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STEVENSON
U N I V E R S I T Y
Executive Vice President

1525 Greenspring Valley Road
Stevenson, Maryland 21153

09 April 2020

James D. Fielder, Jr., Ph.D.
Secretary of Higher Education
Maryland Higher Education Commission
6 N. Liberty Street, 10th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Dr. Fielder:

I hope this letter finds you and yours healthy and safe as the world navigates the extraordinary and challenging time at hand due to COVID-19.

On behalf of President Elliot Hirshman and Stevenson University, I am pleased to submit the enclosed proposal for a new **Area of Concentration in Forensic Nursing within the existing Master of Science in Nursing** program. The proposal has been approved by all of the necessary internal constituencies at Stevenson University, including the Deans' Council, the Faculty Council, President Elliot Hirshman, and our Board of Trustees.

In compliance with MHEC's request, we are submitting this cover letter and the proposal as PDF attachments to an e-mail message. We have also submitted under separate cover the required filing fee in accordance with MHEC procedures.

Please contact me at 443-334-2205 or at sgorman@stevenson.edu if you have questions.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our proposal. Be well.

Sincerely,

Susan Thompson Gorman, Ph.D.
Executive Vice President and Provost
Stevenson University
443-334-2205
sgorman@stevenson.edu

Cover Sheet for In-State Institutions
New Program or Substantial Modification to Existing Program

Institution Submitting Proposal	

Each action below requires a separate proposal and cover sheet.

New Academic Program	Substantial Change to a Degree Program
New Area of Concentration	Substantial Change to an Area of Concentration
New Degree Level Approval	Substantial Change to a Certificate Program
New Stand-Alone Certificate	Cooperative Degree Program
Off Campus Program	Offer Program at Regional Higher Education Center

Payment Submitted:	Yes No	Payment Type:	R*STARS Check	Payment Amount:	Date Submitted:

Department Proposing Program		
Degree Level and Degree Type		
Title of Proposed Program		
Total Number of Credits		
Suggested Codes	HEGIS:	CIP:
Program Modality	On-campus	Distance Education (*fully online*)
Program Resources	Using Existing Resources	Requiring New Resources
Projected Implementation Date	Fall Spring	Summer Year:
Provide Link to Most Recent Academic Catalog	URL:	

Preferred Contact for this Proposal	Name:
	Title:
	Phone:
	Email:

President/Chief Executive	Type Name:
	Signature: See attached Date:
	Date of Approval/Endorsement by Governing Board:

Revised 3/2019

Stevenson University
Proposal for New Area of Concentration
Master of Nursing – Forensic Nursing

A. Centrality to Institutional Mission and Planning Priorities:

1. Provide a description of the program, including each area of concentration (if applicable), and how it relates to the institution's approved mission.

Stevenson University is proposing a new Area of Concentration in Forensic Nursing within their existing Master of Science in Nursing program. The approved degree program currently has three Areas of Concentration in Nursing Education, Nursing Leadership/Management, and Population-Based Care Coordination. The proposed new Area of Concentration would prepare nurses for the field of Forensic Nursing, defined as those nurses trained to apply criminal and social sciences to victims of trauma, rape, domestic violence, interpersonal violence, elder and child abuse.[1] The new concentration will enable Stevenson to prepare nurses for roles already in demand within the forensic community and that will be needed in increasing numbers to address expanding numbers of victims of violent crime acts. As well, Forensic Nurses work with persons in settings of mass casualty events and natural disasters. Forensic Nurses own a unique skill set and body of knowledge that permit them to prove effectiveness in multiple situations. Nursing professionals will gain the appropriate skills that will enable them to make ongoing changes in the health systems they serve, as well as acquire the knowledge and abilities to adapt to future challenges in nursing. The proposed new concentration is consistent with Stevenson University's mission to provide a distinctive career-focused and personalized environment for its students.

