

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION**

**COMMITTEE:** Assessment and Accountability

**NO.:** AAC 07-11

**COMMITTEE DATE:** February 7, 2007

**BOARD DATE:** February 15, 2007

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**MOVED:** The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the Articles of Amendment of **Becker College** to award the **Bachelor of Science in Nursing**.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 69, Section 30 et seq.

Contact: Aundrea Kelley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Policy

# **BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

February 2007

Becker College  
Bachelor of Science in Nursing

## **INTENT**

In January 2006, Becker College filed a petition with the Board of Higher Education to seek approval to offer a program for registered nurses leading to a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). This proposed program is designed to build upon the College's Associate in Science in Nursing program, which prepares students for the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses and for the beginning level of nursing practice. The proposed RN-to-BSN program will consist of two additional years of full-time study leading to the baccalaureate degree. Part-time students may pursue a longer sequence. The BSN is meant to produce graduates with deeper and broader levels of assessment, communication, critical thinking, and technical skills than those acquired by graduates of the associate program. The proposed program also is intended to provide students with the competencies for professional practice, community health assessment and leadership, as well as an academic foundation for graduate study in nursing.

## **INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW**

Becker College is a small, private non-profit educational corporation, accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Current total enrollment is approximately 1,660 students. The College was incorporated originally by an act of the Massachusetts Legislature on December 4, 1940, as Becker School of Business Administration and Secretarial Science with the power to award the degree of Associate in Science, St. 1943, C. 555. In March 1977, the College acquired the Leicester campus and began offering courses in Leicester as well.

In 1990, an Act of the Legislature, amending the institution's charter, authorized a change of name to Becker College and award the Associate in Science degree in the following fields: liberal arts, business, secretarial science, education, health and animal sciences, technical studies, retailing and human services, environmental studies, law and criminal justice, communications, sports and recreation, travel and tourism hospitality, and to offer any and all other courses or programs related or incidental thereto. In 1993 Becker filed Articles of Amendment pursuant to M.G.L.C. 69, s. 30 and came under the jurisdiction of the Board of Higher Education in May 1993 when it was authorized to award, in addition to its associate degree programs, the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Bachelor of Science in Legal Studies, and Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. In May 1996, the College was authorized to award the degree, Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Science. In April 1997, Becker College was authorized to grant the degree, Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice. In March 1998, the Board approved the Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology and two years later, in April 2000, the College was authorized to grant the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts. In 2001, the Board of Higher Education approved the Bachelor of Arts in Design.

## **ACADEMIC AND RELATED MATTERS**

While, the core competencies for the current ASN and the proposed RN-to-BSN programs include assessment, communication, critical thinking, and technical skills, the level at which graduates of each program meet these competencies is the distinguishing factor between

them. For example, in the area of assessment, the ASN graduate demonstrates competency in the management of individual clients, whereas the RN-to-BSN graduate will demonstrate competency in managing the health of communities and integrating the concepts of wellness, health promotion, risk reduction and disease prevention. The ASN graduate is prepared to think critically in terms of delivery of care to individual clients across the life span. The BSN graduate, in contrast, is taught to integrate critical thinking skills in the delivery of care to families, groups and communities while integrating research with clinical judgment and client values.

*Curriculum (Attachment A).* Proposed BSN program graduation requirements include completion of a minimum of 126 credit hours of which 48 credits are in general education courses, a minimum grade of “C” in each of the nursing courses, a cumulative grade point average of 2.0, and a passing grade in the practicum. (These requirements reflect student completion of requirements for the Associate in Science in Nursing Degree [or equivalent for diploma-prepared students] and the proposed RN-to-BSN program.)

RN-to-BSN program students must take 18 courses (55 credits) to complete the baccalaureate degree. Twelve of the courses are in nursing and include theory and research courses as well as two practicum courses. The practicum is designed to be completed in two consecutive semesters at a healthcare setting (e.g., hospice, psychiatric setting, community, obstetric-gynecology, or a primary care/specialty clinic) with a focus in community health. The remaining credits include humanities and math courses.

