

APPROVED
OCTOBER 7, 2014

Item #V-8
October 7, 2014

**NEW OPERATING AND/OR DEGREE-GRANTING AUTHORITY
FOR INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS**

Submitted for: Action.

Summary: New independent institutions, institutions planning to operate at a new location, including a location outside the higher education region of original operating authority, and out-of-state institutions planning to operate in Illinois for the first time are required to obtain authorization to operate. These institutions also are required to obtain authorization for each new degree program.

Action Requested: That the Illinois Board of Higher Education approve the recommendations to grant degree-granting authority and/or operating authority to the following institutions:

Not-For-Profit

Benedictine University

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing in the North Suburban Region

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**NEW OPERATING AND/OR DEGREE-GRANTING AUTHORITY
FOR INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS**

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) has responsibility for administration of The Private College Act (110 ILCS 1005) and The Academic Degree Act (110 ILCS 1010). Under these statutes, new independent institutions, institutions planning to operate at a new location, including a location outside the higher education region of original operating authority, and out-of-state institutions planning to operate in Illinois for the first time are required to obtain authorization to operate. These institutions also are required to obtain authorization for each new degree program.

Applications for new operating and degree-granting authority submitted by independent Illinois institutions and out-of-state institutions are reviewed by the staff. Recommendations are developed by applying criteria for operating and/or degree-granting authority, which are defined in the rules adopted for administration of the statutes and Board policies on assessment of student learning and specialized accreditation requirements for student licensure. These criteria encompass educational objectives, institution and degree titles, curricula, facilities, faculty and administrator qualifications, student policies, publications, records, compliance with pertinent laws, and fiscal stability. Staff recommendations are based on analyses of application materials, responses to questions, and site visits. Out-of-region sites are defined as sites located within an IBHE approval region other than the region within which an institution's original operating authority was granted. There are ten IBHE approval regions; each is coterminous with one or more community college districts. Approval to operate within a new approval region entitles an institution to operate throughout the region, and not solely at the site at which the institution initially applied.

This item includes recommendations to grant operating and/or degree-granting authority to three institutions.

Benedictine University
5400 College Road
Lisle, Illinois 60532
President: Dr. William Carroll

Proposed Program Title: Bachelor of Science in Nursing in the North Suburban Region

Projected Enrollments: Benedictine University projects enrollments of 20 students in the first year, increasing to 40 students by the fifth year.

Institutional Accreditation: Benedictine University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The Benedictine University nursing program is accredited by The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

Background and History

Benedictine University (BU or the University) is an independent, not for profit institution founded in Chicago as St. Procopius College in 1887. The University is a Catholic, faith-based institution granted charter by the State of Illinois in 1890. In 1901 the institution moved to Lisle, in DuPage County, Illinois. It became a coeducational institution in 1968 and was renamed Illinois Benedictine College in 1971. The College became Benedictine University in 1996 and expanded to offer graduate and adult learner programs.

Benedictine University has an enrollment of nearly 10,000 students in 55 undergraduate majors, 17 graduate programs, and four doctoral programs. The main campus of the University is located in Lisle, Illinois. Branch campuses are located in Springfield, Illinois, and Mesa, Arizona, with additional class sites in China and Vietnam. As a faith-based institution, the University promotes religious values while emphasizing excellence in academics and science to prepare students to excel in leadership and professional endeavors. Benedictine University currently offers a Registered Nurse (RN) to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program, a 12-month adult accelerated undergraduate program for registered nurses, at their main campus in Lisle and the branch campus in Springfield. The University is seeking authorization to offer this program at another location through a partnership with Harper College. Upon IBHE approval of this proposal, Harper College graduates of the Associate Degree in Nursing can complete their BSN with Benedictine University through courses offered onsite at Harper College.

Institutional Data

Criterion 1030.30(a)(2)(D) provides that success in student progression and graduation, and success rates in programs preparing students for certification and licensure, shall be consistent with expectations in higher education and the appropriate related field of study. At a minimum, the Board shall consider the following factors, based on results for similar institutions: (i) Graduation rates, degree completion rates, retention rates, and pass rates for licensure and certification. (ii) Success rate, which shall be, at a minimum, higher than that of the lowest quartile of these measures for similar Illinois institutions defined as open versus competitive enrollment institutions and primarily associate versus primarily baccalaureate granting institutions. Exceptions may be made to the lowest quartile if an institution is above the national average for these measures using the same comparison categories of institutions.

