

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Assessment and Accountability **NO.:** AAC 07-05
COMMITTEE DATE: October 11, 2006
BOARD DATE: October 19, 2006

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the Articles of Amendment of **MGH Institute of Health Professions** to award the **Bachelor of Science in Nursing**.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 69, Section 30 et seq.
Contact: Aundrea Kelley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Policy

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

October 2006

MGH Institute of Health Professions

Bachelor of Science in Nursing

INTENT

MGH Institute of Health Professions, a NEASC-accredited graduate educational institution located at the Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston, Massachusetts, has filed Articles of Amendment to its corporate charter to award a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

The BSN is the professional preparation for the practice of nursing. The degree does not represent specialization or advanced scholarship within nursing. The purpose of the proposed baccalaureate program in nursing is to provide an educational opportunity for post-baccalaureate students to become registered nurses. Because students will enter the program with a minimum of a baccalaureate degree in any discipline other than nursing, it will offer an expedited entry into nursing practice and a significant contribution toward alleviating the current and future workforce shortage in nursing.

According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2005), post-baccalaureate BSN programs have proliferated, based on their ability to build on previous learning experiences and expeditiously transition into nursing individuals with previous undergraduate degrees. In 1990 there were 31 accredited programs; by 2005 there were 168 such programs with an additional 46 programs in the planning stages. The number of students enrolled in post-baccalaureate BSN programs increased from 4,794 students in 2003 to 6,090 students in 2004.

For individuals with a prior degree, these programs offer the most efficient pathway to becoming an RN prepared at the baccalaureate level, assisting the nation in meeting the Department of Labor's projected need for more than one million new and replacement registered nurses by the year 2012.

INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND

The Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Professions at Massachusetts General Hospital was founded on March 18, 1977, when the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education voted to approve the Hospital's petition for a charter amendment to grant the degrees of Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Therapy, Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Technology, Master of Science in Physical Therapy, Master of Science in Nursing Science, Master of Science in Speech Pathology, and Master of Science in Dietetics. On May 14, 1985, the MGH Institute of Health Professions filed Articles of Organization and became a separate corporation that remains closely affiliated with the Hospital. In June 1996, the Institute was granted authority to award the Master of Science in Clinical Investigation. The Board authorized the Institute to award the Doctor of Physical Therapy in June 2000. The Institute was granted approval to offer the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Medical Imaging in December 2003.

The Institute is an academic affiliate of the Massachusetts General Hospital and the only degree-granting educational institution within Partners HealthCare System.

MGH Institute currently offers a six-semester, post-baccalaureate entry-level master's degree in nursing. Graduates of the program are eligible to take the National Council of State Boards of Nursing's (NCSBN) National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN®) after three semesters and to sit for national certification in their area of specialty upon graduation.

CURRICULUM

Background to the Proposed Curriculum

The Graduate Program in Nursing at the Institute was organized in 1981, accepted the first class in 1982 and graduated that class in 1985. (The predecessor organization, the MGH School of Nursing, closed in 1981 coincident with the opening of the Institute.)

The Graduate Program in Nursing first admitted non-nurse students in 1982 with a curriculum initially designed to prepare clinical nurse specialists (CNS). Students admitted to the three-year full-time program hold a baccalaureate degree in any field and bypass the BSN on their way to the MSN. The first half of the curriculum is known as the generalist level, which prepares students to sit for the NCLEX-RN.

In 1982, there were very few generic master's programs, as they later became known, in existence, and there was heavy opposition to them from the nursing profession and other schools. Over the past 20 years, validity of the entry-level MSN that the Institute pioneered has been proven. The number of similar programs has increased dramatically and the Institute is now acknowledged as a leader in this movement.

In 2005 Massachusetts had 70,621 nurses, a shortfall of 4,820 or 7 percent of the actual need. According to the Massachusetts Public Higher Education Initiative on Nursing and Allied Health Education (www.mass.edu, 2004), the need is expected to grow to an "unacceptably dangerous shortage" of 12 percent by 2010. Five hundred eighty-three qualified applicants were denied admission to nursing schools in Massachusetts in 2003 because of a shortage of qualified faculty, an inadequate supply of instructional facilities and equipment, and increasing competition for access to a limited pool of clinical learning sites (MACN, 2005).

The Massachusetts Association of Colleges of Nursing (MACN) Report, *Ensuring an Educated Nursing Workforce for the Commonwealth* (2005), notes that "nurses prepared at the baccalaureate and higher degrees provide better patient outcomes (Aiken et al., 2003), have lower levels of medication errors and practice violations (Milbank Memorial Fund, 2001), stronger critical thinking and leadership skills (Good, 2001), and stronger communication and problem-solving skills (Johnson, 1988).

