



August 10, 2010

Montana University System
2500 Broadway St., P.O. Box 203201
Helena, MT 59630-3201

Dear Board of Regents:

Enclosed is a proposal for an accelerated post-baccalaureate undergraduate nursing alternative submitted by the College of Nursing at Montana State University. We are excited about this proposal believing that this alternative will provide a quality route for individuals with a degree in a discipline other than nursing to enter the profession of nursing. As is evident in our packet, this proposal clearly meets a need. Montana is one of three states without a second degree post baccalaureate option. Our needs assessment has shown a high degree of interest and enthusiasm for this alternative. Hardly a week goes by that we don't hear about a degreed student that has chosen to leave the state because there is not an accelerated second degree option available in the state.

The second degree alternative is just that – a new option – not a new program. Students enrolling in this alternative will follow the same curriculum as our basic students with the same number of credits, same courses, and same number of clinical hours. The difference is simply the schedule. The curriculum will be condensed into four academic terms (including summers) so students can complete the curriculum in 16 months beginning in summer 2011 (summer 2011 → fall 2011 → spring 2011 → summer 2012). We plan to admit a cohort of 16 students to our Bozeman campus. Bozeman was selected in that we only admit once a year to that campus and do not compete with other nursing schools for clinical placements.

The faculty in the College of Nursing at MSU are enthusiastic about this proposed alternative as is the MSU administration. We have worked closely with budgetary officials to develop a cost effective plan for the alternative with the intent of offering it through Extended University. Our primary clinical partner in the community, Bozeman Deaconess Hospital, is supportive and eager to collaborate with us on this endeavor. The Montana State Board of Nursing reviewed this proposal at its July 2010 meeting and gave full approval.

Thank you for the consideration you will give this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Helen I. Melland'.

Helen I. Melland, PhD, RN
Dean and Professor

Main Campus

Sherrick Hall
P.O. Box 173560
Bozeman, MT 59717-3560

Tel (406) 994-3783
Fax (406) 994-6020

Billings Campus

1500 University Drive
MSU-Billings Campus, Box 574
Billings, MT 59101

Tel (406) 657-2912
Fax (406) 657-1715

Great Falls Campus

400 15th Ave. South, Suite 106
Great Falls, MT 59405

Tel (406) 771-4450
Fax (406) 771-4449

Missoula Campus

32 Campus Drive #7416
Missoula, MT 59812-7416

Tel (406) 243-6515
Fax (406) 243-5745



May 27, 2010

Attn: Montana State Board of Nursing
Montana State Board of Regents

Re: BSN Accelerated Program

Please accept this letter on behalf of Kalispell Regional Medical Center to extend our support of the proposed BSN Accelerated Program at Montana State University. In hiring nurses with prior bachelor's degrees, we have found that these students are more mature and focused in what they want for their careers, and they go on to become excellent nurses. This option would enable such students to advance more quickly through the requirements to become a registered nurse.

Because Montana offers healthcare in a rural setting, finding top-notch nurses who will develop into leadership staff can, at times, be very challenging. An accelerated program will give Kalispell Regional Medical Center another strategy to help assure an adequate supply of nurses for the future.

Thank you so much for considering this proposal and for the potential it represents to our organization, our community and our patients.

Very sincerely,

Pat Wilson RN, MSN
Executive Director, Education Services



2715 Dickinson
Miles City, MT 59301
www.milesc.edu

(406) 874-6100
Fax: (406) 874-6282
*Equal Opportunity in
Education and Employment.*

June 1, 2010

Helen Melland, PhD, RN
Gretchen McNeely, DNSc, RN
Montana State University
College of Nursing
Sherrick Hall
Box 173560
Bozeman, MT 59717-3560

Dear Dr's Melland and McNeely,

This letter is in support of Montana State University College of Nursing to offer an accelerated post-baccalaureate option. Miles Community College Nursing Program does not find any objections to MSU College of Nursing adding a cohort of 16 post-baccalaureate students in an accelerated BSN program. There is a need for more nurses, and this need will only increase. We applaud Montana State University College of Nursing for developing the accelerated post-baccalaureate option.