The Forensic Nursing Area of Concentration is a 36-credit graduate specialty designed for registered nurses prepared at the baccalaureate level who want to expand their knowledge and practice in the field of forensic nursing, while earning a master's degree. The development of this concentration stems from the increase in forensic nurse roles within the community and hospital settings, as well as the increase in victimization and violent crimes acts within the state. Students in the Forensic Nursing Concentration will learn the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to the nursing profession as forensic healthcare providers. Like the other areas of concentration within the Graduate Nursing Program, the Forensic Nursing Concentration is structured to allow working professionals the flexibility needed to attain their career goals. This is accomplished through offering multiple starting points (fall, spring, or summer), enabling the student to focus on taking one course at a time, and providing a flexible schedule that supports life balance. These values are in direct alignment with the Mission of the University and Stevenson University Online (SUO).

The Forensic Nursing Concentration, which will provide Registered Nurses with the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills in forensic nursing and earn a credential that can advance their careers, aligns strongly with the mission of Stevenson University. The University blends the liberal arts with career exploration and planning, complementing a traditional education with applied learning beyond the classroom. Stevenson Online University (SUO) offers undergraduate and graduate degrees and certificate programs to

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[1] International Association of Forensic Nurses. (2020). What is a forensic nurse? Retrieved from
https://www.forensicnurses.org/page/WhatisFN

adult students seeking to establish careers, enhance existing careers, or change careers. Degree and certificate programs are designed to enable busy people to complete their degrees and pursue their career goals while maintaining their work and family schedules. SUO provides a learning environment that includes flexible formats, multiple avenues for access, state-of-the-art technology, support services, and practical hands-on applications. This Forensic Nursing Concentration, which will provide Registered Nurses with the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills in forensic nursing and earn a credential that can advance their careers, aligns strongly with the mission of the University and SUO.

2. ***Explain how the proposed program supports the institution 's strategic goals and provide evidence that affirms it is an institutional priority.***

The proposed new Area of Concentration (AOC) in Forensic Nursing supports the University's 2014-2019 Strategic Plan for Stevenson University, approved by the Board of Trustees. In the new Strategic Plan, to be implemented in 2020, an institutional priority is to: Develop Academic Programs and Focus on Students' Professional Success and Career Development. Additionally, this new Area of Concentration in Forensic Nursing will build on an area of strength at Stevenson. Stevenson started graduate programs in both Forensic Studies and Forensic Science in 2004. Since that time, over 1,000 students have graduated from those programs. Now, the multiple connections within the community and the knowledge gained from growing those two programs in forensics, can be applied to support the proposed new AOC in Forensic Nursing.

3. ***Provide a brief narrative of how the proposed program will be adequately funded for at least the first five years of program implementation. (Additional related information is required in section L).***

The Master of Science in Nursing, with an Area of Concentration in Forensic Nursing, will draw upon existing University faculty and staff resources. The forensic program will include existing courses in Stevenson's approved Master of Science in Nursing core curriculum, Master's in Forensic Science degree, Master's in Forensic Studies, and Master of Education with new courses developed as emerging issues arise. New course development is funded through existing budgetary resources for program development. The faculty for the program will be current full-time faculty, along with adjunct faculty. Hence, minimal new resources will be required for developing and implementing this degree program.

4. ***Provide a description of the institution's commitment to:***
    a) ***ongoing administrative, financial, and technical support of the proposed program***

Strategy I: The University will support faculty and students in their pursuit of academic excellence by integrating academics with experiential learning and career preparation, and by establishing a solid liberal arts foundation. This program will reside in the Nursing Unit and be administered by the existing Graduate Nursing Program Coordinator who has joint appointments in the School of Nursing and Health Professions and Stevenson University Online. The Nursing Unit Leadership Team (NULT), which comprises the deans of SNHP and SUO, the Associate Dean of Nursing (and Chief Nurse Administrator), the Program Coordinator for Graduate Nursing, and the Department Chair for Nursing, are also included in the leadership and will support the administrative, financial and technical support of the program.

b) *continuation of the program for a period of time sufficient to allow enrolled students to complete the program*.

