

Nursing degree collaboration moves forward

by News Bureau - Thursday, December 18, 2008

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/1576/nursing-degree-collaboration-moves-forward/>

A program that would allow Janesville-area residents to earn a bachelor's degree in the high-demand nursing field without having to leave Rock County just moved a step closer to becoming a reality, according to UW-Rock County dean and campus executive officer Diane Pillard and Rosemary Smith, UW Oshkosh's dean of the College of Nursing.

UW Oshkosh's College of Nursing recently received UW System approval to fund a faculty position. The doctorally prepared nurse in that position help establish and then teach in a collaborative nursing degree program at UW-Rock County.

"State hiring freezes and budget cuts could have stalled this crucial part of the process," says Pillard. "The impact this type of program could have on Rock County, which has been hit with record job losses yet is in need of qualified healthcare workers, was clearly an important factor in the decision to fund this faculty position and allow this program go forward."

The program would provide an opportunity for area residents currently working as registered nurses with an associate's degree to earn a bachelor's of science degree in nursing (BSN) by taking UW-Rock County and UW Oshkosh courses in Janesville. BSN nurses typically have increased responsibilities and increased career opportunities.

The UW Oshkosh College of Nursing has experience with outreach programs leading to BSN and master's of science in nursing degrees in underserved areas of Wisconsin, including a similar collaborative degree program with UW-Marathon County and Northcentral Technical College that has been quite successful at helping registered nurses reach the baccalaureate level, according to Smith.

"I've been very impressed with the level of community support for a nursing program in Rock County and I think UW Oshkosh's collaboration with UW-Rock County and Blackhawk Technical College will allow area residents better access to a professional nursing career," says Smith.

Those new to the nursing field would be able to start courses at UW-Rock County and Blackhawk Technical College and move into the classes offered by UW Oshkosh after earning an associate's degree in nursing. Details of the curriculum and credit transfer are still being worked out among the three institutions, so no official agreement is finalized, but Pillard expects the program to begin enrolling students as early as fall 2009 and excitement about the program is already building.

"The area healthcare providers we've talked to are interested in BSN nurses," says Pillard. "In fact, many states and individual healthcare institutions now require new nurses to hold a bachelor's degree." She notes that healthcare providers and government institutions often seek out these BSN nurses for leadership positions and for positions in case management, research, public health and other specialized areas.

Nursing degree collaboration moves forward - 12-18-2008

by News Bureau - UW Oshkosh Today - <http://www.uwosh.edu/today>

“This demand is huge now and only expected to increase as baby boomers age and need more healthcare services and many nurses reach retirement age with not enough new nurses to take their place,” says Pillard.

To get on the list for information about the nursing program, contact UW-Rock County student services at (608) 758-6565, ext. 200.