

Program Description

Overview

The Practical Nursing (PN) program of Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC) reflects the mission of the College in its educational efforts to respond to the needs of the students, the medical community and the residents of Montana. The proposed program results from vital partnerships within the community between FVCC and various health care facilities. Shared goals include community building, improving lives, affecting economies and preparing highly qualified professional licensed practical nurses to serve Montana residents.

According to the Montana Board of Nursing, licensed practical nurses (LPNs) work under the direction of a doctor or registered nurse. Most LPNs provide basic bedside care to patients. They take vital signs such as temperature, blood pressure, pulse, and respiration. They treat patients for bedsores, give alcohol rubs, and apply dressings. They apply hot water bottles and ice packs. LPNs observe patients and report any negative reactions to treatments or medications. They collect blood and other samples from patients for testing. In some work settings, they perform routine lab tests. LPNs feed patients and record their food and liquid intake and output. They also help patients with other personal care activities, such as bathing, dressing, or brushing their teeth.

Montana faces a lack of skilled LPNs to fill the many jobs available and to fill the projected openings in the next five years due to the increasing aging population, especially in the geographic area served by Flathead Valley Community College. FVCC will address this employer and health care need by educating individuals to become LPNs.

a. Objectives

The objectives of the FVCC Practical Nursing program are:

- Offer a Practical Nursing program that provides education that prepares students to sit for licensure;
- Address current health workforce supply challenges, such as the impending nursing shortage in Montana, by filling the need of health care facilities with entry-level nurses who will practice in supervised settings where policy and procedures guide practice; and
- Establish a curriculum that provides opportunities for continued studies in nursing.

The Flathead Valley Community College Practical Nursing program will be designed to prepare caring practical nurses who will positively influence the health and well-being of persons in the community they serve. The program will pursue its goal by maintaining sensitivity to the ongoing changes in the health care industry. Graduates who pass their licensure exam will perform services according to the rules that govern the Montana Board of Nursing found in the *Administrative Rules of Montana, Title 8, Chapter 32*.

The FVCC Practical Nursing program will be a certificate with a total of 50 credit hours, based on the courses proposed by the Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) Transfer Taskforce. FVCC participated in the LPN Transfer Taskforce, which held weekly meetings in response to the recommendation by the Legislative Audit Division State of Montana that LPN programs have consistent standards for the number of credits required, type of degree awarded and program transfer agreements. The proposed FVCC PN program has considered information presented at these meetings in the development of the program.

The program is designed to prepare graduates to take the National Council of State Boards of Nursing's *National Council Licensure Examination for Practical/Vocational Nurse (NCLEX-PN)*. In addition, the program design will allow for students to transfer credits to other Montana Practical Nursing programs. Furthermore, students will have taken appropriate coursework empowering them to pursue additional educational goals as desired.

The program's first semester will begin spring semester 2006. Twenty students will be admitted into the program third semester. After they complete the four-semester program of 50 credit hours, graduates will earn certificates in Practical Nursing and will obtain approval to take the licensure examination, National Council Licensure Examinations (NCLEX-PN).

Students graduating from the Practical Nursing program will be qualified and encouraged to resume their learning through employer continuing education programs. Other students, through faculty support, will desire to seek more advanced degrees. In addition, FVCC and the Practical Nursing program will be responsive to the community's economic and workforce training needs. There is a documented need (see letters of support in Appendix B) for a Practical Nursing program in the Valley. Because this program values the role of the licensed practical nurse in healthcare, FVCC believes the program will serve the needs of practical nursing education statewide. All policies of the Practical Nursing program will be congruent with FVCC policies and will include additional policies needed to meet specific health and licensure requirements.

b. Resources Including Faculty, Student, Facilities, Equipment and Library Holdings

Faculty

The FVCC campus has doctorate-prepared faculty in the biology and chemistry departments, while other faculty who teach English, nutrition, math and psychology hold master degrees. Numerous faculty on the FVCC Kalispell and Lincoln County campuses will continue to be involved in instruction of the PN curriculum. Of the 50 total credit hours of instruction, 26 credits will be taught by qualified existing faculty in the appropriate areas. The remaining 24 credits will be taught by nursing faculty, which will include a director and part-time faculty.

FVCC has a pool of academically strong candidates for both Nursing program director and faculty positions. FVCC will hire a director who will work 50 percent (**50%**) in administration and 50 percent (**50%**) in teaching, serving on college committees and continued development of professional and educational expertise. In addition, part-time nursing faculty will be hired to teach in specialty areas of practice. Preceptors will be hired through the Kalispell Regional Medical Center's nursing staff (see Appendix B letter of support dated March 29, 2005 from Fran Laukaitis, Chief Nursing Officer, Kalispell Regional Medical Center). FVCC will follow the Montana Board of Nursing requirements for the use of preceptors in educational PN programs (ruling 8.32.1113). Classroom ratios will generally be 20:1 for all nursing didactic coursework and 10:1 for labs/clinicals. Preceptors will work with students on a one-to-one basis in the clinical setting.

Student Resources

The following is a list of student support services already in place:

- Academic advisement/counseling;
- Personal adjustment counseling;
- Students with disabilities resource center;
- Grants for disadvantaged students;
- Financial aid;
- Work study;
- Career placement/testing; and
- Information technology with access to over 140 computers on the FVCC campus and five computers available at the Kalispell Regional Medical Center campus.

There is no anticipated increase in Student Services, Admissions, Financial Aid, Registration, Counseling or other student service areas. The current student service areas meet anticipated needs.

Facilities

FVCC currently has clinical agreements with Kalispell Regional Medical Center, HealthCenter Northwest, and North Valley Hospital for educational programs in allied health professions. All three facilities have agreed to make their facilities available for PN student clinicals. The types of clinicals at these facilities would include: mental health, wellness and health promotion, medical/surgical, maternal child and geriatrics. See Appendix E for the PN Advisory Board Meeting minutes. In addition, Immanuel Lutheran Home has agreed to take students for a community geriatric clinical.

Clinicals will occur primarily during the summer months. This is a high volume time for KRMC due to the number of residents who return to the area for the summer and vacationers visiting the area. Utilizing the summer months for hospital and community clinicals will lessen the burden of preceptors, as the Salish Kootenai Community College and the Montana State University students utilize facilities during the fall and spring semesters. In addition, Chief Nursing Officer at KRMC, Fran Laukaitis, has proposed clinical time in the evenings to ensure that students receive the necessary skill development that a hospital setting offers. The prospective student survey results support student availability for classes, labs and clinicals in the evening. This evening experience would prepare students for working shifts that utilize the majority of LPN care. See letters of support for adequate clinicals in Appendix B.

St. John's Lutheran Hospital in Libby, Montana, also supports the PN program. There is a need for LPNs in the Libby community working in physicians' offices and nursing homes. St. John's will provide clinical experiences for students at the hospital where students may be involved in emergency and trauma medicine, general surgery, pediatrics/ OBGYN and general medicine.