Federal policy advisors to Congress and the US Secretary for Health and Human Services have urged that at least 66 percent of the nation's nursing workforce hold baccalaureate and higher degrees by 2010 (National Advisory Council on Nursing Education and Practice, 1996). Currently only 49.7 percent of nurses in Massachusetts are prepared at the baccalaureate or higher degree level." Support for the importance of baccalaureate nursing preparation has been expressed by the American Organization of Nurse Executives, NACNEP, the US Army, Navy and Air Force, the Veterans Administration, the Pew Health Professions Commission, and the Helene Fuld Health Trust.

The development of a freestanding post-baccalaureate bachelor's degree in nursing, sometimes known as a fast-track BSN, is responsive to both the current regional and national nursing shortages. As a workforce development strategy, it assists individuals already employed in health care in another capacity to enter professional nursing. It provides students with a valued credential and enhances the profile of those providing entry-level nursing care.

Proposed Curriculum

The curriculum for the proposed BSN has been in place as a component of the MGH Institute's current entry-level master's program. It has been redesigned and enhanced in keeping with the American Academy of Colleges of Nursing's (AACN) *Essentials of Baccalaureate Nursing Education* to create a freestanding post-baccalaureate degree offering.

The AACN, in the document *Essentials of Baccalaureate Nursing Education*, identifies content threads, including informatics, genetics, gerontology, ethics, culture and diversity, research and continuity of care. These content threads have been integrated into the proposed baccalaureate nursing curriculum.

In addition to the generalist level content of the current entry-level master's program, the freestanding post-baccalaureate program is characterized by the addition of two significant courses: a synthesis course in which students use a research paper to bring together key areas of clinical care, leadership and evidence-based practice, and a clinical role immersion/internship at the completion of formal course work. This course experience is designed to assist novice nurses in making the transition from student to beginning clinician.

Curriculum Structure (Attachment A)

The proposed Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) curriculum builds on the prior baccalaureate preparation of admitted students and, therefore, does not include a general education (or liberal arts) course of study.

Because this curricular offering builds on the student's existing general education background, it allows matriculants to complete the program in an expedited fashion and requires only 53 credits to accomplish the professional nursing course of study. These second-degree students and career-changers will then be positioned to continue education in nursing, toward a master's or doctorate in nursing.

Specifically, the curriculum is designed to allow recent baccalaureate students and career changers to expeditiously complete the program requirements and be eligible for licensing within a fifteen-month period from May to June of the next year. The proposed structure for the BSN curriculum will encompass a total of four semesters of study, including two summers, with varied components of academic and clinical education in each term. The 53 credits of academic and clinical course work must be completed with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale).

Clinical Education Experiences

Three elements comprise the clinical education program. First, students are involved in weekly clinical experiences that allow them to practice direct care skills and professional interactions in world-class health care settings and to bring experiences back to the classroom for analysis. Because these experiences are integrated throughout the academic program, students develop their professional identities early and have opportunities to reinforce their professional skills.

The second element of clinical education is the newly designed synthesis course. This course offers students the opportunity to complete a major paper that incorporates their didactic and clinical modes of learning under the rubrics of evidence-based practice, professional leadership, and population focused care.

The third clinical education component is the clinical role immersion/internship, which serves as the culminating experience for the students. This seven-week course assists students in consolidating skills, making the transition to the world of work, and offers organizations the opportunity to participate in the development of the clinical role and practice of prospective employees.

Methods of Evaluating Student Work

Students are evaluated in multiple ways as part of their professional preparation. Within academic courses, students take written examinations, prepare and submit papers, participate in case discussions, and develop and present group projects.

Students are also evaluated by clinical instructors and sites. Clinical instructors complete evaluation forms and submit them to the clinical course coordinator, who then determines the student's final grade. Students complete self-assessments as part of all clinical experiences and evaluate the clinical instructor and the placement site.

Current Institute students in the entry-level master's program sit for the NCLEX-RN exam at the completion of the third semester. Students in the BSN will also be eligible to sit for the NCLEX-RN at the completion of the third semester. The pass rate for licensure for Institute students and graduates has consistently been above the national and regional averages since the beginning of the program.

ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

The anticipated total Institute student enrollment for AY06 is 758, 372 part-time and 386 full-time. The estimated projected enrollment for the post-baccalaureate BSN program is 50 students per class per year. The first class is expected to enroll during the summer of 2008. Only one new class will be accepted for study per year, starting during the summer session in mid-May and completing the program 15 months later.

Admission requirements for the post-baccalaureate BSN program will be similar to those for the current entry-level master's program, with the exception that the GRE will not be required. Applicants must hold a bachelor's degree upon enrollment, and must have completed the following prerequisite courses: human anatomy and physiology, chemistry, microbiology, statistics, and nutrition. Applicants also must submit an essay, a current résumé, and three letters of reference.

