, has the potential to add 32 BSN-prepared nurses annually into the South Carolina workforce, beginning within the next three years. This represents an almost 20 percent increase in USC nursing graduates through program expansion versus opening a new program. Using existing faculty and physical facilities, the primary need for new faculty is minimized to clinical nursing instructors rather than classroom professors. As a clear alternative to opening new BSN nursing programs, this initiative brings far less burden to bear (and far less pull on limited resources) for the other nursing programs in the state.

### **Duplication**

While there are nine baccalaureate programs and 13 associate degree programs which lead to the nursing licensure, all report that their programs are full and they are turning away qualified applicants. Strategic expansion of existing programs is a clear option over duplicating with new nursing schools.

## **Relationship of the proposed program to existing programs at the proposing institution**

Just as students enrolled on the USC Regional campuses are readied for admission into upper division majors on the Columbia campus, those BSN-prepared nurses resulting from this program modification will be prepared for entry into graduate studies. Graduate studies will be available in multiple venues to

## **Relationship of the proposed program to other institutions via inter-institutional cooperation Collaboration**

The program modification is a collaborative effort and is predicated on collaborative relationships between the regional campuses and USC Columbia. USCS and USCL will provide the first two years of the USC Columbia pre-nursing curriculum. This consists of general education requirements and pre-nursing courses. Faculty and syllabi for all pre-nursing classes will be approved by USC Columbia to ensure articulation. During the lower division, faculty will be hired by the Regional Campuses and students will be enrolled on those campuses. All upper division nursing courses offered in years three and four will be provided by USC Columbia faculty through a combination of distance education and on-site instruction. During the upper division, faculty are hired by USC Columbia and students are enrolled at USC Columbia.

Students matriculating in the A.A. or A.S. programs may apply for admission to USCS or USCL by indicating pre-nursing as a career interest. After successful completion of the first two years of study, students will apply directly to Columbia. Admissions requirements will be the same for both on-campus and off-campus programs,

A faculty nursing coordinator will be designated on both the USCS and USCL campuses and will serve to assist students in the program and to act as liaison with the College of Nursing. The College of Nursing will designate a coordinator to work directly with the USCS and USCL nursing coordinators to facilitate the successful progression of students within the programs.

## **Budget Issues**

The total new costs for this program modification are estimated at about \$250,000/academic year for each site. These funds cover the costs of faculty to teach the six lower-division nursing courses and the additional clinical nursing faculty required for the Columbia upper division courses. Funding estimates include salary/fringe for a nursing coordinator for each campus, as well as money to cover travel and meeting expenses. USC Columbia faculty teaching the didactic courses will incorporate the 32 off-site upper division students into their classrooms via technology; therefore no additional costs for classroom instruction are anticipated as the infra-structure of distance learning is already in place.

Required funding for the 3-year USC Salkehatchie partnership is in hand from The Duke Endowment (through the Allendale County Hospital) and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation. Required funding for the USC Lancaster partnership is in hand from the Piedmont Medical Center/Tenet South Carolina.

USCS is in the process of seeking external funding for basic nursing skill labs equipment in order to provide additional support for nursing students taking upper division classes. USCL already has a nursing skills lab that may be used for these purposes. However, neither of the Regional Campuses will necessarily require these facilities for approval of this program modification, as plans are in place to bring these 32 students to the USC CON campus for coursework requiring this type of lab.