The intention is to offer the concentration pursuant to student enrollment. The University is committed to the development and continuation of the Master of Science in Nursing with a Forensic Concentration and will ensure that enrolled students are supported through completion of their degree. Many of the program courses crossover with other existing programs, ensuring sustainability during launch of the program and beyond.

B. Critical and Compelling Regional or Statewide Need as Identified in the State Plan:

1. Demonstrate demand and need for the program in terms of meeting present and future needs of the region and the State in general based on one or more of the following:

a) The need for the advancement and evolution of knowledge

b) Societal needs, including expanding educational opportunities and choices for minority and educationally disadvantaged students at institutions of higher education.

The demand for forensic nurses is based upon violent crime incidence.[2] Nurses respond to that call out of a desire for professional growth, and for a chance to provide mission-driven care to victims. Across the nation, the number of violent incidents increased from 5.2 million in 2017, to 6 million in 2018.[3] Violent crime includes murder, rape, sexual assault, robbery, and assault. The rate of violent victimizations not reported to police, rose from 9.5 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older in 2015, to 12.9 per 1,000 in 2018, while the rate of violent victimizations reported to police showed no statistically significant change.[4]

There are just over six million people living in Maryland. In 2016, there were over 1800 reported rapes in Maryland,[5] with an additional number of rape victims who did not report to law enforcement. Per the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (2020), Baltimore City alone reported 299 rapes, and 318 murders, contributing to a total state crime occurrence of 11,115 or 27%[6]. In 2017, at a population of 613,210 persons, the same city experienced 385 reported rapes and 342 murders, with all of Maryland reporting 12,527 victims of violent crimes, or a 29% violent crime rate.[7]

In 2019, the nation suffered a reported 417 mass shootings, 21 of which occurred in Maryland.[8] Trauma nurses and Emergency Room nurses serve as first responders to many

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[2] International Association of Forensic Nurses (2020). Become a forensic nurse. Retrieved from
https://www.forensicnurses.org/page/BecomeFN

[3] Bureau of Justice Statistics (2019). Criminal victimization. Retrieved from
https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=6686

[4] Bureau of Justice Statistics (2019). Criminal victimization, 2018. Retrieved from
https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=6686

[5] Maryland Statistical Analysis Center [MSAC] (2020). Violent crime & property crime statewide totals: 1975 to present.
Retrieved February 26, 2020 from https://opendata.maryland.gov/Public-Safety/Violent-Crime-Property-Crime-Statewide-Totals-1975/hyg2-hy98

[6] Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention Open Data Portal (2020). Violent crime & property crime by municipality:
2000 to present. Retrieved from https://opendata.maryland.gov/Public-Safety/Violent-Crime-Property-Crime-by-Municipality-2000-/2p5g-xrcb

[7] Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention Open Data Portal (2020). Violent crime & property crime by municipality:
2000 to present. Retrieved from https://opendata.maryland.gov/Public-Safety/Violent-Crime-Property-Crime-by-Municipality-2000-/2p5g-xrcb

[8] Gun Violence Archive (2020). Gun violence archive 2020. Retrieved from https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/

victims of crime, trauma, and behavioral instability; all of whom may be served by advanced education in forensic nursing.