FVCC has a contract with KRMC that provides lab, classroom and faculty office space for the FVCC Paramedicine, Radiological Technology and Surgical Technology programs. See a letter of support from Ted Hirsch, Chief Operations Officer at KRMC, and an architectural plan that shows the space

designated for the PN program in Appendix B. Space includes offices for the director, faculty, classroom and lab.

Equipment

While students are taking coursework at the FVCC campus, they will have access to computer labs (over 140 computers). Additional computers are located in the FVCC library for student use. At KRMC during labs and clinicals, students will have access to five computers that have been purchased for this program. The FVCC campus is one mile from KRMC so students may continue to use the computer resources at the main campus. Classrooms at FVCC and at KRMC are equipped with PowerPoint capability, video players and overhead projectors. Video recorders have been purchased for the allied health programs to be used for student feedback instruction during the labs. These will be available to the PN program as well. PN lab equipment has been purchased by state funds appropriated for allied health and includes: two Compete Care Manikins and one Complete Keri Age-Generic Manikin. North Valley Hospital has committed to furnishing labs with additional nursing equipment such as hospital beds, wheelchairs and other items to simulate a patient room. See letter of support in Appendix B.

Library

Project for Training for Health & Education Opportunity, a Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration grant, will fund \$3,000 for library resources that will include purchasing videos and books. In addition to the FVCC library, KRMC has an extensive library for current medical information, including subscriptions to the major nursing and medical professional journals. Students will have access to the KRMC library. In addition, the Montana State Library System will be accessible.

c. Additional Faculty Requirements as to Qualifications, Salary, and Recruitment

Additional personnel required to operate and support the program include: program director, administrative support and part-time faculty.

Faculty Qualifications

The Nursing faculty that will be hired will meet the qualifications outlined by the Montana Board of Nursing. The program director (ruling 8.32.1110) qualifications include:

1. A current, unencumbered license to practice as a registered nurse in the state of Montana; and
2. A master's degree with a major in nursing or a minimum of a baccalaureate degree in nursing, supplemented by courses in curriculum development, principles and methods of teaching and measurement and evaluation.

Faculty qualifications according to the Montana Board of Nursing ruling 8.32.1113 include:

1. Holding a baccalaureate in nursing or a master's degree from a nationally accredited program supplemented by courses in curriculum development, principles and methods of teaching, measurement and evaluation;
2. Having at least two years' experience in registered nursing practice within the last five years; and
3. Holding a current, unencumbered license to practice professional nursing in the state of Montana.

These are the minimum director and faculty standards for PN accreditation based on the requirements of the Montana Board of Nursing. Educational Services at FVCC will provide administrative assistance to the PN program.

Salary

The director's salary range will be \$50,000 to \$55,000 for year one depending upon credentials and experience. The director's teaching load will consist of only one nursing course the first semester. Part-time faculty will not be hired until the program's second semester. Part-time faculty will be paid at the FVCC adjunct faculty pay rate. See Appendix D for the complete budget.

Recruitment

FVCC has received interest from a pool of academically strong candidates for both director and faculty positions.

d. Budget information that describes estimated incremental revenues and expenditures for a three to five-year period and estimated student enrollments for the same period of time

Revenues consist of the college general funds (which include tuition, state and local appropriations), laboratory fees and equipment fees. See Appendix D for the complete budget.

e. Specify the number of students expected to graduate over a ten-year period

About 30 to 35 students will enroll each spring, first semester of a four semester program, and begin the application process. Twenty students will be accepted into the program third semester. Due to attrition, approximately 15 students will continue into the final fourth semester and graduate. Total number of graduates estimated for the next ten years will be 150. Due to the current local, state, and national nursing shortage, it is anticipated that all graduates will be offered employment upon graduation for the foreseeable future.

The rate of attrition is based upon a phone conversation with Carol Gilbert, Deputy Director of the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC). Gilbert reported on August 2, 2005, that the NLNAC is now examining national data collected on program attrition. She states that 75% retention rate is reasonable due to student maternal leave, financial problems or remedial learning problems.

f. New courses this program will add to the curriculum and course requirements for the degree

Numerous faculty on both the Kalispell and Libby campuses will be instructors for the PN curriculum. Of the 50 total credit hours of instruction, 26 credits will be taught by qualified existing faculty in the appropriate areas. The remaining 24 credits will be taught by nursing faculty, which will include a director and part-time faculty. Below is the proposed curriculum for the 50 Credit PN Certificate proposed by the Montana Board of Regents in collaboration with the directors of Montana Practical Nursing programs:

Course	Credits* Didactic/Clinical/Lab	Course	Credits Didactic/Clinical/Lab
Semester One Spring		Semester Two Fall	
Anatomy & Physiology I	3/0/1 = 4	Anatomy & Physiology II	3/0/1 = 4
Freshman English	3/0/0 = 3	College Algebra	3/0/0 = 3
Inorganic Chemistry w/lab	3/0/1 = 4	Nutrition	2/0/0 = 2
Introduction to Nursing	1/0/0 = 1	Developmental Psych	3/0/0 = 3
Total	10/0/2 = 12	Total	11/0/1 = 12
Admission to Nursing Program required before taking Semester Three coursework.			
Semester Three Spring		Semester Four Summer	
Pharmacology	3/0/0 = 3	Core Concepts of Adult Nursing (Med Surg I)	4/3/0 = 7
Fundamentals of Nursing	4/0/3 = 7	Core Concepts of Maternal/Child Nursing (OB/Peds I)	2/1/0 = 3
Gerontology	1/1/0 = 2	Nursing Care of Clients w/Alterations in Psychosocial Integrity	2/0/0 = 2
Total	8/1/3 = 12	Total	8/4/0 = 12
		Leadership Issues	1/1/0 = 2
		Total	9/5/0 = 14

*Clinical credits are 3:1. Lab credits are 2:1. Total credits 50

FVCC already offers the following courses:

- Anatomy & Physiology I 4 credit hours

- Anatomy & Physiology II 4 credit hours
- Freshman English 3 credit hours
- Inorganic Chemistry w/lab 4 credit hours
- College Algebra 4 credit hours (a special section for this program will be three credit hours to meet the transfer credit requirement)
- Nutrition 3 credit hours (a special section for this program will be two credit hours to meet the transfer credit requirement)
- Developmental Psychology 3 credit hours
- Pharmacology 3 credit hours

Prerequisite coursework will depend upon students' skill level determined by the Learning Resource Center. English and Math placement exams are required before students can register for any Math course or English Composition course.

