

Gretchen McNeely, DNSc, RNC, Chair, Education Committee, Board of Nursing
301 South Park, P.O 200513
Helena, MT 59620-0513

Dear Dr. McNeely,

This letter is in response to the April 22, 2003 meeting of the Education Committee of the Board related to the proposal by UM-Helena COT to initiate an ASN-RN program. We were asked to meet with UM-H to discuss the impact this expansion would have on the nursing program at Carroll College. We have met with UM-H on April 29, May 27 and June 12, 2003 to discuss their proposal and have prepared the attached tables documenting the numbers of students needing clinical placements at the two hospitals in Helena, St. Peter's Community Hospital and VA Fort Harrison. UM-H provided Carroll College with their projected numbers of students at the June 12, 2003 meeting.

From this data as well as meetings with the clinical agencies, we feel that the expansion/change at UM-H would **negatively impact** the quality of the clinical experience that we can provide Carroll College students. We cannot support the UM-H change/expansion for the following reasons:

1. We currently have difficulty placing our 100+ students in clinical experiences in Helena. We initiated a major curriculum adjustment this academic year to accommodate for this competition for placements with UM-H. Adding another RN program in the clinical sites will significantly increase the competition. If the new program at UM-H is initiated, Carroll College will not be able to serve the clinical needs of the current sophomore class of 45+ students for progression, as there is no room for expansion of clinical sites or times. Carroll College will be restricted to clinicals on Thursday and Friday only with UM-H taking Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday for clinicals at all the agencies (see Tables 1 and 2 attached).
2. Carroll College will need to cap enrollments to 25 students per class cohort, because of an overload of RN students in clinical placements with the proposed UM-H expansion. This would, in fact, **decrease** the number of baccalaureate RN nurses the state can prepare.
3. The UM-H expansion specifically compromises the availability of RN preceptors for the Carroll College Capstone Course in spring semesters. Table 2b (attached) displays an overload of RN students at the agencies in spring semester. The Capstone Course is a hallmark of our program and an essential learning experience for students. It is highly regarded by students and employers as a program asset.
4. Needs of the Helena community will not be met in this expansion as documented by the April 2003 UM-H feasibility study (p. 16) in which agencies preferred a staffing mix of LPNs and baccalaureate prepared RNs and also reported a low vacancy rate in Helena of 0 – 2.3 RN positions (p. 15, UM-H April Study).

The Helena community presently has two outstanding programs for educational preparation of quality nurses with the Carroll College RN-baccalaureate program and the current UM-H LPN program. Both programs have high passage rates on the licensure examinations for RNs and LPNs and employers are seeking the graduates. Carroll College continues to be willing to work in partnership with UM-H to put in place a specific articulation agreement that would serve the needs of the LPNs in the community wishing to advance to RN baccalaureate status.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Gustafson, PhD, RN
Chair of the Department of Nursing

James Trudnowski, EdD
Vice President for Academic Affairs

**TABLE 1. NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN CLINICAL PLACEMENTS IN HELENA AREA
Current Programs and Proposed Change in UM-H Nursing Programs Beginning Fall 2004**

Current Program: 2003-04	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer
Current UM-H program	40 UM-H LPN students	40 UM-H LPN students	
Current Carroll College programs	100 CC RN students	100 CC RN students	
Total students in clinical placement:	140 students	140 students	No students
Proposed Programs: 2004-05	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer
Proposed change of UM-H program to ASN-RN	32 UM-H RN students	32 UM-H RN students 50 UM-H LPN students	50 UM-H LPN students
Carroll College program (projected)	120 CC RN students	120 CC RN students	
Total students in clinical placement:	132 students	182 students*	50 students*

With current programs for next year there is competition for clinical space and need to negotiate days and times with UM-H. There is presently an overload in clinical areas and Carroll College made adjustments to the curriculum to accommodate agencies and clinical availability.

*If new UM-H programs are established, there will be an **increase of 40 students needing clinical placements** in spring semester and students will be in clinical areas year round. Potential is very high for overload of staff and patients willing to work with nursing students.

Table 2. Projected Utilization of Clinical Facilities with Carroll College and proposed addition of UM-H ASN-RN program

Prepared by Cynthia Gustafson with information from Ellen Wirtz, UM-H on 6-12-03

Table 2a. Number Of Students (RN OR LPN Students) Per Day By Program at St. Peter’s Hospital and VA

RN CC = # of students from Carroll College RN UM-H = # of ASN- RN students UM-H COT

FALL SEMESTER 2004 (Carroll College: last week of Aug – first week of Dec) (UM-H Oct – Dec)

