

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Assessment and Accountability

NO.: AAC 08-01

BOARD DATE: October 19, 2007

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the application of **Framingham State College** to award the **Master of Science in Nursing**.

One year after graduating the program's first class, the institution shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application and in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, faculty, resources, and program effectiveness.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b)

Contact: Aundrea Kelley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Policy

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

October 2007

Framingham State College

Master of Science in Nursing

INTENT AND MISSION

Framingham State College (FSC) has submitted an expedited proposal to offer a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN). The proposal for an MSN builds upon the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program for registered nurses introduced in 1983 and the Graduate Certificate in Nursing Education, introduced in 2003. The goal of the proposed MSN program with concentrations in Nursing Education and Nursing Leadership is to prepare nurses with a strong theoretical foundation in research, nursing and related theories, healthcare policy, ethics, cultural competencies, and informatics/technology, as well as clinical expertise as a nurse educator or nurse leader. Further, the proposed MSN is designed to be a part-time program for working registered nurses, combining online and face-to-face classroom instruction.

The proposed MSN program is closely linked with the mission and priorities of Framingham State College. An important part of the Framingham State College mission is to fulfill the workforce needs of the Commonwealth with an emphasis on the rapidly growing high technology and MetroWest service region. Framingham State College is the only public four-year institution of higher learning located in the MetroWest region. The proposed MSN degree program is designed to help address the Commonwealth's serious shortage of nurses by preparing nurse educators and leaders and will help serve the educational needs of the almost 7,000 nurses without advanced degrees who live and/or work in the greater MetroWest region.

The proposal was approved by the Framingham State College Board of Trustees on May 24, 2007. The letter of intent was circulated on May 16, 2007. No responses were received.

NEED AND DEMAND

Student Demand

In November 2006 surveys were sent to current students and graduates of the RN to BSN (undergraduate) and the Graduate Certificate Program in Nursing Education programs at Framingham State College, as well as to staff nurses at Natick Visiting Nurses Association (VNA), Metro West Medical Center (Framingham and Natick Campuses), and Milford Regional Medical Center. Findings from the 270 responses included the following:

- Seventy percent of respondents do not have an MSN and would consider enrolling in an MSN program at Framingham State College.
- Of RNs who indicated that they had an MSN, 61.4% would have considered enrolling in an MSN program at FSC, had it been available.
- There was a strong preference for Nursing Education as follows:
 - Nursing Education: 59.3% (N = 134)
 - Nursing Leadership 28.8% (N = 65)

- Another 11.5% (N = 26) of RNs indicated that they would be interested in BOTH concentrations.
- A majority of RNs preferred a combination of online, hybrid, and face-to-face courses.
- A survey of graduates of the Certificate Program (N = 40) revealed that 64% report their long-term goal is to obtain the MSN.

National and State Need

According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2005), nursing colleges and universities nationally turned away 30,000 qualified applicants from baccalaureate and graduate level nursing programs. Massachusetts' findings are consistent with these national trends. The current shortage of nursing faculty in Massachusetts threatens the quality of clinical education for nurses and is significantly impacted by the low percentage of master's-prepared nurses in Massachusetts. Based on surveys of nursing programs of student enrollment projections, approximately 671 to 1,118 clinical nurse educators will be needed at RN programs throughout the state during the academic year of 2006-2007. This is a faculty vacancy rate of approximately 8%, which parallels national figures (MACN).

Moreover, the potential that in the future nurses may be required to hold the bachelor's degree would result in additional demand for the MSN. Federal policy advisors to Congress and the U.S. Secretary for Health and Human Services on nursing issues have urged that at least 66% of the nation's workforce hold baccalaureate and higher degrees in nursing by 2010 (National Advisory Council on Nursing Education and Practice, NACNEP, 1996).

The number of MSN degrees conferred from 2001 to 2005 by Massachusetts public colleges and universities has declined. In 2001 there was a total of 145 degrees conferred. That number decreased to 92 in 2005. This decrease comes at a time when the Commonwealth is in need of more nurses prepared at the MSN level. The reasons for the decline have not been fully identified, but the addition of a new MSN program at Framingham State College with concentrations in Nursing Education and in Nursing Leadership will assist in increasing the availability of nurses prepared for clinical leadership and/or educator roles in the MetroWest region.