The remaining courses (24 credit hours) will be taught by the Practical Nursing program director or faculty. These new courses include:

- Introduction to Nursing 1 credit hour
- Fundamentals of Nursing 7 credit hours
- Gerontology 2 credit hours
- Core Concepts of Adult Nursing 7 credit hours
- Core Concepts of Maternal/Child Nursing 3 credit hours
- Nursing Care of Clients w/Alterations in Psychosocial Integrity 2 credit hours
- Leadership Issues 2 credit hours

This sequential curriculum is based upon approval of the Montana Board of Nursing and will be further developed by the program director.

g. Inter-Departmental Implications of Additions to this Program

Currently, all the non-nursing courses have the appropriate number of available faculty to offer the required courses. BIOL 261 and 262, *Anatomy and Physiology I & II*, will require an additional lecture section and an additional lab to accommodate the increased enrollment. Students located closer to the Lincoln County campus will be offered the option of accessibility through Interactive Television (ITV). Currently, the Lincoln County campus can offer freshman English, college algebra, nutrition, developmental psychology and pharmacology.

h. Need for the Program

History

The recommendation to submit this proposal to the Board of Regents began with faculty and administrators partnering with nursing personnel at Kalispell Regional Medical Center. Later, FVCC conducted an Advisory Board Meeting November 11, 2004 (see minutes in Appendix E and a list of members). This meeting documented the need for a PN program, the availability of clinical opportunities for student learning, equipment and support of area nursing employers. The starting annual salary for beginning LPNs at KRMC was reported at \$23,000 plus benefits, and experienced LPNs earn \$34,000 plus benefits. It became clear that the PN program would provide residents with an affordable education and secure them a career that would pay a decent salary with excellent benefits. The PN program would also supply a skilled workforce that would hopefully increase the opportunity for greater health care excellence and quality of life.

Program preparation also included FVCC supporting Dr. Linda Hunt, Director of Training for Health and Education Opportunities, to attend the *Self-Study Forum 2005*, in Chicago, sponsored by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, Inc. (NLNAC). Hunt learned the NLNAC'S standards and criteria that represent the best national thinking about how to demonstrate quality in a nursing program. During this meeting, Hunt met with other Montana Nursing program directors to discuss program development.

To document the student interest in a PN program, a telephone survey was completed in March 2005. The subject pool consisted of a random sampling of FVCC students who have taken nurse

assistant training. Sixty-six individuals were interviewed. Forty-four voiced interest in enrolling in a PN program with 38 stating strong interest. See Appendix C for Practical Nursing Survey.

In addition to the survey, a conversation with the Dr. Jean Shreffler-Grant, Campus Director of Montana State University-Bozeman, Missoula/Flathead Valley Campus Nursing Program, reported March 17, 2005 that the MSU program received 48 applicants for placement in the Kalispell program. This program has only eight openings per year. Although this is a baccalaureate degree program, clearly, there is student interest in nursing education for the Kalispell location. Shreffler-Grant also reported PN students statewide may not drop out at the PN level but continue their studies to receive credentials as registered nurses. This may contribute to a shortage of LPNs.

Summary

- Fifty-eight percent (**58%**) of those surveyed reported that they would be strongly interested in applying to a PN program at FVCC, while 38 percent (**38%**) stated they are not interested.
- Students applying to the MSU nursing program may also apply to the proposed FVCC PN program.
- With the introduction of PN to RN programs statewide, there may be a future shortage of LPNs in Montana as students continue the extra two semesters for the RN associate degree.
- A shortage of LPNs in Montana may lead to more hiring of medical technicians who do not have the training to ensure public safety.
- It is estimated that 150 students will graduate over the next ten years.

Workforce Supply

The nursing industry is rapidly aging. From 1996 to 2000, the national average age of a nurse increased from 44.5 years to 45.2 years, and working nurses increased from 42.5 to 43.3 years. Nationally in 1980, 52.9 percent (**52.9%**) of RNs were under the age of 40. By 2000, the percentage had dropped to 31.7 percent (**31.7%**). The change in the under 30 statistic is even more startling. In 1980, 25.1 percent (**25.1%**) of nurses nationally were under 30 years of age. In 2000, only 9.1 percent (**9.1%**) were under 30.

To see what role age plays in nursing education, the national survey compared average age by education level attained. When graduating from a diploma program, the average student was 30.8 years old; associate degree, 33.2 years; baccalaureate, 27.5 years; and all graduates were on average 30.5 years old. The average current age by type of nursing program completed showed that the average age for a diploma graduate is 48.33 years; associate degree graduates average 42.88 years; baccalaureate average 41.84 years; master's degree graduates average 46.69 years; and doctoral graduates average 53.38 years. This data illustrates that nurses are beginning their careers later in life; therefore, the range of their employment may be limited in years.

The Montana Hospital Association conducted a recent survey on healthcare worker needs in the state. Seventy-five percent (**75%**) of all Montana hospitals participated in the survey. The following data is from that report, which was presented to the Nursing Coordinating Group, June 2004:

- Thirty-nine licensed practical nursing (LPN) positions were vacant, representing 5.7 percent (**5.7%**) of the budgeted LPN positions;
- The vacancy rate is significantly higher at so-called "critical access hospitals," which are the smaller, more rural facilities. At those facilities, the vacancy rate for LPNs is 9.7 percent (**9.7%**) and ;
- According to the respondents, they spent approximately \$27 million in the last year on "replacement strategies," such as overtime pay and travelers. That figure included all healthcare workers, but most of the money was spent on additional nursing staff.

The study concluded that Montana will experience a need for more nurses, based on information provided by the Montana Department of Commerce. Montana employed 7,687 RN nurses in 2000. The Commerce Department predicts that Montana will employ 9,355 nurses by the year 2010. Another projection from the Montana Department of Commerce concludes that the state will have a need for 167 new nurses and 155 replacement nurses annually to keep up with the growth in health care services and the aging population of Montana's current nursing professionals. See Appendix A for national LPN practice analysis regarding employing facilities, employment setting characteristics and practice settings.

The changing demographics signal a need for more nurses to care for our aging population. According to a July 2001 report released by the Government Accounting Office, *Nursing Workforce: Emerging Nurse Shortages Due to Multiple Factors* (GAO-01-944), "A serious shortage of nurses is expected in the future as demographic pressures influence both supply and demand. The future demand

for nurses is expected to increase dramatically as the baby boomers reach their 60s, 70s, and beyond." (www.gao.gov).

As attested by a May 2001 report, *Who Will Care for Each of Us?: America's Coming Health Care Crisis*, released by the Nursing Institute at the University of Illinois College of Nursing, the ratio of potential caregivers to the people most likely to need care, the elderly population, will decrease by 40 percent (**40%**) between 2010 and 2030. Demographic changes may limit access to health care unless the number of nurses and other caregivers grows in proportion to the rising elderly population (www.kaisernetwork.org/healthcast/nursing/may01).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics report, *Occupational Employment Projections to 2008*, released in November 1999, employment of registered nurses is projected to grow by almost 22 percent (**22%**), with a projected need of 794,000 new RNs by 2008 (www.bls.gov). The need for RNs falls in the area of working with clients who are critically or acutely ill. These are the more involved cases of nursing care. Therefore, it is essential that the LPN workforce is increased to care for those clients who are in stable, but chronic conditions. By increasing the LPN workforce, RNs will be better utilized for the care of more seriously ill clients.

