



TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: III.C.

MEETING DATE: August 17, 2023

SUBJECT: New Academic Program
University of Tennessee, Health Science Center, and University of Tennessee,
Southern (Joint Program)
Nursing, Bachelor of Science (BSN)
CIP Code: 51.3801 (Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse)

ITEM TYPE: Action

ACTION RECOMMENDATION: Approval

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The University of Tennessee, Health Science Center (UTHSC) and the University of Tennessee, Southern (UTS) propose a joint Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) to assist in expanding the traditional BSN program at both institutions. The proposed joint program will leverage faculty and student support resources from UTHSC to expand the resources available to UTS nursing students and increase the preparation of skilled nurses in rural, south-middle Tennessee.

The proposed program will allow students to complete their general education requirements at UTS and apply to a jointly offered nursing program with the nursing curriculum managed by UTHSC. The curriculum will consist of six online courses taught by UTHSC faculty and eleven traditional courses, delivered face-to-face at UTS. The proposed joint program will provide additional resources for BSN students on the UTS campus, ensure faculty expertise and qualifications, while maintaining educational quality and National Council Licensure Examination – RN (NCLEX-RN) first-time pass rates for graduating students.

INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNING BOARD APPROVAL

The proposed Nursing, BSN program was approved by the University of Tennessee System on June 29-30, 2023.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE

Fall 2024

ALIGNMENT WITH STATE MASTER PLAN AND INSTITUTIONAL MISSION/STRATEGIC PLAN

The proposed BSN aligns with the Tennessee State Master Plan for Higher Education by increasing education attainment levels in a field aligned directly to a significant workforce demand for nursing. The proposed program also leverages institutional collaboration to provide expanded nursing training that offers graduates immediate entry into employment.

The proposed program aligns with the UTHSC's mission of "transforming lives through collaborative and inclusive education, research/scholarship, clinical care, and public service," and UTS's mission to "provide undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs grounded in the liberal arts and sciences that are

designed to prepare students for careers and lives of continued learning; promote a diverse and globally conscious learning community that nurtures intellectual, social, and personal growth and to serve the region through educational, social, and cultural programs and through community outreach and development.” The proposed joint BSN aligns with the missions of both institutions and Schools of Nursing by preparing exceptional nurse leaders through rigorous academic preparation, hands-on experience, and guided practice.

CURRICULUM

The proposed 120 credit hour BSN program is structured to include 60 credit hours of general education and program prerequisites completed at UTS, plus an additional 60 credit hours of nursing courses, which will be a combination of in-person courses offered at UTS as synchronous and asynchronous online courses that are managed from UTHSC.

At the completion of the program, graduates will be able to:

- Engage in clinical reasoning to make decisions regarding patient care.
- Deliver safe, evidence-based, compassionate, holistic patient and family-centered care across health and illness continuum.
- Advocate for individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations.
- Implement population-focused, wellness promotion, and illness prevention strategies that consider determinants of health and available resources.
- Use effective communication and collaborative skills for professional practice.
- Demonstrate accountability for personal and professional standards of moral, ethical, and legal conduct.
- Evaluate quality improvement processes to optimize safe health care outcomes for individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations.
- Employ leadership principles to improve patient outcomes across healthcare systems.
- Exhibit a commitment to continuous self-evaluation and lifelong learning.

No new courses will be developed because all the courses required to deliver the proposed program currently exist.

PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY

Projections for the Joint Nursing, BSN program estimate that 17 students will enroll in the first year, with total enrollment remaining steady at 32 students for the remaining four (4) years. These projections reflect a need to maintain a low faculty to student ratio for hospital and medical facility placements for current clinical sites. The program will graduate its first students in year two.

	2024-25	2025-26	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Enrollment	17	32	32	32	32
Graduates	--	15	15	15	15

PROGRAM DUPLICATION

Currently, all 11 public universities and 18 private institutions in Tennessee offer an undergraduate nursing program, including UTHSC and UTS. However, UTS is the only institution that offers a Nursing, BS in the south-central region of Tennessee.