We wish you well in this endeavor, looking forward to the results of the cohort group.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karla Lund'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Karla Lund, MSN, RN
Director of Nursing
Miles Community College
2715 Dickinson
Miles City, MT 59301

Start Here... Go Anywhere.



June 2, 2010

Helen Melland, PhD, RN
Gretchen McNeely, DNSc, RN
Sherrick Hall
P.O. Box 173560
Bozeman, MT 59717-3560

Dear Dr. Melland & MS. McNeely,

I offer this letter of support on behalf of the MSU-Bozeman's College of Nursing efforts to establish a program expansion that would allow baccalaureate students to advance their degree in Nursing. The "accelerated" option sounds like a wonderful idea and I have also noticed that grant opportunities apply with this type of program expansion.

Today's economic changes do stimulate a large number of students with previous bachelor's degrees to seek Nursing as a second career. The utilization of clinical sites in the Gallatin and Park county areas would not compete with our program at MSU-Billings College of Technology. The shortage of nurses is projected to grow at the same time those who will require the skills of a nurse are growing. The plain demographics make a strong case for development of more nursing programs.

We at MSU Billings College of Technology Nursing Program wish you well in your endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cindy Rossmith, EdDc, RN".

Cindy Rossmith, EdDc, RN
Nursing Director
MSU-Billings College of Technology



Montana Board of Nursing
301 South Park Avenue
P.O. Box 200513
Helena, MT 59620

June 3, 2010

Dear Members of the Montana Board of Nursing,

The purpose of this letter is to support the proposed accelerated post-baccalaureate nursing option being developed by the College of Nursing at MSU-Bozeman. We applaud their innovative planning for an accelerated educational professional nursing program to meet the increasing nursing and health needs of the citizens of Montana and global communities.

The Admissions Department, as well as the Department of Nursing at Carroll College, receives regular inquiries from post-baccalaureate students requesting information related to accelerated professional nursing options in the state on Montana. The news that Montana is one of three states which currently does not offer this option for professional nursing education is frequently met with dismay. Until this time, options for post-baccalaureate students included moving out of state or completing a lengthy and, often times costly, second college career to obtain the necessary nursing education.

We thank the College of Nursing at MSU-Bozeman for their diligence and foresight in providing an alternative educational path for post-baccalaureate students pursuing a degree in nursing.

On behalf of the faculty,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Elison".

Jennifer Elison, EdD, APRN
Chair, Department of Nursing
Carroll College





June 7, 2010

Montana State University
College of Nursing
PO Box 173560
Bozeman, MT 59717-3560

Dear Gretchen and Helen;

I am writing this letter to express support for the accelerated post-baccalaureate option that you are developing for students who have a previous degree. I am especially pleased to see that you are using clinical facilities in the Gallatin and Park county areas where there are no other nursing programs using clinical units as some practicum sites are heavily utilized.

I do agree with you that there is a need for an accelerated baccalaureate nursing program in Montana. I wish you well in your endeavors to institute this program offering.

Sincerely;

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Pappas".

Mary Pappas RN, Ed.D.
Director of Nursing and Professor



*Improving Lives
Through Learning*

Flathead Valley Community College

777 Grandview Drive, Kalispell, MT 59901 • 406/756/3822 • Fax 406/756/3815
fvccinfo@fvcc.edu • www.fvcc.edu

June 8, 2010

Dear Dr. Melland and Dr. McNeely:

Flathead Valley Community College Administration, Nursing Program Director and faculty are pleased to have the opportunity to support MSU College of Nursing's proposed accelerated post baccalaureate option for a BSN in Nursing.

Due to the current economic situation, many individuals in Northwest Montana are finding themselves in need of education in order to gain employment in other fields. Many of these individuals have a bachelor or higher degree in other disciplines and are now looking to nursing as a second career. Having the option of an accelerated BSN for these individuals in Montana is a positive step in expanding nursing education opportunities.

The projected nursing shortage continues to be of concern and adding this option will provide more BSN nurses in a shorter amount of time to help meet this need.

The Flathead Valley and surrounding area have many individuals who would qualify for this option and would possibly be willing to relocate for the 16 months rather than 29 months it takes to complete the generic BSN.