Summary

- Employment of LPNs in nursing care facilities is expected to grow faster than the average. Such facilities will offer the most new jobs for LPNs as the number of aged and disabled persons in need of long-term care rises. In addition to caring for the elderly and the disabled, LPNs in nursing care facilities will care for the increasing number of patients who will have been discharged from the hospital, but have not recovered enough to return home (U.S. Dept of Labor).
- Employment of LPNs is expected to grow much faster than average in home health care services. This growth is in response to an increasing number of older persons with functional disabilities, consumer preference for care in the home and technological advances that make it possible to bring increasingly complex treatments into the home (U.S. Dept of Labor).
- Facilities in Flathead County that have advertised for LPNs are hiring RNs as a result of an LPN shortage in turn, contributing to the RN shortage. Having LPNs employed in their practice area would create better role delineation, placing RNs in areas where they are more suited in advanced patient care.
- The National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc., states that the greatest need for hiring LPNs exists in the hospital and long term care settings located in smaller communities with facilities containing less than 299 beds.
- Because nurses generally begin their careers later in life, their years of practicing may be limited. Yet, a PN educational program will provide the means for individuals to receive training for jobs that have a high demand, while other employment opportunities in the Valley may be limited.
- The LPN program will increase the workforce and the quality of life in the Flathead Valley where the starting annual salary for beginning LPNs at Kalispell Regional Medical Center was reported at \$23,000 plus benefits and experienced LPNs earn \$34,000 plus benefits.

Workforce Hiring in Flathead Valley

The following data were collected from area facilities through telephone interviews regarding hiring full-time LPNs.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES		
EMPLOYER	LPN PREFERRED	NEEDED HIRES IN NEXT 6-12 MONTHS*
Drs. Higgs/Oerhtman	yes	1
Prestige Assistive Living	yes	1
Beehive Homes Assistive Living	yes	1
Kalispell Diagnostic	yes	1
Kalispell Orthopedics	yes	1 every 2 yrs
Riverside Assistive Living	yes	0
Northwest Women's Healthcare	yes	1
Glacier Medical Center	yes	1
Surgeons**	yes	0
RMHL***	yes	1

Kalispell OB/Gyn	yes	1
Lakeview Care	yes	2
Colonial Manor	yes	4-6
Immanuel Lutheran	yes	3-4
Evergreen Health & Rehab	yes	1-2
Family Health Care	yes	0
Heritage Place	yes	4-5
KRMC****	yes	10-15 first year; 4-5 each year thereafter

*Starting January 24, 2005

**Northwest Montana Surgical Associates

***Rocky Mountain Heart & Lung

**** Kalispell Regional Medical Center

The following data were collected from PN programs in the state of Montana:

PN GRADUATE AND EMPLOYMENT

Institution	Year	# of Graduates	# Employed in Major	% Employed in Major	% Employed outside Major	% Unemployed	% of GradsCont Edu**
MSU-Great Falls	2002-2003	16	12	75%	0	0	25% (RN)
COT-Butte	2004	5	5	100%	0	0	0
UM-Missoula	2004	30	25	83%	0	17%	0
UM-Helena	2004	25	25	100%	0	0	0
MSU-Billings	2004	43*	30*	70%	.02%*	.02%*	.05%*

* Data not complete

** Graduates continuing education

Summary

- Eighteen area employers stated that they would hire LPNs.
- Approximately 32 full-time LPNs will be needed in the next six to 12 months as of January 24, 2005.
- The greatest need will be in geriatric care facilities, where LPNs are most likely to be employed in nursing homes or long-term care facilities.
- Appendix A provides data showing 29 percent (**29%**) of LPNs work in a rural employment setting, and the majority work in an area where the population is 5,000 to 19,999.
- The majority of graduates from Montana state PN programs are securing employment in practice nursing positions.

Effects on Existing Programs in Montana

This feasibility study was mailed to all the nursing programs directors in Montana, including Carroll College and Salish Kootenai College the week of May 2, 2005. Hunt contacted Missoula College of Technology Program Director, Margaret Wafstet, by phone. Wafstet stated that the FVCC proposed program would not impact her PN program. FVCC is not utilizing clinical sites in Missoula. In addition, Missoula rarely receives student applications from the geographical region serving FVCC. Moreover, she reports that FVCC's proposal appropriately presents solutions that offer PN education resulting in graduates satisfying the needs of the medical community. See Appendix F for letter dated May 11, 2005.

Hunt spoke to Dr. Elizabeth G. Nichols, Dean and Professor of the College of Nursing at Montana State University at Bozeman on May 10, 2005. Nichols stated there is definitely a need for additional Licensed Practical Nurses. She reported if FVCC places students in clinicals during the summer, the Montana State University program will not be impacted (see letter of support in F). Jean Shreffler-Grant, Associate Professor and Missoula Campus Director for Montana State University (MSU) Nursing

program, agreed both programs could work together regarding availability of student clinical experiences in the Kalispell area (phone conversation May 17, 2005).

Jacque Dolberry, Director, Salish Kootenai College (SKC) Nursing program, expressed her support and stated that the FVCC Practical Nursing program would not have an impact on the SKC Nursing program.

Board of Nursing Program Proposal

8.32.801 Application for Initial Approval

(1) A statement of intent to establish a program in nursing was submitted and approved by the Montana Board of Nursing (MBON) September 2004. The present document is the feasibility study submitted to the MBON. This document will be formatted according to the guidelines established by the MBON.

(a) Data

Population Data

Flathead County includes the cities of Bigfork, Hungry Horse, Kalispell, Lakeside and Somers.

Population Estimates				
Area	2001 Estimate	2002 Estimate	2003 Estimate	
Montana	904,460	913,110	921,830	
Flathead County	76,270	77,660	79,220	
Population Growth				
	1990-2000	2000-2005	2000-2010	
Percentage	24%	7%	16%	
Population				
Total	1990	2000	2005	2010
Total	59,218	74,471	82,250	89,590
Population by 5 Age Groups				
	1990	2000	2005	2010
<18	16,749	18,603	21,326	22,341
18-34	12,521	12,728	13,381	15,266
35-54	17,122	25,277	25,688	25,896
55-74	9,665	12,535	13,572	16,479
75+	3,161	4,526	4,941	5,386
Percent <18	28%	25%	27%	26%
Percent 18-34	21%	17%	17%	18%
Percent 35-54	29%	34%	33%	30%
Percent 55-74	16%	17%	17%	19%
Percent 75+	5%	6%	6%	6%
Median Age	34.3	38.7	37.7	38.0

Source: Applied Geographic Solutions, Inc. (2000)

Lincoln County includes the cities of Eureka, Fortine, Libby and Troy.