The application included eleven letters of endorsement for the MSN proposal from area health facilities and organizations, including the Board of Registration in Nursing, Metrowest Community Healthcare Foundation, and Marlborough Hospital.

Similarities and Differences with Other Existing Public and Private Programs

While there are five MSN programs in Massachusetts with concentrations in Nursing Education and/or Nursing Administration, there are no graduate nursing programs serving the greater MetroWest region that offer concentrations in the areas of education and leadership. The existing programs are:

- American International College, Springfield
Nursing Administration, Nursing Education
- Boston College, Newton
Nursing Administration
- Northeastern University, Boston
Nursing Administration
- Regis College, Weston
Nursing Administration

- Salem State College, Salem
Nursing Administration, Nursing Education

ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

Applicants must have a baccalaureate degree in Nursing from an accredited program; an overall undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, including an average of 3.25 in nursing courses; and an undergraduate, introductory course in statistics. Additional criteria for success in the proposed MSN program will include working knowledge of computers, current knowledge of the research process, and knowledge of the American Psychological Association standards for writing scholarly papers

During its first year of operation, it is anticipated that the proposed MSN program will attract an enrollment of approximately 35 students. A cohort will be admitted every two years (2008, 2010). Upon full implementation, the proposed program is expected to enroll between 48-80 matriculated students over a four-year period. The College projects its enrollment as follows:

MSN Proposal: Four-Year Enrollment Projection, 2008-2012				
	Cohort 1, Year 1 (2008-09)	Year 2 (2009-10)	Cohort 2, Year 3 (2010-11)	Year 4 (2011-2012)
Annual Initial (HCT) Enrollment in MSN, New	35	0	35	0
Continuing Enrollment in MSN (HCT)	0	27	2	28 (1 from cohort 1, 27 from cohort 2)
Enrollment in Graduate Certificate (one-year program)	0	15	0	15
Total HCT Enrollment	35	42	37	43

Based on 77% retention rate between years 1 and 2; 70% graduation rate after two years; 75% after four years.

CURRICULUM (Attachment A)

The proposed Master of Science in Nursing with concentrations in Nursing Education and Nursing Leadership intends to prepare nurses with a strong theoretical foundation in research, nursing and related theories, healthcare policy, ethics, cultural competencies, and informatics/technology as well as clinical expertise as a nurse educator or nurse leader.

The proposed MSN requires nine courses for completion, including five core courses and four concentration courses. Each course is equivalent to four credits, resulting in a total of 36 graduate credits for program completion. Students must complete the program prerequisite requirement (Introduction to Statistics) before enrolling in a graduate-level course. A graduate student who enters the proposed program with the prerequisite completed is expected to be able to complete the MSN core and concentration courses in two years if taking two courses per semester as well as one course during the first summer.

The program will integrate technology across the curriculum; all courses will be delivered through a hybrid model that is mostly online, with face-to-face meetings every other week. This format is especially well-suited for the program's target audience – employed nurses – and will make the program more accessible to students.

Academic and community partners for the Nursing Education and Nursing Leadership Practica will include at least 25 college and community center programs.

RESOURCES

Faculty

The College anticipates the need for two additional full-time faculty to teach in the MSN program. One of the new hires will be full-time in the MSN program and will serve as the graduate program coordinator. The second new full-time faculty member will teach in both the undergraduate and graduate programs as needed. At least one of the existing full-time undergraduate faculty will also teach both in the graduate and undergraduate programs. There will be two adjunct faculty, both with long-term commitment and service, to teach undergraduate courses. The College anticipates hiring additional faculty, as needed, subject to the growth of the nursing program. New faculty hires will possess appropriate doctoral credentials qualifying them to teach at the graduate level.

Instructional Resources

The Henry Whittemore Library currently serves students in undergraduate and graduate nursing programs and will continue to support MSN program resource requirements in terms of print materials, electronic databases, and interdisciplinary databases. The College is committed to providing future instructional resources as needed to support the proposed MSN program.