By locating the program in the Bozeman area, there will be no conflict regarding the needs for clinical space with the FVCC Nursing program.

We wish you every success with this proposal and look forward to working with MSU CON in the future on expanding nursing education opportunities in Montana.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kathy Hughes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Kathy Hughes MEd
Vice President of Instruction

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Myrna Ridenour". The signature is cursive and elegant.

Myrna Ridenour BSN RN BC
Nursing Program Director



Bozeman Deaconess HOSPITAL

June 9, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

Bozeman Deaconess Hospital and Montana State University College of Nursing have enjoyed a very close partnership over the past 5 years. Bozeman Deaconess Hospital has been privileged to serve as a clinical site to junior and senior nursing students and employ several newly graduated nurses annually.

Being acutely aware of the aging nursing workforce and the significant number of current RN's who will be leaving the workforce in the next several years, Bozeman Deaconess Hospital is supportive of the MSU College of Nursing's visionary direction to provide an accelerated post-baccalaureate undergraduate nursing option. The provision of additional RN's in a shorter period of time would aid in alleviating the expected nursing shortage.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing has reported that the enrollment in current baccalaureate programs is not sufficient to meet the projected demand for nurses. HRSA official's state that "to meet the projected growth in demand for RN services, the U.S. must graduate approximately 90% more nurses from U.S. nursing programs" (www.aacn.nche.edu). As a result forty-seven states have developed an "accelerated option". Montana State University College of Nursing leadership has recognized the need and benefit of the accelerated option.

Bozeman Deaconess Hospital would gladly increase our support by providing additional clinical opportunities for the post-baccalaureate students in this "accelerated" program. There are currently no other nursing programs utilizing these clinical facilities. Our commitment, first and foremost, is to the Montana State University College of Nursing students.

Bozeman Deaconess Hospital respectfully requests that permission be granted to Montana State University to expand the BSN program with this accelerated option.

Sincerely,

Vickie Groeneweg

Vickie Groeneweg, RN, MSN, MBA
Vice President of Patient Services/CNO
Bozeman Deaconess Health Services

From: Scott, TaraL [mailto:TaraL.Scott@mso.umt.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2010 3:53 PM
To: McNeely, Gretchen
Subject: MSU Accelerated BSN

Hi Gretchen,

I was thrilled to get your memo about the possibility of MSU offering an accelerated second degree program. I advise many post-baccalaureate students and students looking at changing majors to nursing in their junior or senior year who are planning to travel out of Montana to complete their nursing education with either a second degree BSN or direct entry MSN program. Many other candidates for second degree programs give up on a BSN education because their circumstances don't allow them to relocate or they don't have the time to dedicate to a traditional BSN. I believe having a program in Montana will really benefit many of our students and the nursing profession in Montana by keeping more graduating nurses here for work.

I look forward to hearing details about admission requirements, application process, and other logistics. I have sent my students a link to your survey and will continue to direct students to the MSU website for more information.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns with regard to UM's pre-nursing population.

Tara L. Scott

UM Pre-Nursing Advisor
Lommasson Center Room 286
(406) 243-5658
tara.scott@umontana.edu
www.umt.edu/prenursing

From: Claire Oakley [mailto:oakleyc@rocky.edu]

Sent: Friday, February 19, 2010 10:20 AM

To: McNeely, Gretchen

Subject: post-bacc nursing degree!!!!

Hello Gretchen,

I received your letter about the potential for a post-bacc degree in nursing. GO FOR IT--we need it!!! I often have biology majors who decide as juniors or seniors to pursue a health career--one student did the WY program for 18 months and loved it.

This is a wonderful option for students and you will have students with great science backgrounds. Our bio majors graduate with a year of physics, a year of organic chem, and a semester of biochem--and most have had a year of cadaver anatomy/physiology.

YOU have all of my support. I handed out copies of your letter to a bunch of my students and asked them to fill out your survey.

--

Claire R. Oakley, Ph.D.