Population 2003 estimate	18,835
Median Age	42.1 years
19 years and under	27.5 %
20 - 64 years	57.3 %
65 years and over	15.2 %

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

According to Report of Findings from the 2003 LPN/VN Practice Analysis published by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc., 72 percent (72%) of LPNs care for clients in the 65 to 85 age

range and 47 percent (**47%**) care for clients in the 31 to 64 age range. The results were from a survey where respondents could select more than one category.

Summary

- LPN employment will increase in response to the long-term care needs of an increasing elderly population and the general growth of health care (U.S. Department of Labor). The demographics of Flathead and Lincoln Counties show a growing increase in the elderly population.
- In 2000, the Montana population of those 65 years and older was 13.4 percent (**13.4%**). In Flathead County, it was 13 percent (**13%**), while the national figure was 12.4 percent (**12.4%**). Montana has a higher growth rate than the national average of aging individuals as people choose to retire here. In addition, those aging residents who have moved away from the area are returning to be with family members (U.S. Census Bureau).
- Nationwide, LPNs care for those ranging in age from 31 to 85 years, which is the majority of the population in the Valley.

Workforce Supply

The nursing industry is rapidly aging. From 1996 to 2000, the national average age of a nurse increased from 44.5 years to 45.2 years, working nurses increased from 42.5 to 43.3 years. Nationally in 1980, 52.9 percent (**52.9%**) of RNs were under the age of 40. By 2000, the percentage had dropped to 31.7 percent (**31.7%**). The change in the under 30 statistic is even more startling. In 1980, 25.1 percent (**25.1%**) of nurses nationally were under 30 years of age. In 2000, only 9.1 percent (**9.1%**) were under 30.

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- Thirty-nine licensed practical nursing (LPN) positions were vacant, representing 5.7 percent (**5.7%**) of the budgeted LPN positions;
- The vacancy rate is significantly higher at so-called "critical access hospitals," which are the smaller, more rural facilities. At those facilities, the vacancy rate for LPNs is 9.7 percent (**9.7%**) and ;
- According to the respondents, they spent approximately \$27 million in the last year on "replacement strategies" such as overtime pay and travelers. That figure included all healthcare workers, but most of the money was spent on additional nursing staff.

The study concluded that Montana will experience a need for more nurses, based on information provided by the Montana Department of Commerce. Montana employed 7,687 RN nurses in 2000. The Commerce Department predicts that Montana will employ 9,355 nurses by the year 2010. Another projection from the Montana Department of Commerce concludes that the state will have need for 167 new nurses and 155 replacement nurses annually to keep up with the growth in health care services and the aging population of Montana's current nursing professionals. See Appendix A for national LPN practice analysis regarding employing facilities, employment setting characteristics and practice settings.

The changing demographics signal a need for more nurses to care for our aging population. According to a July 2001 report released by the Government Accounting Office, *Nursing Workforce: Emerging Nurse Shortages Due to Multiple Factors* (GAO-01-944), "A serious shortage of nurses is expected in the future as demographic pressures influence both supply and demand. The future demand for nurses is expected to increase dramatically as the baby boomers reach their 60s, 70s, and beyond." (www.gao.gov).

As attested by a May 2001 report, *Who Will Care for Each of Us?: America's Coming Health Care Crisis*, released by the Nursing Institute at the University of Illinois College of Nursing, the ratio of potential caregivers to the people most likely to need care, the elderly population, will decrease by 40 percent (**40%**) between 2010 and 2030. Demographic changes may limit access to health care unless the

number of nurses and other caregivers grows in proportion to the rising elderly population (www.kaisernetwork.org/healthcast/nursing/may01).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics report, *Occupational Employment Projections to 2008*, released in November 1999, employment of registered nurses is projected to grow by almost 22 percent (22%), with a projected need of 794,000 new RNs by 2008 (www.bls.gov). The need for RNs falls in the area of working with clients who are critically or acutely ill. These are the more involved cases of nursing care. Therefore, it is essential that the LPN workforce is increased to care for those clients who are in stable but chronic conditions. By increasing the LPN workforce, RNs will be better utilized for the care of more seriously ill clients.

Summary

- Employment of LPNs in nursing care facilities is expected to grow faster than the average. Such facilities will offer the most new jobs for LPNs as the number of aged and disabled persons in need of long-term care rises. In addition to caring for the elderly and the disabled, LPNs in nursing care facilities will care for the increasing number of patients who will have been discharged from the hospital but have not recovered enough to return home (U.S. Dept of Labor).
- Employment of LPNs is expected to grow much faster than average in home health care services. This growth is in response to an increasing number of older persons with functional disabilities, consumer preference for care in the home and technological advances that make it possible to bring increasingly complex treatments into the home (U.S. Dept of Labor).
- Facilities in Flathead County that have advertised for LPNs are hiring RNs as a result of an LPN shortage, in turn contributing to the RN shortage. Having LPNs employed in their practice area would create better role delineation, placing RNs in areas where they are more suited in advanced patient care.
- The National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc., states that the greatest need for hiring LPNs exists in the hospital and long-term care settings located in smaller communities with facilities containing less than 299 beds.
- Because nurses generally begin their careers later in life, their years of practicing may be limited. Yet, a PN educational program will provide the means for individuals to receive training for jobs that have a high demand, while other employment opportunities in the Valley may be limited.
- The LPN program will increase the workforce and the quality of life in the Flathead Valley where the average salary is \$24,696, and the average LPN salary in Montana is higher at \$25,450 (MT DOL).

Workforce Hiring in Flathead Valley

The following data were collected from area facilities through telephone interviews regarding hiring full-time LPNs.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES		
EMPLOYER	LPN PREFERRED	NEEDED HIRES IN NEXT 6-12 MONTHS*
Drs. Higgs/Oerhtman	yes	1
Prestige Assistive Living	yes	1
Beehive Homes Assistive Living	yes	1
Kalispell Diagnostic	yes	1
Kalispell Orthopedics	yes	1 every 2 yrs
Riverside Assistive Living	yes	0
Northwest Women's Healthcare	yes	1
Glacier Medical Center	yes	1
Surgeons**	yes	0
RMHL***	yes	1
Kalispell OB/Gyn	yes	1
Lakeview Care	yes	2
Colonial Manor	yes	4-6
Immanuel Lutheran	yes	3-4
Evergreen Health & Rehab	yes	1-2

Family Health Care	yes	0
Heritage Place	yes	4-5
KRMC****	yes	10-15 first year; 4-5 each year thereafter

*Starting January 24, 2005

**Northwest Montana Surgical Associates

***Rocky Mountain Heart & Lung

**** Kalispell Regional Medical Center

The following data were collected from PN programs in the state of Montana:

PN GRADUATE AND EMPLOYMENT

Institution	Year	# of Graduates	# Employed in Major	% Employed in Major	% Employed outside Major	% Unemployed	% of GradsCont Edu**
MSU-Great Falls	2002-2003	16	12	75%	0	0	25% (RN)
COT-Butte	2004	5	5	100%	0	0	0
UM-Missoula	2004	30	25	83%	0	17%	0
UM-Helena	2004	25	25	100%	0	0	0
MSU-Billings	2004	43*	30*	70%	.02%*	.02%*	.05%*

* Data not complete

** Graduates continuing education

Summary

- Seventeen area employers stated that they would hire LPNs.
- Approximately 32 full-time LPNs will be needed in the next six to 12 months as of January 24, 2005.
- The greatest need will be in geriatric care facilities where LPNs are most likely to be employed in nursing homes or long-term care facilities.
- Appendix A provides data showing 29 percent (**29%**) of LPNs work in a rural employment setting, and the majority work in an area where the population is between 5,000 to 19,999.
- The majority of graduates from Montana state PN programs are securing employment in practice nursing positions.

