

M O N T A N A B O A R D O F R E G E N T S
NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Institution: Montana State University - Great Falls College of Technology

Program Title: Certificate of Practical Nursing

1. How does this program advance the campus' academic mission and fit priorities?

MSU-Great Falls has offered the AAS in Practical Nursing since 1995 to respond to the needs of the healthcare industry for qualified nurses. During that time the institution has graduated over 200 students, the majority of whom secured employment in Great Falls or in the Golden Triangle. In order to continue to respond to the healthcare needs of the community and remain in compliance with Board of Regents criteria, it is necessary to transform the program from its current state as an AAS degree to a Certificate program.

2. How does this program fit the Board of Regents' goals and objectives?

The LPN program has responded to the regional needs since its inception in 1995. The need for licensed practical nurse employment will only increase in coming years in response to the long-term care needs of an increasing elderly population and the general growth of health care (U.S. Department of Labor). The demographics of Cascade and Chouteau Counties show a growing increase in the elderly population. In 2000, the Montana population of those 65 years and older was 13.4 percent (13.4%). While the national figure was 12.4 percent (12.4%). In Cascade County, the percentage of people 55 and older increased by over 15% between 2000 and 2004 (U.S. Census Bureau).

3. How does this program support or advance Montana's needs and interests?

The Montana Hospital Association conducted a recent survey on healthcare worker needs in the state. Seventy-five percent (75%) of all Montana hospitals participated in the survey. The following data is from that report, which was presented to the Nursing Coordinating Group in June 2004:

Thirty-nine licensed practical nursing (LPN) positions were vacant, representing 5.7 percent (5.7%) of the budgeted LPN positions;

The vacancy rate is significantly higher at so-called "critical access hospitals," which are the smaller, more rural facilities. At those facilities, the vacancy rate for LPNs is 9.7 percent (9.7%).

According to the respondents, they spent approximately \$27 million in the previous year on "replacement strategies" such as overtime pay and travelers. That figure included all healthcare workers, but most of the money was spent on additional nursing staff.

Conversion of the current program from a two-year AAS degree to a Certificate program will not only bring MSU-Great Falls into conformity with current OCHE requirements but will also allow students to complete their degree in one year, increasing the number of graduates to fill critical nursing vacancies in the Great Falls region.

4. How will this program contribute to economic development in Montana? (Note projected annual economic impact both regionally and statewide.)

The Montana Department of Labor & Industry, Research & Analysis Bureau reports that out of the state's 20 top employers, six are hospitals. The Bureau predicts that Montana will employ 2,812 LPNs by the year 2010. Montana can keep up with the nursing demand only by educating more nurses. Montana's Nursing Program Directors report that graduates are readily hired. In Montana, licensed practical nurses average \$25,450 annually, plus benefits. Providing individuals with employment opportunities upon graduation contributes to the economic development of the state and region. In Montana, employment for licensed practical nurses is projected to grow faster than the statewide average for all occupations through 2012 (Montana Department of Labor & Industry - Research & Analysis Bureau).

The health care industry includes establishments ranging from small town private physician practices employing only one licensed practical nurse to nursing homes, which provide the majority of jobs. Many health services establishments operate around the clock and need staffing at all hours. Shift work is common in LPN

practice. The economic impact of Montana’s health care industry shown in the tables below illustrates all sectors of the economy are interconnected, and the impacts are captured in multipliers, which are ratios used to calculate the estimated total economic effect for a variety of economic activities. The multipliers quantify the induced and indirect effects of the health care industry and add it to the known demand and supply side effects. According to 2001 data below, employment multipliers were generated for hospitals and nursing and residential care facilities in Montana:

Total Employment Impact of Montana’s Hospitals:

Jobs from Hospitals
 Hospital employment 19,123 number of workers
 Hospital multiplier 2.03 (in rural settings, the multiplier be lower than in rural areas)
 Jobs created in other businesses 19,774
 Total Jobs 38,897

Total Employment Impact of Montana’s Nursing and Residential Care Facilities:

Jobs from nursing and residential care facilities
 Nursing and residential care facilities employment 9,704
 Nursing and residential care facilities multiplier 1.36
 Jobs created in other businesses 3,537 Total Jobs 13,241

Source: Research and Analysis Bureau, Montana Department of Labor and Industry, QCEW program Summary

There is a shortage of LPNs statewide and regionally. In addition, there are limited numbers of instructors and directors for Practical Nursing programs, which could provide an opportunity for those who graduate from this Practical Nursing program to pursue further education and consider teaching or directing. With Montana’s aging population and rural setting, providing quality health care will continue to become an increasing problem. Without additional support to create solutions to nursing shortages, health care will increasingly become unavailable and unaffordable.

5. What is the program’s planned capacity?

• Break-even point?	Program does not break even
• Enrollments / year?	22 FTE students
• Graduates / year?	16
• MT jobs / year?	16

6. Resource Allocation:

• Total program budget?	\$ 183,512
• Faculty FTE?	3 FTE (down 1 FTE from current level)
• Staff FTE?	0

7. Does this program require new resources? Yes No

If yes, what is the amount? \$ _____

8. How will the campus fund the program?

Through tuition, fees and the State allocation as previously

9. If internal reallocation is necessary, name the sources.

None Required