Professor of Biology and Physician Assistant Studies

1511 Poly Drive

Billings, MT 59102

406-657-1089

May 26, 2009

Re: Accelerated Option for the BSN program

As the Maternal Newborn Manager at Bozeman Deaconess Hospital, I am excited that you are moving forward towards provided an accelerated option for the BSN program at the Montana State Board of Nursing because we have found that the nursing graduates from MSU are excellently prepared to begin their work as Registered Nurses. Our staff has been impressed with the MSU student's assessment skills as they rotate through our Labor, Delivery, Nursery, NICU, Post Partum, and Lactation units.

In the last ten years, I have hired many MSU graduates have been so exceptional in their performance; they have been selected as Team Leaders by their peers.

With the national aging nursing pool, this option is vital and I applaud your move towards the Accelerated option.

I expect accepting students who have proven their ability to study with a BS degree under their belt will produce highly productive and talented nurses, which we need in the work force.

Thank you,

Susan Connell, RN
Maternal Newborn Manager

ITEM 148-2008-R0910

May 27, 2010

Montana State Board of Nursing
PO Box 200513
Helena MT 59620-0513

Montana Board of Regents
PO Box 203201
Helena MT 59620-3201

To whom it may Concern:

I am writing to you regarding Montana State University's request for approval to conduct an accelerated option for the BSN program. I am currently a student at Carroll College where I am pursuing my BSN; however the program is set up as a four year degree program and does not take into consideration individuals who have already obtained a BA or BS from another University. I would like to take this opportunity to explain why the state of Montana needs an accelerated nursing program and why I support a program such as this at Montana State University.

I am a 38 year old wife and mother of three who has worked as a professional for the State of Montana for over 12 years. I have also been a member of the Montana National Guard for 19 years, 13 of which I have spent as a Flight Medic. My time in the guard is what made me make the decision to return to school to pursue my nursing degree. After spending a year in Iraq and performing several medical evacuation missions here in the state of Montana, I felt my true passion in medicine. I decided to leave my full time job and return to school. Carroll College only offers a standard four year degree therefore I am attending school at a part time level because I have already taken the general education courses required by the program and Carroll does not allow for acceleration.

At my age and point in life as a person with family and life responsibilities, I feel being able to get the best education in the least amount of time would benefit not only me and my family but also the profession of nursing in the following ways. Because I am attending school at a part time level I have had to secure a full time job to help provide for my family as it's not feasible to live four years without an income source other than that of my husband. An accelerated program would put far less strain on our family as it would only be a 16 month sacrifice not 4 full years. My service in the National Guard as well as with the State of Montana as a professional has provided me with vast life experience to offer an accelerated program at MSU and also the nursing profession as a whole. Currently the nursing profession has a shortage that will only increase over the years. Montana is one of only three states in the U.S. that does not currently offer an accelerated option for the BSN program. I believe that Montana State University has the ability to put together an accelerated program that will both meet the requirements of the Montana State Board of Nursing and Board of Regents but also the need for qualified professional nurses in the state of Montana.

I am asking that you approve and support the accelerated option for the BSN program at Montana State University. I feel this is in the best interest of our great state. If you would like to contact me regarding this letter please call me at 406-465-2435 or write to me at 3806 Timothy Ln, Helena MT 59602.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter,

Amanda Sell
Sergeant First Class
Montana National Guard

May 28, 2010

Montana Board of Nursing,
PO BOX 200513,
Helena, MT 59620- 0513 and

Montana Board of Regents
Office of Commissioner of Higher Education
Montana University System
2500 Broadway Street
PO Box 203201
Helena, MT 59620-3201

Dear Representatives of the Montana Board of Nursing and the Montana Board of Regents:

I am a returning post-baccalaureate student currently enrolled at Montana State University in the Pre-Nursing program. While talking with my academic adviser in April, I learned that there is a possibility that Montana State University may start an accelerated BSN program for post-bac students like me. I am enthusiastically supportive of this, and I would like to help make it happen whatever way I can. Given the current demand for nurses in our economy and strong indication that the demand will only continue to increase, it would be a great asset for our state to offer an accelerated program like this that would enable people re-entering the job market, or changing careers to expedite their education.