(b) Purpose and Classification of Program

Overview

The Practical Nursing program, functioning within the general framework and policies of Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC), reflects the mission of the college in the program's philosophic statements regarding people and society, nursing and education. These reflect responsiveness to the educational needs of our students, the needs of the medical community and its residents, as well as the provision of service to Montana through the preparation of nurse practitioners.

Practical nurses provide care in diverse settings where policies and procedures are specified and guidance is available. Environment includes all physical, psychological, cultural and spiritual conditions affecting individuals and families. Unique responses by an individual or family to constant interaction with the environment result in varying degrees of health. A focus of nursing is to optimize the environment, in diverse health care settings, to assist the clients to meet their individualized basic needs.

Learning is a continuous process involving active participation by both faculty and students. The faculty facilitates this process by assessing student learning needs and providing appropriate guidance regarding academic progress. Each learning experience will be planned and organized to meet individual learning needs and achievement of identified learning objectives. In order to assist students to attain the necessary competencies, a variety of clinical environments will be selected.

Purpose

The purposes of the practical nursing program will be to prepare graduates with certificates for entry-level nursing practice in supervised settings where policy and procedures guide practice. Another purpose will be to provide a basis for continued studies in nursing.

The Flathead Valley Community College Practical Nursing program will be designed to prepare caring practical nurses who will positively influence the health and well-being of persons in the community they serve. The program will pursue its goal by maintaining sensitivity to the ongoing changes in the health care needs of people. Graduates who pass their licensure exam will perform services according to the rules that govern the Montana Board of Nursing found in the *Administrative Rules of Montana, Title 8, Chapter 32*.

Classification

The FVCC Practical Nursing program will be a certificate with a total of 50 credit hours, based on the proposed courses by the LPN Transfer Taskforce. Linda Hunt participated in the LPN Transfer Taskforce, which held weekly meetings in response to the recommendation by the Legislative Audit Division State of Montana that LPN programs have consistent standards for the number of credits required, type of degree awarded and program transfer agreements. The proposed FVCC PN program has considered information presented at these meetings in the development of the curriculum.

The program is designed to prepare graduates to take the National Council of State Boards of Nursing's *National Council Licensure Examination for Practical/Vocational Nurse (NCLEX-PN)*. In addition, the program design will allow for students to transfer credits to other Montana Practical Nursing programs. Furthermore, students will have taken appropriate coursework empowering them to pursue educational goals as desired.

The program's first semester will begin spring semester. Twenty students will be admitted into the program third semester. After they complete the four-semester program of 50 credit hours, graduates will earn certificates in Practical Nursing and will obtain approval to take the licensure examination, National Council Licensure Examinations (NCLEX-PN).

Due to the rigor of this program, students will have scheduled appointments with a nursing faculty advisor to document mid-semester progress. Students in jeopardy of not making scholastic progress will be urged to seek necessary tutoring available through FVCC's Learning Resource Center.

The Practical Nursing program purpose, as stated above and the mission of FVCC reinforce and support one another. Both provide educational courses that prepare students for transfer to other postsecondary institutions for the workforce and for citizenship. Both increase lifelong learning opportunities for our students and our community. Students graduating from the Practical Nursing program will be qualified and encouraged to resume their learning through employer continuing education programs. Other students, through faculty support, will desire to seek more advanced degrees. In addition, FVCC and the Practical Nursing program will be responsive to the community's economic and workforce training needs. There is a documented need (see letters of support in Appendix B) for a Practical Nursing program in the Valley. Because this program values the role of the licensed practical nurse in healthcare, FVCC believes the program will serve the needs of practical nursing education statewide. All policies of the Practical Nursing program will be congruent with FVCC policies and will include additional policies needed to meet specific health and licensure requirements. This is similar to other allied health programs offered by FVCC.

(c) Availability of Qualified Faculty

The FVCC campus has doctorate-prepared faculty in the biology and chemistry departments, while other faculty who teach English, nutrition, math and psychology hold master degrees. FVCC has a pool of academically strong candidates for both director and faculty positions. FVCC will hire a director who will work 50 percent in administration and 50 percent in teaching, serving on college committees and continued development of professional and educational expertise. In addition, a full-time nursing faculty member will be hired who will have a teaching load similar to other FVCC faculty. Furthermore, FVCC will hire a part-time faculty member to teach clinicals. Classroom ratios will generally be 20:1 for all nursing coursework and 10:1 for labs/clinicals. Twenty students will be admitted each year, which will allow for attrition. The following provides information on individuals who have expressed interest in working in varying capacities of this program. Their credentials are as follows:

- One candidate for the director's position was employed at Montana State University Billings College of Technology for eight years. During that time, she served as director of the health occupations department and taught LPN courses. While in the position, she was responsible for facilitating and participating in the development and revisions of the LPN curriculum. Currently, she is employed as the clinical educator for the medical, surgical and rehabilitation areas of Kalispell Regional Medical

Center. She has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Montana State University and has completed some course work in a Master of Nursing program. FVCC would support this person in her professional development as she completes her master's degree.

- A second candidate for the director position holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a master's degree. Her teaching and practice expertise focuses on psychiatric nursing and management nursing. She is experienced in curriculum development and evaluation. She is knowledgeable in PN education and has experience in supervising LPNs in her practice.
- A candidate for faculty has a clinical background in obstetrics and gerontology. Her education includes a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Master of Science in Nursing Education.
- Another candidate has served as a practical nursing educator in the state of Oklahoma for 18 years. She has taught all aspects of PN education including pharmacology. She is licensed as a registered nurse in good standing in the state of Oklahoma and is in the process of renewing her Montana RN license. She is completing a Master of Science in Education. She is interested in part-time work as a preceptor and guest lecturer.
- A practicing RN has a baccalaureate degree. She has voiced interest in serving as an adjunct faculty member and precepting students during their clinicals. She supervises LPNs and has experience in medical-surgical and perinatal nursing and case management. She has experience as a preceptor and teaching students for work as an acute care nurse aide. Her past work shows responsibility for theory development, clinical supervision of students and program outcomes.