*Admission.* Admission to the proposed RN-to-BSN program will require:

- Completion of an ASN degree at Becker College or another regionally accredited institution of higher education within the last seven years
- Completion of the National Council Licensing Examination (NCLEX) or a current Massachusetts registered nursing license. (Diploma-prepared RNs who have graduated from an accredited institution but who do not possess an ASN degree will have their academic credits evaluated and be given a plan of study.)
- Completion of the following prerequisite courses with grades of “C” or better: Math or Algebra I, Biology, Chemistry.
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Provider Certification Level C (American Heart Association).
- A 2.0 cumulative GPA from the basic National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC)-accredited nursing program courses. (NLNAC is the accrediting body for all types of nursing education.
- Criminal Record Investigation (CORI).
- Required medical documentation.

*Tuition and Enrollment.* Becker anticipates an enrollment of approximately 25 students in the first and second years of the proposed RN-to-BSN program. Tuition and fees will be consistent with other bachelor’s programs. In 2005-06, annual tuition, board, and fees for resident students totaled \$28,354 and for commuter students totaled \$19,904.

*Administration and Governance.* The proposed program will be administered by the Director of the RN-to-BSN program, who will report to the Dean of Nursing. The Dean of Nursing oversees and allocates resources to all nursing programs at Becker College and reports to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The faculty has a primary role in the governance of the academic programs and development of new programs. Faculty meetings of the nursing program include all nursing faculty.

## RESOURCES

*Faculty and Fiscal Resources.* Since proposing the program, the Department of Nursing has hired five additional full-time faculty and two full-time clinical facilitators. The increase in the salary and benefits budget solely for new faculty hires in nursing is \$198,000 in 2006 and \$211,000 in 2007. In addition to faculty salaries of the new hires, \$43,000 for start-up expenses has been budgeted for instructional, administrative, and media supplies (exclusive of library budget items) with an on-going yearly expense of approximately \$10,000 for such items.

*Library.* An initial expense of \$30,000 for library and database costs is earmarked during the RN-to-BSN start-up phase. An additional yearly expense of \$5,000 for subscription renewals and further acquisitions is planned for each subsequent year of operation.

*Facilities and Equipment.* There are no major additional physical resources required for the program RN-to-BSN program. Existing classroom, clinical laboratory space, library, and common spaces are adequate to support the anticipated student enrollment.

## EXTERNAL REVIEW AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

*Visiting Committee.* The proposed program was evaluated by an external visiting committee comprising Phyllis A. Currier, Ed.D., RN, Professor, RN Program Director, College of Nursing, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Visiting Committee Chair; Wanda E. Anderson, Nursing/Health Sciences Bibliographer, Boston College; Ellen Ceppetelli, MS, RN, Chair, Department of Nursing, Colby Sawyer College; and Marie B. McCarthy, MS, RN, Vice President for Education, Lawrence Memorial/Regis College Nursing and Medical Radiography Programs. The Visiting Committee reviewed the petition and appendices in preparation for the site visit, which took place March 5-8, 2006. During the visit, the Committee met with administrators, faculty, staff, and students; and toured the facilities.

*Findings.* The Visiting Committee found the BSN proposal to be consistent with the mission and purpose of Becker College and that it built upon the strengths of the existing associate degree in nursing. The Committee also noted that current students felt supported by the nursing faculty and that local health care agency representatives viewed current nursing faculty as clinically competent. The Committee stated that Becker College shows great strength—in that physical plant and facilities are well-maintained and equipped—and adequate numbers of laboratories with sufficient space, as well as computer labs, exist to support the proposed nursing curriculum. The Visiting Committee identified the following areas of concern and recommendations with subsequent actions taken by Becker College in response.