I strongly encourage you to support this program.

Sincerely,
Tara Gallagher
Prospective "accelerated program" student
114 East Alderson
Bozeman, MT 59715
taragall@aol.com
406-600-6616

May 28, 2010

Montana State Board of Nursing
301 South Park Avenue
Helena, MT 59601-6282

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the proposed accelerated nursing program at Montana State University. I am a stay at home mom with a degree in finance from MSU and this program would be a perfect fit for me to get my RN.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions at (406)582-5434.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy Connell". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Amy Connell
Prospective "Accelerated" Student

June 2, 2010
Melissa Gutzman
College of Nursing
Montana State University
PO BOX 173560
Bozeman, MT 59717

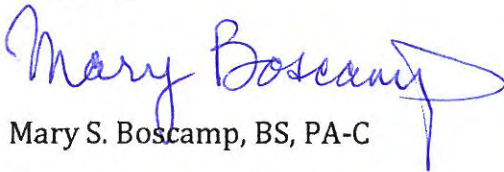
Dear Melissa:

I am writing in support of an accelerated option for the BSN program here at MSU. I am currently a Physician Assistant looking for work. I have thirty plus years of clinical experience, first as a radiology tech and then as a Physician Assistant in primary care. I did my pre-requisite coursework here while working and received my Bachelor of Clinical Sciences from the University of Washington. After graduation in 2004, I went to work in an underserved community in Wyoming. After serving with NHSC successfully for four years, my husband and I wanted to return to our home here in Bozeman. Fortunately, he has been able to secure a full-time job with benefits. While I have been able to work several temporary jobs, I have not been able to secure a permanent job.

Apparently, because Bozeman is such a desirable place to live, there is no shortage of primary care providers. I do believe there is a nursing shortage here as everywhere, and that an accelerated BSN program here at MSU would get that many more skilled nurses working.

I do hope this vision can become a reality, and I thank-you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Mary S. Boscamp, BS, PA-C

June 9, 2010

To Montana State Board of Nursing and the Montana State Board of Regents:

I am writing to express my support for the establishment of an accelerated Bachelors of Science in Nursing program at Montana State University in Bozeman. With a high number of students holding previous bachelor's degrees applying to the current nursing program, an accelerated option would offer a more efficient option for advanced education of nurses in Montana. Many states have already successfully established such a program, and with the resources that are available in Bozeman the time is ripe for such a program at MSU. On a greater scale, such a program would help to ensure that Montana is utilizing all of it's resources to educate as many healthcare professionals as is possible. With a growing shortage of primary care providers nationwide, the demand for nurses and nurse practitioners is expected to skyrocket as well over the next decade. With a limited number of nursing education programs in the country, it is important now more than ever that every program pushes itself to its full potential in making education available and accessible to potential nurses.

For students like myself, who have completed prerequisite coursework for medical or other healthcare graduate programs, entering nursing education offers the possibility of taking a slightly different career path while still utilizing knowledge garnered through an initial Bachelor's program. Using this prior knowledge, and having an advanced base of prerequisites, makes the accelerated option feasible and realistic for many students. Having the option available in Montana would make attainment of a BSN practical and within reach for Montana students.

Sincerely,

Allison Phillips
Prospective Accelerated BSN student
Bachelors of Science, Health and Human Development '10

Contact Information:
allison.phillips@msu.montana.edu
541-390-5730

Casey W. Jardine
3191 Oliver St.
Bozeman, MT 59718
(406)570-4660
June 9, 2010

Montana State Board of Nursing
Montana State Board of Regents

Re: Accelerated BSN Program Offering at Montana State University

Dear Board Members,

Thank you for taking the time to consider implementing an accelerated BSN program to be offered at Montana State University's Bozeman campus. Accelerated BSN programs are currently being offered in many states and if feasible, should also be offered in Montana.

Accelerated programs are not only advantageous to the students but also to the nursing profession which currently is experiencing a nursing shortage that is predicted to only get worse as many nurses retire. Students who already have a Bachelor's degree have proven that they are scholastically able to perform at an advanced level. Furthermore, many second degree seeking students are older and have family obligations that make an additional four year commitment extremely difficult.