(d) Budgeted faculty positions

Numerous faculty on the FVCC campus will continue to be involved in instruction of the PN curriculum. Of the 50 total credit hours of instruction, 24 credits will be taught by qualified existing faculty in the appropriate areas. The remaining 26 credits will be taught by nursing faculty, which will include a director and part-time faculty.

Proposed Curriculum

Course	Credits* Didactic/Clinical/Lab	Course	Credits Didactic/Clinical/ Lab
Semester One Spring		Semester Two Fall	
Anatomy & Physiology I	3/0/1 = 4	Anatomy & Physiology II	3/0/1 = 4
Freshman English	3/0/0 = 3	College Algebra	3/0/0 = 3
Inorganic Chemistry w/lab	3/0/1 = 4	Nutrition	2/0/0 = 2
Introduction to Nursing	1/0/0 = 1	Developmental Psych	3/0/0 = 3
Total	10/0/2 = 12	Total	11/0/1 = 12
Admission to Nursing Program required before taking Semester Three coursework.			
Semester Three Spring		Semester Four Summer	
Pharmacology	3/0/0 = 3	Core Concepts of Adult Nursing (Med Surg I)	4/3/0 = 7
Fundamentals of Nursing	4/0/3 = 7	Core Concepts of Maternal/Child Nursing (OB/Peds I)	2/1/0 = 3
Gerontology	1/1/0 = 2	Nursing Care of Clients w/Alterations in Psychosocial Integrity	2/0/0 = 2
Total	8/1/3 = 12	Total	8/4/0 = 12
		Leadership Issues	1/1/0 = 2
		Total	9/5/0 = 14

*Clinical credits are 3:1. Lab credits are 2:1.

Total Credits: 50

There is no anticipated increase in Student Services, Admissions, Financial Aid, Registration, Counseling or other student service areas. The current student service areas meet anticipated needs. Additional personnel required to operate and support the program include: program director, administrative support and part-time faculty. The Montana Board of Nursing specifies the requirement of a full-time director who shall devote a minimum of 50 percent (**50%**) time to administrative activities. Student-instructor ratios in the clinical and lab settings will not exceed 10 students to one instructor. Although the PN program will be located off campus, PN faculty will still participate in FVCC activities, such as serving on committees and governance of FVCC. Likewise, students in the program have opportunities to become active in FVCC activities and student governance. For example, FVCC sponsors a student run club, Scrub Club, open to all students in the allied health educational programs. This year the club sponsored a case study presentation entitled *Continuity of Care Depends on Teamwork* that included invited speakers from paramedicine, trauma care nursing, surgical technology and medical coding. See Appendix D for the proposed budget.

(e) Availability of Adequate Clinical and Academic Facilities for the Program

FVCC currently has clinical agreements with Kalispell Regional Medical Center (KRMC), HealthCenter Northwest, and North Valley Hospital for educational programs in allied health professions. All three facilities have agreed to make their facilities available for PN student clinicals. The types of clinicals at these facilities would include: mental health, wellness and health promotion, medical/surgical, maternal child and geriatrics (see Appendix E for the PN Advisory Board Meeting minutes). In addition, Immanuel Lutheran Home has agreed to take students for a community geriatric clinical.

Clinicals will occur primarily during the summer months. This is a high volume time for KRMC due to the number of residents who return to the area for the summer and vacationers visiting the area. Utilizing the summer months for hospital and community clinicals will lessen the burden of preceptors, as the Salish Kootenai Community College and the Montana State University students utilize facilities during the fall and spring semesters. In addition, Chief Nursing Officer at KRMC, Fran Laukaitis, has proposed clinical time in the evenings to ensure that students receive the necessary skill development that a hospital setting offers. Our prospective student needs assessment supports that students would be available for classes, labs and clinicals in the evening. This evening experience would prepare students for working shifts that utilizes the majority of LPN care. See letters of support for adequate clinicals in Appendix B.

Nursing Director, Jackie Hare, at St. John's Lutheran Hospital in Libby, Montana, also supports the PN program. She has stated that she would like residents in Libby to start with the PN degree and for those interested, to continue on to RN educational programs. St. John's Lutheran Hospital does not hire LPNs, but Hare states that there is a need for LPNs in the Libby community working in physicians' offices and nursing homes. She will provide clinical experiences for students at the hospital where students may be involved in emergency and trauma medicine, general surgery, pediatrics/ OBGYN and general medicine.

FVCC has a contract with KRMC that provides lab, classroom and faculty office space for the FVCC Paramedicine, Radiological Technology and Surgical Technology programs. See a letter of support from Ted Hirsch, Chief Operations Officer at KRMC and an architectural plan that shows the space designated for the PN program in Appendix B. Space includes offices for the director, faculty, classroom and lab. More space is available from the Surgical Technology program classroom.

(f) Evidence of financial resources adequate for the planning, implementation and continuation of the program

Continuing Education

FVCC supported Dr. Linda Hunt, Director of Training for Health and Education Opportunities, to attend the *Self-Study Forum 2005* in Chicago sponsored by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, Inc. (NLNAC). Hunt learned the NLNAC'S standards and criteria that represent the best national thinking about how best to demonstrate quality in a nursing program.

The Montana Board of Nursing, on an annual basis requires evidence of professional development. This professional development is achieved through attendance at continuing education conferences, workshops and professional organization meetings. FVCC recognizes the need for faculty to raise their levels of expertise while fulfilling their continuing education requirements, thereby improving the quality of nursing instruction. The philosophy behind this purpose is based on the belief that continuing education is a lifetime commitment requiring knowledge of current trends and developments in science, technology and the economics of health care. Currently, full-time faculty are eligible from a pool of \$22,000 per year

for continuing education funds. Furthermore, Kalispell Regional Medical Center has offered continuing education for employees who may be instructors in the FVCC PN program (see Appendix B for a letter of support written by Fran Laukaitis, RN).

Student Resources

The following is a list of student support services already in place:

- Academic advisement/counseling;
- Personal adjustment counseling;
- Students with disabilities resource center;
- Grants for disadvantaged students;
- Financial aid;
- Work study;
- Career placement/testing; and
- Information technology.

A childcare center is being planned for FVCC students and employees.

Facilities

- Rent for faculty offices, classrooms and labs;
- Library;
- Computer laboratory;
- A/V department;
- Parking;
- Conference rooms; and
- Lab equipment purchased by state funds ear marked for allied health that includes: two Complete Care Manikins, one Complete Keri Age-Generic Manikin and other educational equipment totaling \$13,550.00.

Project for Training for Health & Education Opportunity, a Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration grant, will fund \$3,000 for library resources that will include purchasing videos and books. In addition to the FVCC library, KRMC has an extensive library for current medical information, including subscriptions to the major nursing and medical professional journals. Students will have access to the KRMC library. In addition, the Montana State Library System will be accessible.