Benedictine University is in the primarily baccalaureate granting, competitive enrollment comparison group in Illinois. Cohort is based on those seeking bachelor's degree only.

Cohort Graduation Rate	Group Mean	Group Median	Rank
53.0 percent	54.7 percent	55.0 percent	49/83
Undergraduate Completions per 100 FTE	Group Mean	Group Median	Rank
24.0	27.0	24.0	42/94

Retention and student loan default rate data are included as new informational items to expand upon the institutional data provided in the above table. The retention and student loan default rate data were not used in the evaluation of this application. In the future, these data will be considered during the application review process and used in making a staff recommendation for Board action.

The 2012 retention rate for first-time, full-time students at Benedictine University was 73 percent. The three-year student loan default rate for Benedictine University was 6.8 percent in 2010 and 7.4 percent in 2009. The 3-year cohort student loan default rate is the percentage of a school's borrowers who enter repayment on certain Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program or William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program loans during a particular federal fiscal year, October 1 to September 30, and default or meet other specified conditions prior to the end of the second following fiscal year. The U.S. Department of Education stated that the Fiscal Year 2010 average three-year national cohort default rate was 14.7 percent. For context, per Section 435(a)(2) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, the U.S. Department of Education suspends eligibility for FFELP loans for any college with a cohort default rate of greater than or equal to 25 percent for three years in a row.

Mission and Objectives

Criterion 1030.60(a)(2) provides that the objectives for the degree program must be consistent with what the degree program title implies.

Criterion 1030.60(a)(3) provides that the requested degree program shall be congruent with the purpose, goals, objectives, and mission of the institution.

Benedictine University has a stated mission to prepare "students for a lifetime as active, informed and responsible citizens and leaders in the world community." The University offers undergraduate and graduate degrees to students from diverse ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. The proposed degree title corresponds with the degree program and promotes the goals, objectives, and mission of the institution.

Curriculum/Assessment

Criterion 1030.60(a)(4) provides that the caliber and content of the curriculum shall assure that the stated degree objectives for which the program is offered will be achieved.

Admission

The proposed Benedictine University RN to BSN program is an adult accelerated, undergraduate program for registered nurses. The RN to BSN will be a 12 month cohort-based program delivered through web-enhanced, face-to-face method. All RN to BSN applicants must have an undergraduate degree; hold an unencumbered registered nurse (RN) license in Illinois; have a minimum of 2.5 GPA; transfer in a minimum of 55 semester credit hours including 100 level writing courses and 83 designated credit hours for Harper College applicants; and submit a letter of recommendation. Adult students are required to fulfill the general admission requirements for the RN to BSN program, complete at least the last 30 credit hours of their undergraduate degree at Benedictine as degree-seeking students, and complete at least 12 credit hours of coursework at the 200 level or above in their major field at Benedictine. Adult students may receive credit and/or waiver for some course requirements by demonstrating ability through

examination and experiential learning assessment. The waived courses will not include the final 30 credit hours course requirements.

Benedictine University accepts transfer credit from other institutions, but transfer courses must be evaluated to establish equivalency with Benedictine courses and must be from regionally accredited institutions. BU is a participant in the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI), which is a state-wide transfer agreement that allows participating institutions to transfer completed Illinois General Education Core Curriculum courses and selected major courses.

Curriculum

The proposed RN to BSN program is designed for registered nurses with an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) who wish to obtain a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. The curriculum requires completion of 120 credit hours. Graduates of partner Harper College are required to complete prerequisite courses agreed upon by Benedictine and Harper in a 3+1 Memorandum of Understanding. Students complete 83 credit hours at Harper and 37 credit hours at Benedictine. Students must complete program requirements within three years after starting the nursing cohort classes. No areas of specialization or independent research are required, but students engage in research by taking the “Nursing Scholarship: Role of Research in Evidence Based Practice” course to prepare them to integrate research processes throughout their studies. Students are required to participate in field experiences in five courses in the curriculum and are assigned qualified nurse preceptors to guide them.

Assessment of Student Learning

Benedictine RN to BSN student outcomes are measured using guidelines obtained from the University mission, Department of Nursing and Health (DONH) mission, and program goals. The University outlines student learning goals that include measures in the following areas: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Communication, Information Fluency, Global Perspective, Social Responsibility, Personal Growth, Breadth of Knowledge and Integrative Learning, and Catholic and Benedictine Traditions. Assessment of student learning will involve a variety of methods including pre-course assignments, course written assignments, team-based collaborative learning activities, and exams. Students will be required to complete 20 hours of weekly independent learning activities such as reading, assignments, papers, projects, and quizzes.