For forensic nurses, working with civic and legal systems can help optimize the safety and wellness for the members of the Maryland state community. Educating nurses interested in combining their nursing skills and knowledge, with that of scientific investigation and trauma treatment, allows them to serve as community leaders in diversified populations. In addition to aiding in criminal and violent cases, the forensic nurse is positioned to care for victims of trauma like auto and pedestrian accidents, traumatic injuries, suicide attempts, work-related injuries, and natural or environmental disasters. While Registered Nurses are academically and skillfully prepared to care for critically ill trauma patients, engaging in forensic specialty education provides the nurse with greater forensic awareness, and a sense of career achievement that opens doors to non-traditional nursing roles. Such functions encompass nurses working in correctional nursing, forensic mental health facilities, trauma centers, within death investigation or mass disasters, long term patient care facilities where residents are maltreated, public health, with domestic and sexual abuse victims, and human trafficking. Persons filling these roles must be Registered Nurses and undergo specialized training. A Master's degree with a Concentration in Forensic Nursing would catapult the nurse candidate in these positions past another lacking this specialty education. Forensic nurses are needed to optimize the current, insufficient models the legal and hospital systems have, to care for trauma victims of all ages and sufferings.

In the coming years, caring for all people, regardless of economic status, race, community, or health status, will be a priority for nurses under the direction of the National Academies of Sciences. Included in these patient populations often may be victims of violent crimes. In a statement made to clarify the demand for nurses to care for the disadvantaged, disparaged, and socially rejected, the National Academy of Medicine advises the future of nursing care on this target, and this focus will be included in the pending report, The Future of Nursing: 2020 to 2030[9].

2. *Provide evidence that the perceived need is consistent with the Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education.*

The 2017-2021 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education[10] promotes the development of new partnerships and collaboration. In meeting **Strategy 8**: Develop new partnerships between colleges and businesses to support workforce development and improve workforce readiness (p. 66) and **Strategy 10**: Expand support for research and research partnerships/ Coordinate and share resources to improve scholarship for students and faculty (p. 85). The proposed, graduate nursing, forensic concentration permits faculty from four departments (Nursing, Forensic Science & Studies, and Education) within Stevenson University Online, to work collaboratively to provide academic experience and excellence in program delivery. Students enrolling in this Concentration will interact with members of the civic, legal, and healthcare communities to fulfill concentration outcomes and prepare for forensic roles upon graduation. This collaboration between community, law enforcement and judicial systems, and nurse education supports the state's plan for innovative workforce

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[9] National Academy of Medicine. (2019). The future of nursing 2020-2030. Retrieved from
http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/Activities/Workforce/futureofnursing2030.aspx
[10] Maryland Higher Education Commission. (n.d.). Retrieved from
https://mhec.state.md.us/About/Pages/2017StatePlanforPostsecondaryEducation.aspx

preparation and catalytic change, and thus seeks to provide better care to victims of violent crime.

Strategy 7: Enhance career advising and planning services and integrate them explicitly into academic advising and planning (p. 83). Students will have the opportunity to fulfill practicum requirements within their area of forensic specialty by seeking experiences with Forensic Nurse Examiners, Correctional Nurses, Death Investigators or Coroners, disaster preparedness-trained nurses, Legal Nurse Consultants, and Forensic Mental Health Nurses, among others. Such experiences will occur under the assistance and advising of program faculty.

C. Quantifiable and Reliable Evidence and Documentation of Market Supply and Demand in the Region and State:

   1. *Describe potential industry or industries, employment opportunities, and expected level of entry (ex: mid-level management) for graduates of the proposed program.*

In addition to addressing the Maryland State Plan for post-secondary education, Stevenson University's Master of Science in Nursing, Concentration in Forensic Nursing will cultivate and prepare registered nurses in the needs of victims of violent sexual and non-sexual crimes. Forensic nurses are uniquely positioned to care for patients during the post traumatic experience. Using the nursing process and a multi system approach to administer forensic healthcare, collect evidence, and connect the victim to community resources, the forensic nurse improves health and wellness for those persons. As the rates of disaster occurrences, violent crimes, perpetrator incarcerations, and community awareness of reporting criminal offenses persist, so does the need for professionally educated nurses to care for this population caught between nursing and the law.