EXTERNAL JUDGMENT

An external review of the proposed program was conducted during a site visit on February 6, 2023, by Dr. Linda Lewandowski, Dean and Professor in the College of Nursing at the University of Toledo. The site visit included meetings with campus administrators and faculty from UTHSC and UTS, as well as current UTS Nursing students and industry partners. The visit also included a tour of classroom and simulation lab facilities. Dr. Lewandowski recommended approval of the proposed program, noting that the curriculum “is strong and consistent with prevailing educational standards in our field,” and that the program has the potential to build “on the strengths of each program,” thereby strengthening both. Lewandowski noted that the significant shortage of nurses in the south-central region of Tennessee (and in the state more broadly) as well as shifts in nursing education toward “competency-based assessment” make the program timely. In fact, Lewandowski concluded, “[t]his program should be highlighted as a national model for supporting smaller programs with resources from larger programs—while recognizing and highlighting the unique perspectives and expertise each program brings to the partnership.”

STUDENT DEMAND

Student interest was demonstrated based on the continuing trends of UTS students who have declared their intent to apply to the Nursing program during their sophomore year. A three-year average of 91 UTS students have indicated an interest in the existing Nursing, BS program. Further, UTS expects its total enrollment to grow due to the transition to public ownership; this enrollment growth may lead to an increase in students declaring their intent to apply to the joint BSN. The Nursing faculty currently at UTS will continue to market the program in the area using established marketing and recruitment tactics.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM GRADUATES

The proposed program prepares graduates to enter one of the most in-demand fields in the state, as health sciences graduates have some of the highest employment rates of any career cluster according to THEC’s 2022 Academic Supply for Occupational Demand Report. The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) predicted that employment rates for registered nurses will increase by more than 16 percent from 2014-2024, much faster than the average for all occupations. This study was completed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and demand for nurses may increase more than the predicted 16 percent due to nurses leaving the workforce. The TDLWD notes that registered nurses are in high demand with a stable outlook for the southern middle TN region.

Letters of support were provided by the Tennessee Department of Health, HH Health System – Lincoln, Inc.; Southern TN Regional Health System – Pulaski; AHC Meadowbrook; Giles County School System; Maury Regional Medical Center; NHC Pulaski; and NHC South Central Region. These letters reflect a willingness to serve as clinical sites and express interest in employing program graduates.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO DELIVER THE PROGRAM

Both UTHSC and UTS have the institutional capacity to deliver the proposed joint BSN program. UTS currently has five (5) faculty members, including a director, three (3) tenured or tenure-track faculty members, and an instructor, all of whom will become UTHSC faculty following the completion of the teach out plan for the existing UTS program. UTHSC currently has 21 faculty members, fourteen of whom are tenured or on the tenure-track and seven (7) instructors. In addition, existing UTS clinical sites will continue to provide opportunities for students.

No new faculty or staff will be needed for the proposed program, and the program will leverage existing courses. Existing nursing facilities in Martin Hall at UTS are adequate for program delivery. Students enrolled in the proposed program will continue to be supported by existing non-instructional staff at UTS

and will also have access to tutoring and wellness services offered through UTHSC's Office of Student Academic Support Services and Inclusion.

ASSESSMENT AND POST-APPROVAL MONITORING

An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first five (5) years following program approval. The review will be based on benchmarks established in the approved proposal. At the end of this period, the campus, institutional governing board, and THEC staff will perform a summative evaluation. The benchmarks include, but are not limited to, enrollment and graduation, program cost, progress toward accreditation, and other metrics set by the institution and staff. If benchmarks are not met during the monitoring period, the Commission may recommend that the institutional governing board terminate the program. If additional time is needed and requested by the institutional governing board, the Commission may choose to extend the monitoring period.

FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

Tennessee Higher Education Commission
 Appendix A: THEC Financial Projections Form
 University of Tennessee Health Science Center - University of Tennessee Southern
 Joint BSN Program

*Seven-year projections are required for doctoral programs.
 Five-year projections are required for baccalaureate and Master's degree programs
 Three-year projections are required for associate degrees and undergraduate certificates.
 Projections should include cost of living increases per year.
 Planning year projections are not required but should be included when appropriate.*

	Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
I. Expenditures						
A. One-time Expenditures						
New/Renovated Space ¹	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Library	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Consultants	\$ 3,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Sub-Total One-time	\$ 3,500	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
B. Recurring Expenditures						
Personnel						
Administration						
Salary	\$ -	\$ 96,707	\$ 96,707	\$ 96,707	\$ 96,707	\$ 96,707
Benefits	\$ -	\$ 19,341	\$ 19,341	\$ 19,341	\$ 19,341	\$ 19,341
Sub-Total Administration	\$ -	\$ 116,048	\$ 116,048	\$ 116,048	\$ 116,048	\$ 116,048
Faculty						
Salary	\$ -	\$ 128,279	\$ 256,557	\$ 256,557	\$ 256,557	\$ 256,557
Benefits	\$ -	\$ 25,656	\$ 51,311	\$ 51,311	\$ 51,311	\$ 51,311
Sub-Total Faculty	\$ -	\$ 153,934	\$ 307,868	\$ 307,868	\$ 307,868	\$ 307,868
Support Staff						
Salary	\$ -	\$ 33,779	\$ 33,779	\$ 33,779	\$ 33,779	\$ 33,779
Benefits	\$ -	\$ 6,756	\$ 6,756	\$ 6,756	\$ 6,756	\$ 6,756
Sub-Total Support Staff	\$ -	\$ 40,535	\$ 40,535	\$ 40,535	\$ 40,535	\$ 40,535
Graduate Assistants						
Salary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Benefits	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Tuition and Fees* (See Below)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Sub-Total Graduate Assistants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Operating						
Travel	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Printing	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Sub-Total Operating	\$ -	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,000
Total Recurring	\$ -	\$ 321,517	\$ 475,452	\$ 475,452	\$ 475,452	\$ 475,452
TOTAL EXPENDITURES (A + B)	\$ 3,500	\$ 331,517	\$ 475,452	\$ 475,452	\$ 475,452	\$ 475,452

***If tuition and fees for Graduate Assistants are included, please provide the following information.**

Base Tuition and Fees Rate	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Number of Graduate Assistants	-	-	-	-	-	-

	Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
II. Revenue						
Tuition and Fees ²	\$ -	\$ 157,590	\$ 315,180	\$ 315,180	\$ 315,180	\$ 315,180
Institutional Reallocations ³	\$ 3,500	\$ (26,073)	\$ (9,728)	\$ (9,728)	\$ (9,728)	\$ (9,728)
Federal Grants ⁴	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Private Grants or Gifts ⁵	\$ -	\$ 200,000	\$ 170,000	\$ 170,000	\$ 170,000	\$ 170,000
Other ⁶	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
BALANCED BUDGET LINE	\$ 3,500	\$ 331,517	\$ 475,452	\$ 475,452	\$ 475,452	\$ 475,452

Notes:

(1) Provide the funding source(s) for the new or renovated space.

UTS would attempt to raise \$30 million for a new Health Sciences Building through sources like the Travis Foundation and NHC (National Healthcare Corporation).

(2) In what year is tuition and fee revenue expected to be generated? Tuition and fees include maintenance fees, out-of-state tuition, and any applicable earmarked fees for the program. Explain any differential fees.

(3) Identify the source(s) of the institutional reallocations, and grant matching requirements if applicable.

(4) Provide the source(s) of the Federal Grant including the granting department and CFDA(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance) number.
N/A

(5) Provide the name of the organization(s) or individual(s) providing grant(s) or gift(s).
Philanthropic outreach and existing unrestricted gifts

(6) Provide information regarding other sources of the funding.
N/A