I personally was involved in a serious accident that required me to stay in the hospital for a lengthy period of time. The nurses that cared for me were truly amazing. They were counselors as well as caretakers. But most importantly, for that period of time, they were my friends. I want the opportunity to comfort and help injured people just as I was aided in my time of need. The accelerated program will make my professional aspirations a little more attainable. Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

Casey W. Jardine

Current MSU Pre-nursing student
Prospective Accelerated BSN student
B.S. HHD Consumer Science MSU 2004
Business Administration minor MSU 2004

To The Montana State Board of Nursing and the Montana State Board of Regents:

The establishment of an accelerated nursing program at Montana State University would be of great benefit to many post-baccalaureate students across the state. Currently, there are no accelerated nursing programs in the state of Montana. In order for Montana residents to enter an accelerated nursing program, they must attend an out of state school and pay out of state tuition. The accelerated nursing program at MSU would provide a great opportunity for Montana residents to earn their BSN degree quickly without acquiring a substantial amount of debt. The accelerated pace of the program would also allow for students to enter the work force as quickly as possible.

I strongly support the decision to approve the accelerated nursing option at MSU. If the program were approved, I would be able to receive a BSN degree within sixteen months instead of three to four years. This is extremely important to me as I would like to launch my nursing career as soon as possible. Although earning an associate's degree in nursing within a two year time frame is an option, I would prefer to receive the BSN degree as it would provide me with a more comprehensive education as well as the opportunity to earn an advanced nursing degree. The approval of the accelerated option at MSU would allow me to complete my BSN degree in the time that it would take me to earn an associate's degree in nursing. It is vital that the accelerated program become approved as it would not only benefit me, but many others around the state of Montana.

Sincerely,

Kaitlyn Broderick
Prospective Accelerated Student
684 West Main
Helena, Montana 59601
406-459-4290

Aimee Ramaeker

Potential Student

11152 Albion Ct.
Thornton, CO 80233
Aimee.ramaeker@yahoo.com
970-596-1613

Dear Dean Melland,

I am a potential student for your Accelerated Nursing option. Overall, I have been very excited about this potential offering. I currently have a Bachelor's degree and am looking only at an Accelerated Nursing option to continue my education. MSU in Bozeman is my top choice, as I am looking to relocate to an area I could see myself starting a career in.

Many students in my pre-requisite classes are seeking a drastic change from their current career paths. Why wouldn't MSU jump on this opportunity? Montana is lacking, as they are one of the only states that does not currently offer this option to current professionals. They also are not part of the option that allows students certified as an RN in bordering states, to practice in MT. Many bordering states (ID and CO) offer this option. An RN is a career always in demand and as a student, I am looking to go to school where I can continue to raise a family. MT is my top choice due to its culture and landscape.

I look forward to continued communication regarding your efforts to officiate your Accelerated Nursing program. Feel free to reach out if there is any additional support you need from me.

Sincerely,

Aimee Ramaeker
Future MSU, Accelerated Nursing Student

June 10, 2010

Dear Montana State Board of Nursing and Montana State Board of Regents,

I am writing this letter in full support of the prospective accelerated nursing program at Montana State University. An accelerated nursing program has benefits for students seeking to further their education, first-degree students and faculty. For post-baccalaureate students, it is faster and a more convenient way of earning a bachelors in nursing. For first-degree students, it provides more space for acceptance into the standard program. As for faculty, it exposes them to students who are familiar with how to learn, have a desire to learn and know what is required and expected of them.

As a Montana State University graduate, I feel this is a great opportunity for former students to further their education. It is a quicker way of starting a career that I plan on pursuing. Now, with the shortened program, it is more appealing and gives me the desire and opportunity to continue my education with Montana State University. This program is intriguing, as the students receive the full education with the same number of courses; it is just condensed into a smaller time frame. Students who already have bachelor degrees are looking to further their education, but do not want to spend another four years in school. After the given pre-requisites are achieved, earning a bachelors in nursing in 16 months versus 29 months will save students and faculty both time and money.