Between the years 2010 and 2017, statewide violent crime rates fluctuated slightly between 15.4 and 17.2% in a population ranging between 5.7 million and about 6 million people.[11] The violent crime group consists of murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault.[12] Regardless of whether crime rates increase or decrease, they persist, producing victims that require skilled nursing care.

The state of Maryland established a goal to create safer communities for all residents. Strategies implemented to meet this goal, next to creating an anti-human trafficking policy, included locating, dismantling, and prosecuting gangs involved in drug and human trafficking (GOCCP, 2018). In 2018, Maryland prosecuted 201 individuals, made 65 convictions, and recovered 41 human trafficking victims through collaboration on local, state, and federal levels.[13] Within the local partnerships, forensic nurses play a key role in creating and implementing algorithms that instruct nurses to assess for, and identify, victims of human trafficking. Once identified, forensic nurses can care for and align the victim with appropriate, life altering resources.

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[11] Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention Open Data Portal (2020). Violent crime & property crime by municipality: 2000 to present. Retrieved from https://opendata.maryland.gov/Public-Safety/Violent-Crime-Property-Crime-by-Municipality-2000-/2p5g-xrcb

[12] Central Records Division (2019). 2017 Uniform crime reporting. Retrieved from https://mdsp.maryland.gov/Document%20Downloads/2017%20Uniform%20Crime%20Report.pdf

[13] Maryland Criminal Intelligence Network (2018). 2017 Uniform crime report. Retrieved from https://mdsp.maryland.gov/Document%20Downloads/2017%20Uniform%20Crime%20Report.pdf

Forensic nursing job salaries' in Maryland range from $42,000-74,000 with an average earning point of $55,930.00 (Glassdoor, 2019). A job search using Indeed and Glassdoor hiring websites for Forensic Nurse Examiners (FNE) and SAFE Nurses (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners) elicited 11 posted positions in Maryland. Institutions seeking forensic nurses do not always advertise on such job search sites, so this is not an inclusive finding for open forensic nursing positions. Four job postings were listed on the International Association of Forensic Nurses Career Center site.[14] While the FNE does not require a degree in forensic nursing to practice, this population of nurses likely provides a potential student pool, as well as addresses only one option for the forensic nurse.

Trauma nurses and Emergency Room nurses serve as first responders to many victims of crime, trauma, and behavioral instability; all of whom may be served by advanced education in forensic nursing. Indeed (2020) produced 770 job postings for Emergency Room nurses across the slate. As well, there are 152 openings for trauma positions and 250 posted needs for behavioral health nurses (Indeed, 2020).

2. ***Present data and analysis projecting market demand and the availability of openings in a job market to be served by the new program.***

Forensic nurse is an umbrella term for those nurses prepared, educated, and working in the aforementioned roles. Therefore, when conducting a search for job opportunities, the term Forensic Nurse Examiner (FNE) was used as this term is the most common type of forensic nurse and is the most recognized role.

Table 1. Market Demand for Forensic Nurses

Facility/State	Position	Degree Required or Preferred	Current Advanced Practice Openings*
Mercy Medical Center	FNE	RN, FNE preferred	1
Anne Arundel Medical Center	FNE	RN BSN, FNE-A	1
University of MD, BWMC	FNE	RN, FNE, licensure within 1 year	2
State of MD	Forensic Investigator	Associate degree in Health Sciences, Police Science, or Forensics.	1
University of MD Capital Region Health	Forensic Examiner	RN, FNE/SAFE. Training within 3 months of hire,	1
Frederick Memorial Hospital	RN FNE-P	RN, FNE-P	1
Meritus Health	Forensic Nurse	RN, BSN preferred, FNE, SANE preferred, training within 6 months of hire	1
UM Shore Regional Health	RN FNE	RN, BSN, FNE-A/P	1
Calvert Health System	SAFE RN	RN, FNE-A/P	1
Medstar St. Mary's Hospital	RN FNE	RN, BSN, FNE	1