TUITION AND FEES

The current tuition rate for 2006-2007 is \$800 per credit for all graduate level courses. In anticipation of offering the BSN, the Institute expects to establish an undergraduate tuition rate and student fees comparable to other private institutions of higher education. Preliminary estimates suggest that the undergraduate tuition may be approximately 75 percent of the Institute graduate rate.

RESOURCES

Faculty

The Institute currently employs a total of 82 faculty, 57 full-time and 25 part-time. The nursing program will maintain the current faculty ratios and augment its faculty resources: for AY 2006-07 there are currently 32 full-time faculty, eight part-time faculty, eight associated clinical/academic faculty, and 48 term lecturers, primarily for clinical education. Five additional full-time faculty, six part-time faculty, a clinical coordinator, and additional term lecturers will be hired to maintain the current 1:7-8 faculty/student ratio in the clinical placements in the BSN program.

Twenty-three of the full-time faculty hold doctoral degrees, and two full-time faculty are currently completing doctoral degrees. Of the eight part-time faculty, one is doctorally prepared, and one is completing the dissertation.

Faculty represent the full range of clinical expertise needed to teach in an entry-level BSN program. All faculty teaching in the program are prepared at either the doctoral or master's level; most faculty are certified in a specialty area and maintain a clinical practice. This allows them to stay current in their respective practice specialties and to continually update their course content. Faculty maintain a program of scholarship within their areas of interest.

Several adjunct faculty participate in various courses as guest lecturers or primary clinical instructors. This further enhances the ability to bring current clinical practice into the classroom. Adjunct faculty include Institute alumni and other clinicians in practice in the Partners HealthCare System and other institutions in New England.

Physical Resources

The Institute assessed resource needs as part of the yearlong faculty-driven planning process. The Institute provides space for classroom and laboratory work in a state-of-the-art facility in the Charlestown Navy Yard, purchased and renovated in 2001. The nursing program has two dedicated laboratories that house a full range of equipment needed for teaching and practice. Laboratory space is made available for student practice and study during non-class hours.

The clinical laboratory space is in the process of being upgraded. The Institute has purchased *Sim Man* and *Sim Baby*. Two faculty have completed intensive simulation training and are developing simulation scenarios to add to those already in use. Additional video equipment is being obtained to accommodate group learning. Clinical digital and audiovisual materials are constantly being upgraded to offer the most current materials available to master basic assessment skills.

Library Resources

The growth of information technology as a means of access to academic resources has been an asset to the MGH Institute of Health Professions (Institute). With the growth of non-traditional access to learning resources as well as library consortia, the Institute is positioned to provide access to library and information resources on site, at a distance and virtually. The addition of an information science specialist to the staff of the Institute has enhanced support to students and faculty. The information science specialist is responsible for the management of learning information services, for information literacy curriculum development and teaching, and for

collaboration with the Institute's Office of Information Technology, the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) Treadwell Library, as well as other libraries and information resources.

Beyond increasing the capacity of the nursing program, the Institute anticipates minimal impact from implementation of the proposed BSN. Plans are in place to recruit the necessary additional faculty, and two have recently been hired to facilitate course and clinical site development. An assessment of physical needs and resources has been completed. The addition of 50 baccalaureate prepared nurses per year will have a positive impact on the local workforce. The projected financial impact of the program is expected to yield a net gain starting in year three of the proposed program.

EXTERNAL EVALUATION

The National League for Nursing granted initial accreditation to the Graduate Program in Nursing in 1986. The Program was revisited in 1995 and granted full eight-year accreditation and revisited again in 2003 and granted full eight-year accreditation which expires in 2011.

The Graduate Program in Nursing was last reviewed and approved by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing in January 2003. The Board of Registration in Nursing (BORN) also reviewed the proposed baccalaureate curriculum in July 2006. The review indicated that the proposal from the MGH graduate program in nursing "for a Fast-Track BSN Program does not require pre-approval by the Board as the curriculum plan is consistent with the previously approved curriculum plan for the generalist level portion of the Direct Entry Masters Degree Program in Nursing." BORN requires only that the Institute will include information about the BSN along with its annual report.

BORN pre-approval would have been required for the proposed BSN if BORN's review had shown a change in the program's philosophy, goals, outcomes, or a change in the sequence of the majority of courses offered or a change in the overall program content. The Institute's statement of mission and philosophy are contained in Attachment B.