While students are taking coursework at the FVCC campus, they will have access to computer labs (over 140 computers). Additional computers are located in the FVCC library for student use. At KRMC during labs and clinicals, students will have access to five computers that have been purchased for this program. The FVCC campus is one mile from KRMC, so students may continue to use the computer resources at the main campus. Classrooms at FVCC and at KRMC are equipped with PowerPoint capability, video players and overhead projectors. Video recorders have been purchased for the allied health programs to be used for student feedback instruction during the labs. These will be available to the PN program as well.

Travel

The Practical Nursing Director and faculty will have adequate resources to support the following:

- Attending the Montana Board of Nursing Meetings when appropriate;
- Visiting clinical sites; and
- Attending other meetings related to the PN program.

See Appendix D for the proposed budget page.

(g) Anticipated Student Population

A telephone survey was completed in March 2005. The subject pool consisted of a random sampling of FVCC students who have taken nurse assistant training. Sixty-six individuals were interviewed. Forty-four voiced interest in enrolling in a PN program with 38 stating strong interest. See Appendix C for Practical Nursing Survey.

In addition to the survey, a conversation with the Dr. Jean Shreffler-Grant, Campus Director of Montana State University-Bozeman, Missoula/Flathead Valley Campus Nursing Program, reported March 17, 2005 that the MSU program received 48 applicants for placement in the Kalispell program. This

program has only eight openings per year. Although this is a baccalaureate degree program, clearly, there is student interest in nursing education for the Kalispell location. Shreffler-Grant also reported PN students statewide may not drop out at the PN level but continue their studies to receive credentials as registered nurses. This may contribute to a shortage of LPNs.

FVCC plans to admit 20 students each year. It is anticipated that 10 to 15 students will rotate through clinicals during the last semester due to attrition and the need for some students to attend the program part-time or repeat a course such as *College Algebra* or *Human Anatomy and Physiology*.

About 30 to 35 students will enroll each spring, first semester of a four semester program and begin the application process. Twenty students will be accepted into the program third semester. Due to attrition, approximately 10 to 15 students will continue into the final fourth semester and graduate. Total number of graduates estimated for the next ten years will be 150. Due to the current local, state, and national nursing shortage, it is anticipated that all graduates will be offered employment upon graduation for the foreseeable future. The rate of attrition is based upon a phone conversation with Carol Gilbert, Deputy Director of the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC). Gilbert reported on August 2, 2005, that the NLNAC is now examining national data collected on program attrition. She states that 75% retention rate is reasonable due to student maternal leave, financial problems or remedial learning problems. She stated that retention rates will be partly based on the level of admission criteria.

Summary

- Fifty-eight percent (**58%**) of those surveyed reported that they would be strongly interested in applying to a PN program at FVCC, while 38 percent (**38%**) stated they are not interested.
- Students applying to the MSU nursing program may also apply to the proposed FVCC PN program.
- With the introduction of PN to RN programs statewide, there may be a future shortage of LPNs in Montana as students continue the extra two semesters for the RN associate degree.
- A shortage of LPNs in Montana may lead to more hiring of medical technicians who do not have the training to ensure public safety.
- It is estimated that 150 students will graduate over the next ten years.

(h) Time Table

The following time table is tentative pending the decisions made by the Montana Board of Nursing and the Montana Board of Regents.

Activity	Date	Status
1) Submit letter of intent to the Montana Board of Nursing.	September 2004	Completed
2) Submit a program budget for review to FVCC Vice President.	October 2004	Completed
3) Hire Nurse Specialist to assist with feasibility study.	October 2004	Completed
4) Conduct an advisory board meeting.	Nov. 11, 2004	Completed
5) Attend Montana Board of Regents meeting in Helena.	Nov. 30, 2004	Completed
6) Attend Montana Board of Nursing meeting in Helena.	Jan. 18-20, 2005	Completed
7) Gather Data for the feasibility study, which includes: a. Provide population data from the last three years; Quantify workforce supply and demand data from last year; address total state resources and nursing education needs within the state b. Describe purpose and classification of program c. Document availability of qualified faculty d. Budgeted faculty positions e. Document availability of clinical sites, classroom and lab space f. Document evidence of financial resources g. Describe anticipated student populations h. Provide tentative time table	Draft to be submitted to Montana Nursing Program Directors May 2005	Completed

i. Provide evidence on how programs may affect other nursing programs; document support from other nursing education directors for program		
8) Submit Feasibility Study to Montana Board of Nursing.	August/ 2005	
9) Attend Montana Board of Nursing meeting in Polson.	July 20, 2005	Completed
10) Submit Board of Regents Level II report.	August 2005	
11) Start recruiting for Program Director.	October 2005	
12) Attend Montana Board of Nursing meeting in Helena – Nursing Feasibility Proposal reviewed.	Oct. 18-20, 2005	
13) Hire a Program Director (actual start date to be determined, with possible start-up work from remote location). Hire Faculty.	Winter 2006	
14) Submit a written proposed program plan.	Summer 2006	
15) Students may enroll in the first semester.	Spring 2006 or Fall 2006	
16) Students admitted to the program	Fall 2006 or Spring 2007	

(i) Effects on Existing Programs in Montana

This feasibility study was mailed to all the nursing programs directors in Montana, including Carroll College and Salish Kootenai College the week of May 2, 2005. Hunt contacted Missoula College of Technology Program Director, Margaret Wafstet, by phone. Wafstet stated that the FVCC proposed program would not impact her PN program. FVCC is not utilizing clinical sites in Missoula. In addition, Missoula rarely receives student applications from the geographical region serving FVCC. Moreover, she reports that FVCC's proposal appropriately presents solutions that offer PN education resulting in graduates satisfying the needs of the medical community. See Appendix F for letter dated May 11, 2005.

Hunt spoke to Dr. Elizabeth G. Nichols, Dean and Professor of the College of Nursing at Montana State University at Bozeman on May 10, 2005. Nichols stated there is definitely a need for additional Licensed Practical Nurses. She reported if FVCC places students in clinicals during the summer, then the Montana State University program will not be impacted (see letter of support in Appendix E). Jean Shreffler-Grant, Associate Professor and Missoula Campus Director for Montana State University (MSU) Nursing program, agreed both programs could work together regarding availability of student clinical experiences in the Kalispell area (phone conversation May 17, 2005).

Jacque Dolberry, Director, Salish Kootenai College (SKC) Nursing program, expressed her support and stated that the FVCC Practical Nursing program would not have an effect on the SKC Nursing program.

Additionally, Hunt spoke to Kathleen Wankel, Program Director at Miles Community College Division of Nursing and Health Occupations. She stated students from the FVCC area do not apply to her program. She also reported the clinical sites used by FVCC will not overlap with the sites Miles Community College uses. A phone conversation with Cheryl Alt, Program Director at Great Falls College of Technology, verified the same support for the FVCC program.

In summary, the proposed FVCC Practical Nursing program will not negatively affect existing nursing programs sharing the same clinical sites nor will it impact the student populations of existing programs.