*Source: Indeed (2019). Retrieved November 25, 2019 from https://www.indeed.com

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[14] International Association of Forensic Nurses. (2020). Search for jobs. Retrieved from https://careercenter.iafn.org/jobs/

3. *Discuss and provide evidence of market surveys that clearly provide quantifiable and reliable data on the educational and training needs and the anticipated number of vacancies expected over the next 5 years.*

The Bureau of Labor Statistics does not isolate nursing demands specific to forensic nursing. However, the Bureau does anticipate a 16% increase in the nursing job market between now and 2024, based upon baby boomers both retiring and becoming diagnosed with illness. Maryland is among the sixteen states with the greatest anticipated needs.[15] "The current nursing workforce falls far short of recommendations made by the Institute of Medicine's Future of Nursing report, with only 56% of RNs prepared at the baccalaureate or graduate degree level" [16](para. 5). Between the rise and fall of local and national violent and non-violent crime, disaster occurrences, and the current vacancy of nurses in practice, there is sure to be a need for forensic nurses with advanced education.

4. *Provide data showing the current and projected supply of prospective graduates*

To project the number of graduates, enrollment trends in Stevenson's other Areas of Concentration in the Master of Science in Nursing degree were considered along with retention and graduation rates. If the program is approved for a fall 2020 start date, the following conservative enrollment is projected for the first five years of the graduate program.

Table 2: Projected MS in Nursing, AOC – Forensic Nursing Enrollment - 2020–2025

Graduate Program Enrollment	Year 1 2020-2021	Year 2 2021-2022	Year 3 2022-2023	Year 4 2023-2024	Year 5 2024-2025
Forensic AOC	5	10	11	12	12

The enrollment projected above will produce more than five new master's prepared nursing professionals within five years of the first graduating class in 2020.

Table 3: Projected MS in Nursing, AOC – Forensic Nursing Graduates, 2022-2027

Graduate Program Graduates	Year 1 2020-2021	Year 2 2021-2022	Year 3 2022-2023	Year 4 2023-2024	Year 5 2024-2025
Forensic AOC	0	0	4	4	5

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[15] American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2019). Nursing shortage. Retrieved from https://www.aacnnursing.org/news-information/fact-sheets/nursing-shortage

[16] American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2019). Nursing shortage. Retrieved from https://www.aacnnursing.org/news-information/fact-sheets/nursing-shortage

D. Reasonableness of Program Duplication

1. *Identify similar programs in the State and/or same geographical area. Discuss similarities and differences between the proposed program and others in the same degree to be awarded.*

There are many Master's in Nursing Science degree programs in the Maryland; however, there are no forensic nursing concentrations offered. Two regional schools offer forensic nursing concentrations or certificate, as reflected in Table 4.

Table 4: Regional Programs with Forensic Nursing Area of Concentration or Certificate

University	Program of Study leading to a MS or Certificate in Forensic Nursing
Duquesne University	Master of Science in Nursing- Forensic Track Post Master's Certificate in Forensic Nursing (15 cr.)
Penn State University	Post Baccalaureate Certificate (12 cr.)

*Sources: Duquesne University School of Nursing (n.d.). Retrieved from https://onlinenursing.duq.edu/online-forensic-nursing-program/; Penn State University (n.d.). Retrieved from https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/colleges/nursing/nursing-forensics-certificate/

Apart from the programs at Duquesne University and Penn State, there are no other Forensic Nursing programs in the region. In fiscal year 2018, Duquesne University awarded 16 Master of Nursing degrees in Forensic Nursing[17]. It is anticipated that the number of graduates from these two programs will not be able to meet the demands of the workforce necessary to adequately serve the increasing numbers of victims of trauma and violent crime in the State and in the region.

2. *Provide justification for the proposed program.*

As articulated within this proposal, the proposed Area of Concentration leverages Stevenson University's strengths as an online provider of graduate nursing and forensics programs and meets the University's mission of providing career focused graduate programs for professional advancement. This Area of Concentration in Forensic Nursing is unique in the State and addresses a need in the region for advanced nurse training in this emerging field.