Equipment and facilities

The Nursing Department is located in Hemenway Hall, the Science Building. This building houses all the science departments, as well as the mathematics, consumer sciences and computer science departments. The Nursing Department has five offices for faculty, a secretary's office/reception area, the Health Assessment Laboratory, the Nursing Computer Laboratory, photocopy room, media room, and storage room.

MSN Advisory Board

A professional advisory board will provide input to the MSN Faculty Committee for use in program review and evaluation, formulation of innovative curricula, participation in MSN classes, identifying practicum opportunities, and supporting faculty research and development. The following persons have agreed to participate as advisory board members:

Cathy Glover, Program Director, MetroWest Community Health Care Foundation
Mary Haley, Professor Emeritus, Nursing
Thomas Hijeck, Chief Nursing Officer, MetroWest Medical Center
Lily Hsu, Dean of Health Sciences, Massachusetts Bay Community College
Patricia Navin, Director of Nursing Education, Marlborough Medical Center
Karen Wians, Director of Nursing Education, Milford Regional Medical Center

BUDGET (Attachment B)

The College submitted a revenue and expense budget for the proposed program contained in Attachment B.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

The College submitted measurable program implementation goals for the proposed MSN including:

- The Steering Committee, and later, the Graduate Faculty Committee, will make recommendations to the Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education regarding an advertising/marketing plan to recruit 35-40 students in to the MSN Program every two years. The graduate faculty will advise both prospective and enrolled MSN students to promote retention and successful completion of program requirements.
- Pursue accreditation for the MSN program through Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education and/or National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission in spring 2011.
- Periodic Program Assessment/Program Evaluation
Student Course Evaluations: At the end of each course, a designated member of each class distributes and collects the course evaluations completed by the students present in the class. The designated student turns these evaluations over to the Office of Graduate and Continuing Education. On-line students complete a comparable evaluation but use on-line technology for completion of the course evaluation. The results are sent to each faculty member and to the Department Chair for discussion and course modifications, as necessary.

Alumni Surveys: Six months after graduation, all graduate school alumni are sent a survey to collect data on their satisfaction with the program as a whole and on their career status. Results of this survey are shared with department faculty as part of the annual Curriculum Workshop.

Graduate Education Council: This governing body, made up of selected Graduate Administration, including the Graduate Dean, Associate Dean, Registrar, as well as faculty elected by the overall faculty, reviews and approves programs and courses submitted by the academic departments.

Curriculum/Program Change Process: Proposed program changes as well as curriculum changes are submitted in writing to the Graduate Education Council for review and evaluation. The Graduate Council votes either to recommend items and submits these items to the Graduate Dean for action or returns the items to appropriate Program Coordinators as not receiving approval. The Graduate Dean can also award one-time approval to new courses without going through the entire Graduate Education Council process.

EXTERNAL REVIEW AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

The MSN proposal was reviewed by Nancy Hoffart, RN, Ph.D., Professor and Dean, Northeastern University, School of Nursing; and Paulette Seymour, RN, Ph.D., Dean and Professor, Graduate School of Nursing, University of Massachusetts, Worcester Campus

Review Findings

Overall, the reviewers commended Framingham State College for the considerable work put into the proposal, finding it to be a solid and well-developed program responding to the needs of the workforce as well as fitting within the mission of the College. The two reviewers identified similar areas to strengthen the proposal, including the elimination of the term, “advanced nursing practice,” to be replaced with “advanced nursing role” when addressing nursing education and nursing leadership in the curriculum; to identify and map the standards of the nursing leadership concentration; and include the contact hour requirements in all syllabi.

Institutional Response

The MSN program objectives, course descriptions and course objectives for all courses were edited to be consistent with the reviewers’ recommendations. The College submitted revised and mapped program objectives with the nursing leadership concentration courses and also revised the syllabi to include contact hour requirements.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

After careful review and deliberation of the proposal and all supporting documentation, staff recommendation is for approval of the Master of Science in Nursing at Framingham State College.

One year after graduating the program’s first class, the institution shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application and in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, faculty, resources, and program effectiveness.