PUBLIC HEARING

The required public hearing is scheduled for October 13, 2006, at 10 a.m. at the Board of Higher Education.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Board staff has thoroughly reviewed and evaluated all documents and materials submitted and is satisfied that the proposed Bachelor of Science in Nursing program meets the criteria set forth in 610 CMR 2.08(3) in the Degree-Granting Regulations for NEASC-approved Independent Institutions of Higher Education. Staff recommends that the Board approve the petition of MGH Institute of Health Professions to offer the Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Attachment A

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Pre-requisites

		Credits
Semester I - Summer		
	History of Nursing Ideas	3
	Nursing Process Practice and Skills	6
	Biobehavioral Nursing	5
	Pathophysiology	3
	Semester Total Credits	17
Semester II - Fall		
	Health Assessment-Promotion and Wellness	3
	Common Problems of Adult Health	6
	Basic Pharmacology	3
	Community Based Health Assessment and Interventions	5
	<u>Semester Total Credits</u>	<u>17</u>
Semester III - Spring		
	Maternal Child Health	6
	Health Care Policy and Politics	3
	Ethics	2
	*Synthesis	3
	<u>Semester Total Credits</u>	<u>14</u>
Semester IV - Summer		
	*Clinical Role Immersion/Internship	5
	<u>Total Program Credits</u>	53

* Newly developed courses for Baccalaureate degree program

Attachment B
MGH Institute of Health Professions Statement of Mission and Philosophy

MISSION

The Institute educates health care professionals to become leaders in their disciplines. The mission includes fostering an interdisciplinary and diverse educational community by:

- Integrating academic and clinical curricula;
- Expanding and refining the scientific basis for health care through teaching, research and scholarship;
- Developing innovative educational approaches;
- Contributing to new models of practice to foster effective, affordable and ethical health care;

The Institute is an academic affiliate of the Massachusetts General Hospital and the only degree-granting educational institution within Partners HealthCare System.

Graduate Program in Nursing

The mission of the Graduate Program in Nursing is to prepare advanced practice registered nurses who are able to assume leadership in health care. We achieve this mission through excellence and innovation in education, scholarship, and practice.

PHILOSOPHY

Nursing is both an art and science that cares for the body, mind, and spirit unity of persons in relation to their environment. Nursing's caring perspective views human beings as persons in relation at every level of human existence and connection: individuals, families, groups, and communities. The concept of human beings as persons-in-relation provides the framework from which nursing addresses the potential for promotion, maintenance, and restoration of health. This framework underscores the importance of examining the political, economic, and social forces that impact a person's agency and right to health. The infinite complexity of these forces creates a diversity of environments within which nursing seeks to maximize health at every level of human existence.

The structure for the curriculum is based upon the interrelationships among the concepts of the metaparadigm: person-in-relation, environment, health, and nursing.

Person-in-relation

The person-in-relation is interactive and interdependent with others and with the environment. Nursing encounters the client as an individual and aggregates - as families, communities, and groups, existing in evolving relationships.

Environment

Political, economic, and social forces that are present in society shape the environment. They include, but are not limited to, the biophysical environment in which we live, our diverse cultures, and our experiences and perceptions.

Health

Health is an evolving process that is the expression of the interaction of a person with her or his environment. The individual defines health and embraces the states of illness, wellness, disease, and non-disease.

Nursing

Nursing is the diagnosis and treatment of human responses to actual or potential health problems.

The philosophy is manifested in the curriculum through the continued focus on nursing's role at the critical intersection of the concepts of the metaparadigm. This focus is supported by nursing's social mandate to address the needs of our clients in their environment. Within this context are three evolving themes which sequence curriculum content from basic to complex: knowledge, critical thinking, and professional development.

Knowledge

Nursing's knowledge base is grounded in subjective and objective knowing that is esthetic and ethical, empirical and intuitive.

Critical thinking

Critical thinking is the promotion of a high order of thinking - not merely the accumulation of facts - but the development of curiosity. It is a reflective process that exposes contradictions of knowing in order to understand the core concern. It is the acquisition of knowledge through inquiry that includes the process of conceptualization, interpretation, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and the skillful application and communication of information.

Professional development

Professional development is the evolving process of the individual's growth within the nursing profession. It is a process rooted in knowledge and understanding of nursing's rich heritage and a vision of the future of nursing. It allows the individual to develop a sense of place and belonging within the trajectory of the development of the profession. Through this process the individual develops a sense of self as an advanced practice registered nurse, incorporates the profession's values, and becomes part of the shaping of nursing's future.

Through the process of professional development, the individual comes to embody the values upon which nursing is founded. These values include the belief in human caring and the embracing of diversity in the profession, as well as in the clients that nursing serves and the settings in which nurses practice. In addition to the embodiment of these values, professional development means a commitment to life-long learning and development both of the individual and the profession in order to ensure consistent and high quality nursing care to all clients.