- The Committee noted that the proposed curriculum was not characterized by appropriate breadth, depth, sequential progression, and synthesis at the baccalaureate level in nursing education. The recommendation was to develop program outcomes that reflect *Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice* and professional nursing standards. Becker College retained a consultant and held multiple faculty meetings to respond to the Visiting Committee's recommendation. Course syllabi were modified to address the concerns of the Visiting Committee, and core competencies were further defined to meet learning objectives. Changes were made to make explicit connections between the curriculum and outcomes that reflect *Essentials*. Becker College also submitted a revised and improved evaluation plan. A part-time curricular plan was developed as well.

- In response to the Visiting Committee's structural concern of having separate directors for the current ASN and proposed RN-to-BSN program, which would have the potential for issues concerning integrity of the curriculum and fair distribution of resources, Becker College reorganized the Department of Nursing structure and hired a dean of nursing to oversee the entire department.
- The Visiting Committee voiced concern that the faculty as a whole had not demonstrated a program of scholarship that would sufficiently support the proposed program and that there would be a heavy reliance on adjunct faculty to fulfill the purposes of the proposed program. The College has since hired two doctorally qualified faculty and initiated a system for faculty evaluation to include increased emphasis on scholarship.
- The Visiting Committee suggested that curtains or others methods of ensuring privacy be installed in the Health Assessment laboratory. Becker College has since installed curtains in the laboratory.

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

The required public hearing was held on December 13, 2006, at 10:30 a.m. at the Board of Higher Education. No comments were offered in opposition to the proposed program.

### **STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION**

After an exhaustive evaluation of all documentation submitted, staff is satisfied that the proposed Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Becker College meets the criteria set forth in 610 CMR 2.08 (3) in the Degree-Granting Regulations for Independent Institutions of Higher Education accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Recommendation is for approval.

## Attachment A: Curriculum

### ASN Curriculum

#### Year 1 (37 credits)

##### Fall Semester

BC 101 First Year Experience 2 cr  
BI 253 Anatomy & Physiology I 4 cr  
EN 101 English Composition I 3 cr  
NU 113 Health Assessment 3 cr  
NU 114 Fundamentals of Nursing 4 cr  
PY 117 Human Growth & Development 3 cr

##### Spring Semester

BI 252 Microbiology 4 cr  
BI 254 Anatomy & Physiology II 4 cr  
NU 115 Nursing II 10 cr

#### Year 2 (34 credits)

##### Fall Semester

CS 101 Introduction to Computers 3 cr  
NU 221 Nursing III 10 cr  
PY 101 Introduction to Psychology 3 cr

##### Spring Semester

EN 103 Writing About Literature 3 cr  
NU 222 Nursing IV 10 cr  
NU 225 Nursing Seminar 2 cr  
SO 101 Introduction to Sociology 3 cr

### RN-to-BSN Curriculum

#### Year 1 (28 credits)

##### Fall Semester

NU 301 Philosophical & Theoretical Foundations of Nursing Practice 3 cr  
NU 302 Holistic Theory and Techniques 3 cr  
MA 220 Statistics 3 cr  
EN 200+English Elective 3 cr

##### Spring Semester

NU 310 Research in Nursing 3 cr  
NU 303 Applied Pharmacology 3 cr  
NU 311 Health & Physical Assessment of Individuals and Families 4 cr  
NU 312 Business of Nursing 3 cr  
HU 999 Humanities Elective 3 cr

#### Year 2 (27 credits)

##### Fall Semester

NU 401 Nursing in a Global Society 3 cr  
NU 4XX Nursing Elective\* 3 cr  
NU 402 Independent Practicum I 3 cr  
HU 310/312 Intercultural Elective 3 cr  
PI 302 Health Ethics 3 cr

##### Spring Semester

NU 403 Independent Practicum II 3 cr  
NU 411 Professional Nursing Seminar 3 cr  
NU 4XX Nursing Elective\* 3 cr  
HU 999 Humanities Elective 3 cr

\* Nursing Electives: NU 441 Advanced Holistic Nursing Practice; NU 442 Nursing Leadership and Politics; NU 443 Professional Nurse as Educator; and NU 444 Health Promotion and Disease Prevention.