Attachment A – Curriculum Outline
Framingham State College

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

Curriculum Outline

Major Required (Core) Courses (Total # of courses required = 5)			
Course Number	Course Title	Credit Hours	
NURC 905	Health and Education Resources and Policies	4	
NURC 915	Advanced Technology and Nursing Informatics	4	
NURC 925	Ethical, Social and Cultural Competencies	4	
NURC 971	Nursing Theory and Research I	4	
NURC 972	Nursing Theory and Research II	4	
	Subtotal # Core Credit Hours Required	20	

Students must complete one of the two Concentrations below:

Nursing Education Concentration (Total courses required = 4)			
NURE 941	Curriculum Design and Evaluation	4	
NURE 951	Course Development and Implementation	4	
NURE 981	Advanced Teaching Methods (Practicum I)	4	
NURE 991	Application of Technology to Education (Practicum II)	4	
	Subtotal # Elective Credit Hours Required	16	

or

Nursing Leadership Concentration (Total courses required = 4)			
NURL 943	Strategic Planning for Nursing's Future	4	
NURL 953	Role in Health Care Systems	4	
NURL 983	Practicum in Organizational Management Skills (Practicum I)	4	
NURL 993	Internship in Independent Leadership Skills (Practicum II)	4	
	Subtotal # Elective Credit Hours Required	16	

Attachment B: MSN Proposal: Four-Year Budget				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Revenue				
Tuition Per Course ¹	\$975	\$1004	\$1034	\$1065
Average Annual Tuition Per MSN Student ²	\$4875	\$4016	\$5170	\$4260
Average Annual Tuition Per Graduate Certificate Student ³		\$3012		\$3195
MSN Tuition ⁴	\$170,625	\$108,432	\$187,154	\$118,215
Graduate Certificate Tuition ⁵		\$45,180		\$47,925
Gross Revenue	\$170,625	\$153,612	\$187,154	\$166,140
Contribution to College and Overhead ⁶	\$44,642.50	\$39,171	\$46,233.50	\$40,686.50
Net Revenue	\$125,983	\$114,441	\$140,921	\$125,454
Net Expenses (see following page)	\$211,000	\$215,600	\$216,745	\$223,445
Annual Subsidy Required	(\$85,018)	(\$101,159)	(\$75,825)	(\$98,002)
Average Annual Subsidy Required	(\$100,000)	(\$100,000)	(\$100,000)	(\$100,000)

¹ Assumes a 3% increase in tuition per year.

² Assumes students enroll in average of 5 courses year 1, four courses year 2.

³ Assumes students enroll in average of 3 courses every other year.

⁴ Average Tuition Per Student by Number of Students in MSN Program.

⁵ Average Tuition Per Student by Number of Students in Graduate Certificate Program.

⁶ Assumes \$240 per total course enrollment and \$75.50 fee per person (MSN and Certificate combined)

MSN Proposal: Four-Year Budget, continued...				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Expenses				
Faculty Salaries				
Number of Sections Per Year (MSN and Certificate)	10	11	10	11
Average Faculty Salary Per AY ⁷ (1.5 FTE)	\$135,000	\$139,725	\$144,615	\$149,677
Adjunct Faculty Cost ⁸	\$6,000	\$18,000	\$6,420	\$19,260
Total Faculty Salaries	\$141,000	\$157,725	\$151,035	\$168,937
Other Expenses				
Program Support: ⁹	\$25,000	\$25,875	\$26,780	\$27,718
Equipment/Supplies Support	\$15,000	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$10,000
Marketing	\$25,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$15,000
Professional Development	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Total Other Expenses	\$65,000	\$60,875	\$61,780	\$57,718
Net Expenses	\$211,000	\$215,600	\$216,745	\$ 223,445

⁷ Assumes Associate Professor rank and 3% increase per year.

⁸ Average Adjunct Faculty Salary per Course Number of Sections per year. (MSN -- one course during summer after years 1 and 3 only;

Certificate: two courses, fall and one course, spring, for years 2 and 4)

⁹ Advising, coordination, resources