Facility/Unit	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Wkend
St. Peter’s Hospital Medical Unit: Average census: 22 RN Staff: 3 Surgical/Peds/Oncology: Average census: 20 RN Staff: 3 Peds Census: 1-2 varies Family Birthing Center: Average: 3 moms/babies RN Staff: 4	5 RN UM-H 6am – 2 pm	5 RN UM-H 6am – 2 pm 5 RN CC 4 – 9 pm	5 RN UM-H 6am – 2 pm	4 RN CC 7 am– 12:30 pm 4 RN CC 7am – 12:30 pm 5 RN CC 6:30am–12:30 pm	4 RN CC 7am– 12:30 pm 4 RN CC 7am – 12:30 pm	
VA Medical Center 4 th Floor Medical/Psych Average census: 24 RN Staff: 3 3 rd Floor Surgical Average census: 20 RN Staff: 3	8 RN UM-H 7am – 4 pm	8 RN UM-H 7am – 4 pm	8 RN UM-H 7am – 4 pm	4 RN CC 7am – 12: 30 pm 4 RN CC 7am – 12:30 pm	4 RN CC 7am –12: 30 pm 4 RN CC 7am –12: 30 pm	

Table 2b. Number Of Students (RN OR LPN Students) Per Day By Program at St. Peter’s Hospital and VA

RN CC = # of students from Carroll College RN UM-H = # of ASN- RN students UM-H COT

SPRING SEMESTER 2005 (Carroll College: mid Jan – first week of May) (UM-H Mar – May)

Facility/Unit	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Wkend
St. Peter’s Hospital						
Medical Unit: Average census: 22 RN Staff: 3	5 RN UM-H 7am – 3 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	5 RN UM-H 7am – 3 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	5 RN UM-H 7am – 3 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	6 RN CC 7am – 1 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	6 RN CC 7am–1pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	2-3 RN CC (precepting)*
Surgical/Peds/Oncology: Average census: 20 RN Staff: 3 Peds Census: 1 – 2 varies	3 RN UM-H 6am – 2 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	3 RN UM-H 6am – 2 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	3 RN UM-H 6am – 2 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	6 RN CC 7am – 1 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	6 RN CC 7am – 1 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	2-3 RN CC (precepting)*
Family Birthing Center: Average: 3 moms/ babies RN Staff: 4	1 – 2 RN CC (precepting)*	5 RN CC 6:30am–1pm	1 –2 RN CC (precepting)*	5 RN CC 6:30 – 1pm	1 – 2 RN CC (precepting)	1-2 RN CC (precepting)*
VA Medical Center						
4 th Floor Medical/Psych 24 Beds RN Staff: 3 average	5 RN UM-H 7am – 4 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	5 RN UM-H 7am – 4 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	5 RN UM-H 7am – 4 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	6 RN CC 7am – 1 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	6 RN CC 7am – 1 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	2-3 RN CC (precepting)*
3 rd Floor Surgical 20 Beds RN Staff: 3 average	5 RN UM-H 7am – 4 pm 2 –3 RN CC (precepting)*	5 RN UM-H 7am – 4 pm 2–3 RN CC (precepting)*	5 RN UM-H 7am-4 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	6 RN CC 7am – 1 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	6 RN CC 7am – 1 pm 2-3 RN CC (precepting)*	2-3 RN CC (precepting)*

***precepting: CC = Carroll RN students work one-on-one with an RN Preceptor for the facility, may work any shift of the day**

Table 2c. Number Of Students (RN OR LPN Students) Per Day By Program at St. Peter’s Hospital and VA

LPN UM-H = # LPN Students From LPN Program

SUMMER SEMESTER 2005 (UM-H May - June)

Facility/Unit	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Wkend
St. Peter’s Hospital						
Medical Unit: Average census: 22 RN Staff: 3	4 LPN- UM-H 7am – 3 pm	4 LPN- UM-H 7am – 3 pm	4 LPN- UM-H 7am – 3 pm			
Surgical/Peds/Oncology: Average census: 20 RN Staff: 3 Peds Census: 1-2 varies	4 LPN- UM-H 7am – 3 pm 3 LPN UM-H (peds 6– 2 pm)	4 LPN- UM-H 7am – 3 pm 3 LPN UM-H (peds 6-2 pm)	4 LPN- UM-H 7am – 3 pm 3 LPN UM-H (peds 6-2 pm)			
Family Birthing Center: Average: 3 moms/babies RN Staff: 4	5 LPN- UM-H 6am –2 pm	5 LPN- UM-H 6 am – 2 pm	5 LPN- UM-H 6am – 2 pm			
VA Medical Center						
4 th Floor Medical/Psych Average census: 24 RN Staff: 3 average	4 LPN- UM-H 7am – 4 pm	4 LPN- UM-H 7am – 4 pm	4 LPN- UM-H 7am – 4 pm			
3 rd Floor Surgical Average census: 20 RN Staff: 3 average	4 LPN- UM-H 7am – 3 pm	4 LPN- UM-H 7 am– 3 pm	4 LPN- UM-H 7am – 3 pm			