Program Assessment

The RN to BSN program will use the Master Evaluation Plan (MEP) created by the faculty to provide guidance for ongoing systematic evaluation of program effectiveness. The MEP is aligned with the standards and key elements of the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs 2013. The MEP utilizes multiple evaluation tools to measure program outcomes including exit assessments, alumni assessments, open student forums, input received through student and adjunct faculty, new student orientation surveys, and student performance on benchmark assignments. The data gathered will be aggregated and used by faculty for program improvement planning on an annual basis.

Facilities (space, equipment, instructional materials)

Criterion 1030.60(a)(5) provides that the institution shall have adequate and suitable space, equipment, and instructional materials to provide education of suitable quality.

The proposed RN to BSN program will be delivered at Harper College. The 3+1 agreement between Benedictine and Harper stipulates that physical plant and classroom facilities will be provided by Harper College. The Nursing program at Harper site will be housed at the Avanté Center for Science, Health Careers and Emerging Technologies. The Center has 288,500 square feet of space, with 27 classrooms, 38 laboratories, nine lecture halls, 70 faculty and staff offices, a Megalab, and wireless internet access. The classrooms and labs are equipped with smart classroom technology. Nursing students attending Benedictine will have access to the Harper College library.

The Benedictine University library at the main campus in Lisle has a collection of over 200,000 books and e-books, 30,000 print and electronic periodicals, and 120 databases. The library website, catalog, and other resources can be accessed from the University's website and are available to students, faculty, and staff. The website can be accessed through links from the Department of Nursing and Health web page. Students will have resources to support their education including e-books, e-reference books, and multimedia collections in the health sciences and nursing. Some of these electronic resources include STATRef, Lippincott Nursing Procedures Video Collection, and a number of health and medicine titles in the SAGE Knowledge E-Reference Collection. Scholarly journals available for use by nursing students and faculty include Annual Reviews, CINAHL Plus with Full Text, Health Source: Nursing/Academic, MEDLINE, OVID Nursing Full Text Plus, Web of Science, and Wiley Interscience. Nursing students, faculty and staff will have access to approximately 1,000 full-text journal titles in the nursing and other health sciences.

Faculty and Staff

Criterion 1030.60(a)(6) provides that the education, experience, and other qualifications of directors, administrators, supervisors and instructors shall ensure that the students will receive education consistent with the objectives of the program.

Benedictine anticipates eight full-time and five adjunct faculty will serve in the proposed RN to BSN program. In addition, the University has identified eight existing faculty who are integral to the RN to BSN program and may be serving in various capacities, including teaching and clinical supervisions. The faculty for the proposed Bachelor of Science in Nursing will have at least a master's degree. The University maintains policies to ensure faculty are committed to teaching, scholarly engagement, and services.

Fiscal and Personnel Resources

Criterion 1030.60(a)(8) provides that fiscal and personnel resources shall be sufficient to permit the institution to meet obligations to continuing programs while assuming additional resource responsibilities for the new program.

The University has submitted 5-year fiscal plans that show operational revenue will exceed expenditure for the projected five years of operation.

Accreditation/Licensure

Graduates of this program will already hold licensure as registered nurses; therefore no additional licensure of program graduates will be required.

Program Information

Criterion 1030.60(a)(7) provides that the information which the institution provides for students and the public shall accurately describe the degree programs offered, program objectives, length of program, schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the course of study, cancellation and refund policies, and such other material facts concerning the institution and the program or course of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll. Such information shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment.

BU's catalog provides detailed information on academic policies, tuition and fees, proposed program description, course cancellations and refund policies, and other materials necessary for prospective students to make informed decisions on enrollment.

Staff Conclusion. The staff concludes that Benedictine University and its proposed Bachelor of Science in Nursing program meet the criteria in Sections 1030.30 and 1030.60 of the rules to implement The Private College Act (110 ILCS 1005) and The Academic Degree Act (110 ILCS 1010) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education policies pertaining to assessment and accreditation for licensure.

The staff recommends adoption of the following resolutions:

The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby grants to Benedictine University authorization to grant the Bachelor of Science in Nursing in the North Suburban Region subject to the institution's implementation and maintenance of the conditions that were presented in its applications and that form the basis upon which these authorizations are granted.