With several diverse bachelor degrees, the students are more mature and can show different levels of leadership and experiences within the program. These second-degree students will show more responsibility and be driven to succeed in their education. This is an excellent opportunity that will assist post-baccalaureate students to achieve their career goals on a much faster timeframe. Thank you for your time and interest in this program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Whitney Melton". The signature is fluid and includes a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Whitney Melton
Prospective Accelerated BSN Student
whitney_melton@hotmail.com
(406)369-1087



6/11/2010

College of Nursing
Montana State University
Sherrick Hall
P.O. Box 173560
Bozeman, MT 59717-3560

Re: Letter of Support for MSU-Bozeman College of Nursing Accelerated Option

Dear Montana State Board of Nursing and the Montana State Board of Regents:

As the University of Montana's Pre-Nursing Advisor, I serve approximately 350 students in various stages of their educational pursuit toward nursing. The majority of the students I advise have a desire to complete a bachelor's level program beginning at UM with the intent to complete through MSU at the Missoula upper division campus. Due to the competitive nature of MSU's Traditional BSN Program, particularly for Missoula upper division placement, many of my students decide on a different route through either Missoula COT or out of state BSN programs.

As you may know, due to the nation-wide nursing shortage, many second degree programs have been and are currently being developed. Montana is one of the few states in the United States that does not offer second degree options for nursing. Furthermore, there are few programs even within the northwest states, Boise, Idaho being the closest.

The development of a second degree program in Montana would be ideal for the following students in my advising population:

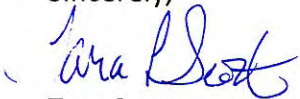
- 1) Individuals returning to school for a second career who have completed a bachelor's degree in another field.
- 2) A junior or senior wanting to change his or her major to nursing. By completing their initial bachelor's degree and following up with a second degree BSN, they can complete much faster than going back and starting over for another four years in a traditional BSN program.
- 3) Student athletes or scholarship recipients who would lose funding if they were to transfer institutions.
- 4) Students who would like to double major or minor in studies in addition to nursing.
- 5) Non-traditional students who do not have the flexibility to relocate to another city for two years of upper division, but may consider a shorter time (12-16 months) to complete studies elsewhere.

Approximately 40% of my students are non-traditional transfer, junior or senior (non-nursing majors), or second degree/post- baccalaureate students. I field an average of 4 to 6 calls per week from prospective students who are seeking a second career in nursing. When they ultimately consider that it is not feasible for them to complete any program that is offered in Montana, they go elsewhere. From the pool of nursing students and prospective students I work with, I believe a second degree cohort of nursing in Montana would be easily filled.

Not only would a second degree program be great for our community and state students, but would also attract out-of-state students seeking a nursing education. After contacting many other institutions offering second degree programs, and researching second degree programs at American Association of Colleges of Nursing website (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Publications/issues/Aug02.htm>), students experience excellent outcomes post graduation. Between the liberal arts background with previous undergraduate degrees along with life experience, second degree students perform very well and are highly sought by healthcare employers.

I would be delighted to be involved in the discussions related to expanding nursing education opportunities in Montana and collaborating with the Montana University System campuses and take part in the implementation of future programs involving nursing. Thank you for your time and consideration and please feel free to contact me with any questions or if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Tara Scott
Pre-Nursing Advisor
Undergraduate Advising Center
The University of Montana
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The University of Montana - Helena
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

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To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to offer support for the accelerated post-baccalaureate option being proposed by the Montana State University College of Nursing. I believe this option is needed in Montana to address the nursing shortage. The fact that it will be an accelerated program will enhance the number of nurses available to meet the needs of Montana patients.

These types of programs have been very successful in other parts of the country. Allowing post-degree students to take a compressed curriculum while maintaining the rigor and quality follows national trends in professional nursing education.

As a nursing program director in Montana, my concern always relates back to the availability of clinical sites and faculty. The survey results and proposal information sent out by MSU College of Nursing addresses these issues. I am confident that this program will prove to be a win-win situation for students as well as Montana nurses and patients.

Sincerely,

Sandy Sacry MSN, RN

Sandy Sacry MSN, RN
Nursing Program Director
UM-Helena COT