RN-BSN EXEMPLAR - ST. PETERESBURG COLLEGE

Refer also to The Future of Nursing IOM Report pp 180-81 and

A Power Point on the SPC RN-BSN

Prior to detailing the RN-BSN program at St. Petersburg College (SPC) via power point this background information about the college and location is provided to form a basis for the reasons SPC was granted the option to offer baccalaureate degrees. The location and statistics are provided to assist the reader in understanding the basis for the legislative action in 2001 granting SPC with the opportunity to award baccalaureate degrees.

Access and excellence are the hallmarks of St. Petersburg College (SPC), founded in 1927 as St. Petersburg Junior College (SPJC), Florida’s first two-year institution of higher education. SPC is located in Pinellas County, a midway point on Florida’s Gulf Coast bordered by the Gulf of Mexico on the west and by Tampa Bay on the east. Pinellas County is a peninsula 38 miles long and 15 miles wide at its broadest point covering approximately 280 square miles. Pinellas County is part of a four-county metropolitan statistical area referred to as Tampa Bay. Pinellas is the second smallest county in the state and the most densely populated of Florida’s 67 counties. In 2001 Pinellas County had the lowest percentage of baccalaureate degrees in FL. Census estimates for 2010 indicate a population of 909,978.

In June 2001, the Governor signed into law amendments to statute 240.3836, Secondary Education, permitting state community colleges to confer baccalaureate degrees after acquiring Department of Education approval and appropriate regional accreditation, both of which SPC received. At the same time, the name of the institution was changed from St. Petersburg Junior College to St. Petersburg College. While SPC dropped *Junior* from its name it did not change its commitment to its two-year mission. SPC is a creative leader and partners with students, communities, service agencies, businesses, and other educational institutions to deliver enriched learning experiences and to promote economic and workforce development. The work of its outstanding, diverse faculty and staff is enhanced by advanced technologies, online learning, international education opportunities, innovative teaching techniques, comprehensive library and other information resources, continuous self-evaluation, a climate for student success, and an enduring commitment to excellence.

Starting in August 2002, SPC began offering fully accredited baccalaureate programs leading to bachelor's degrees in Education, Nursing and Technology Management. Additional baccalaureate degrees have been added since 2002. SPC added baccalaureate degrees to its educational offerings in 2002, becoming the first among Florida’s 28 public community colleges to transition to a four-year institution. SPC now offers 23 bachelor’s degrees, most in areas traditionally underserved by the State University System (SUS).

Today SPC stands as a multi-campus, two-year and four-year public institution with learning sites countywide in Clearwater, Largo, Pinellas Park, St. Petersburg, Seminole, and Tarpon Springs. More than 63,000 students a year are served by SPC, including students in residence from several foreign countries. SPC is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) to award Associate’s and Bachelor’s Degrees. The next formal review by SACS will be in 2013 as part of the Fifth Year Interim Report with the next reaccreditation visit in 2018. The RN-BSN Program was initially accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) in April 2007.

Dr. Bill Law became SPC’s sixth president on June 7, 2010, following the retirement of Dr. Carl M. Kuttler who served as president for 31 years. SPC has a governing district board of trustees (BOT) that, according to Florida Statute 1004.65, is the policy making body for the College and, therefore, ultimately responsible for ensuring adequate financial resources for the institution’s programs. Each SPC campus is governed by a Provost**.** The (CON) is located at the Caruth Health Education Center (HEC) in Pinellas Park. The Dean, until this past summer, reported to the Vice President for the Baccalaureate Program. Organizational changes now have the CON Dean reporting to the Vice President of Academic affairs. There is also an indirect report to the Provost of the Health Education Center.

SPC offers two nursing programs, an associate’s degree in nursing (ADN) and a bachelor’s degree (RN-BSN). The RN-BSN Program admitted its first cohort of students in August 2002 in response to requests from area health care providers for increased opportunities for baccalaureate education in identified disciplines of need, nursing being one of the top three.

There is no Board of Nursing process or over site for post-licensure programs in Florida. A notification letter was sent to the Florida Board of Nursing about the beginning of the RN-BSN program.

The CON currently offers all RN-BSN courses via two delivery options: face-to-face (FTF) at the HEC and online (OL). In the beginning in 2002 all classes were taught face to face. In addition, there were face-to-face cohorts offered at area health care facilities, mainly hospitals. However, with the addition and popularity of the online option, and due to classroom scheduling issues and technology challenges at the hospitals the off-site option was discontinued. The students are currently served by eight full-time faculty members with terminal degrees in nursing as well as selected qualified adjunct faculty who possess Masters (MSN) and doctoral degrees. The faculty is led by a Dean who also has a terminal degree in nursing. The CON is served by an advisory board consisting of nurse leaders in education, community health and acute care from the Tampa Bay area.

As of the spring semester 2011, there were 743 RN-BSN students. The student population included 621 females (83.6%) and 101 males (13.6%), with 21 students (2.8%) who chose not to disclose their gender. The demographics by race for these students are as follows: American Indian 0.1%, Asian 5.1%, Black/African American 16.8%, Hispanic 6.2%, White 67.7%, and Undisclosed 4.0%. The diversity of students in the program by race compares to Pinellas County with the following demographics reflective of 2010 County population statistics (data for Hispanic reflects population by ethnicity for the County; other data is by race for the County): American Indian 0.3%, Asian 3.0%, Black/African American 10.5%, Hispanic 12.5%, and White 82.1%. As of May 2011, the RN-BSN program has had 844 students graduate with an average GPA of 3.35.

Please refer to the power point for specific details about the RN-BSN at SPC. In addition the power point can be utilized as a template should you be considering an RN-BSN at your Community or Technical College.