

New Program Proposal
USC-Aiken
Bachelor of Science in Nursing--Generic Track

Summary

USC-Aiken requests approval to add the Bachelor of Science in Nursing-Generic Track (BSN-Generic) program to its curriculum for implementation in Fall 2000. A summary of the proposal was submitted to the Commission on April 13, 1999. On June 10, 1999, the proposal was reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs. Substantive comments were received at the June 10 meeting of ACAP from representatives of MUSC and Clemson University, who voiced the opinion that the proposal as submitted at that time was unable to be accredited by the National League of Nursing's Accreditation Commission (NLNAC). As a result of those comments, USC-Aiken chose to withdraw and rework the proposal. The proposal was then discussed again, and approved by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs unanimously on October 12, 1999. On October 14, 1999, the USC Board of Trustees approved the revised proposal.

South Carolina's nursing population for new and existing nurses is approximately 1/3 BSN-prepared and 2/3 ADN-prepared. Both the Pew Health Professions Commission report (issued in 1995) and the South Carolina Colleagues in Caring study (issued in 1999) call for a professional nursing population that turns those percentages around in exactly the same proportions so that 2/3 of the professional nurses will be BSN-prepared by the year 2010. If that scenario stands any chance of happening, programs such as the USC-Aiken proposal must be instituted and existing BSN programs must be sustained and increased in numbers. The increased "critical thinking" capacity of the BSN-Generic program and the increased need for professional nurses in healthcare settings that are increasingly complex in terms of scientific and healthcare techniques, business acumen, and sociological diversity argue strongly for baccalaureate-prepared nursing, according to both the Pew Report and the Colleagues in Caring study.

The Aiken area of the state is growing in population and in healthcare facilities. Hospitals and long-term care facilities, as well as home health and rural health delivery systems, are all growing in the area. Need for this kind of program, therefore, appears to be both real and growing. Fifty percent of the institutional healthcare employers responding to USC-Aiken's survey of need stated that they offer tuition reimbursement for the ADN to BSN students already, because of the need for more highly qualified nursing personnel in their facilities.

The Colleagues in Caring report called specifically for the development of a BSN- Generic program at USC-Aiken. Already the campus has both a successful ADN program and a successful BSN-Completion program. The BSN-Generic adds a dimension to the current nursing program which is needed statewide, needed regionally, and is completely in keeping with the mission of a four-year institution.

In October 1999, through a team of external expert consultants the Commission conducted a statewide review of all BSN and graduate programs of nursing in South Carolina's public institutions of higher education. As part of that review, the consultants' team was requested to comment upon USC-Aiken's request to add the BSN-Generic Track to its existing academic programs in nursing. The team's response concurs with the institution's assessment of the desirability of and need for the proposed program track. The team's report cautions, however, that the program should have adequate clinical faculty to provide the appropriate 1:8 faculty: student ratio as required by the State Board of Nursing.

The curriculum will require the addition of seven new courses. Two existing courses in the ADN program (neither of which contains a clinical component) will be incorporated into the BSN-Generic track. Six existing BSN-Completion courses will also be incorporated into the new BSN-Generic track.

The program will require one new full-time faculty member to be added to replace a nursing faculty member who retired in 1998 and a new part-time nursing clinical faculty member.

The number of students in this new program will begin at an enrollment of 10 (5.7 FTE) and will increase finally to a total of 40 (21.3 FTE) by the fourth year of the program's operation. The program is anticipated to graduate only 10 students per year, according to the proposal submitted. This is a small program, as the institution understands.

According to the institutional proposal, the addition of the BSN-Generic program at USC-Aiken will cost the institution \$51,800 in the second year of the program. This figure will rise to \$63,750 in the third year; \$75,375 in the fourth year; \$78,125 in the fifth year. These expenses are constituted entirely by salary and fringe benefits associated with the hiring of the faculty members identified as necessary by USC-Aiken. According to the institutional proposal, no other expenses are necessary for the addition of the BSN-Generic track to the nursing curriculum.

Shown below are the estimated Mission Resource Requirement (MRR) costs and new costs not funded by the MRR associated with implementation of the proposed program for its first five years. Also shown are the estimated revenues projected under the MRR 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
2000-01	\$129,427	0	\$129,427	\$0	\$20,522	\$20,522
2001-02	\$251,240	0	\$251,240	\$58,766	\$40,440	\$99,206
2002-03	\$365,440	0	\$365,440	\$115,250	\$58,698	\$173,948
2003-04	\$487,253	0	\$487,253	\$167,811	\$78,314	\$246,125
2004-05	\$487,253	0	\$487,253	\$223,154	\$78,314	\$301,468

These data demonstrate that if the Commission on Higher Education approves and the University of South Carolina-Aiken implements the proposed modification to add the BSN-Generic program, the program will not produce revenues which match MRR costs in any of the first five years it is in operation. The institution has indicated that it is willing to provide internal reassignment of existing funds to cover any additional institutional costs. The financial commitment of the institution to this program track and the corresponding need for the program track in the Aiken region and in the State make it a desirable addition to South Carolina's inventory of degree program options, despite the fact that the MRR costs will exceed the total revenue generated if current student enrollment projections are maintained.

According to the proposal submitted by USC-Aiken, the institution will seek to have the BSN-Generic track accredited through the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission (NLNAC) on the next regularly scheduled visit of the NLNAC to the Aiken campus. This will occur in 2004, the same time that the existing ADN and the BSN-Completion programs are scheduled for a re-accreditation visit.

Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends that the Commission approve the Generic Track leading to the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree to be implemented in Fall 2000, provided that:

- 1) The program meets all NLNAC requirements for accreditation during the next regularly scheduled accreditation visit to USC-Aiken (scheduled for 2004);
- 2) For purposes of performance funding, separate databases of statistics for students in the ADN and BSN-generic programs be separately kept and reported on first-time licensure results; and that databases be separately kept in ways which appropriately distinguish between BSN-Generic, BSN-

Completion, and ADN students and graduates on issues of student financial aid, age, gender, and race, and be made available upon request to the Commission;

- 3) The institution provide the appropriate faculty: student ratio in clinical situations, as required by the State Board of Nursing; and
- 4) Provided that no "unique cost" or other special State funds be required or requested.

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