E. Relevance to High-demand Programs at Historically Black Institutions (HBIs)

1. *Discuss the program's potential impact on the implementation or maintenance of high-demand programs at HBI's.*

It is expected that the proposed master's degree in concentration in Forensic Nursing at Stevenson will not have an impact on the graduate programs offered through the Historically Black Institutions in Maryland. Only three of Maryland's HBI's offer a graduate degree in nursing: Coppin State University; Morgan State University; and Bowie State University, none of which offer Forensic Nursing. Bowie State University's Master of Science in Nursing program prepares professional nurses for advanced practice roles as nurse practitioners and nurse educators and for doctoral study. Morgan State's programs are in

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[17] Duquesne University (2019). Degree completions by school, program, and major. Retrieved from
https://www.duq.edu/about/departments-and-offices/finance-and-business/planning-budgeting-and-institutional-research/fact-books/degrees-conferred-dashboards/degree-completions-by-school-program-and-major

Nurse Educator and Nursing Leadership and Management. Coppin State University's program is designed to prepare Family Nurse Practitioners.

F. Relevance to the identity of Historically Black Institutions (HBIs)

5. Discuss the program's potential impact on the uniqueness and institutional identities and missions of HBI's.

The proposed new Area of Concentration is not expected to have an impact on the uniqueness, institutional identity, or mission of Historically Black Institutions,

G. Adequacy of Curriculum Design, Program Modality, and Related Learning Outcomes (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.10):

1. Describe how the proposed program was established, and also describe the faculty who will oversee the program.

The program was established through the vision of building on the knowledge and experience that Stevenson University's Online Forensic Science and Forensic Studies programs have acquired over the years through successful forensic programs. The relationship between three existing, yet independent, programs develops a specialty track in forensic nursing that allows the nurse interested in forensics, to obtain a master's degree, gain the knowledge and skillset to advance into specialty community and hospital-based roles.

The faculty that will coordinate the forensic concentration is a Registered Nurse and Doctor of Nursing Practice, full time higher education academician within the Stevenson University Online program, and is an active, licensed Forensic Nurse Examiner-Adult who practices forensic nursing in a city hospital in Baltimore, which has a robust forensic nursing program treating victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, interpersonal violence, sex trafficking, strangulation, and elder abuse.

2. Describe educational objectives and learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor, breadth, and (modality) of the program.

The educational objective of Area of Concentration in Forensic Nursing is to provide advanced training for nurses trained to apply criminal and social sciences to victims of trauma, rape, domestic violence, interpersonal violence, elder and child abuse.

Upon completion of the degree, students will be able to:

1. Critique concepts and theories of nursing, social justice, and health care delivery related to victims of violence.
2. Integrate social, educational, and legal theory, evidence-based practice, and research to address the complex needs of vulnerable populations and victims of violence.
3. Analyze trends in forensic nursing to develop, promote, and implement protocols, policies, and systems that best respond to the complex health needs of victims of violence
4. Analyze the impact of role of the forensic nurse in advancing the relationship between civic, legal, health care sectors.

5. Evaluate culturally competent strategies to educate individuals in the traditional of forensic nursing and forensic wellness through the examination of inter-professional collaborative relationships, social networks, and organizational systems.

3. *Explain how the institution will:*

    a.) provide for assessment of student achievement of learning outcomes in the program document student achievement of learning outcomes in the program:

Assessment and documentation of student achievement of learning outcomes occurs in all the online programs. Each course syllabus clearly identifies the desired learning outcomes for students. Assignments are designed so that all course outcomes are assessed, and graded assignments are scored using rubrics to determine if students demonstrate proficiency of the related outcome. Portfolios are used within the capstone course to allow students to document mastery of outcomes across all courses through collections of course artifacts and reflection. Portfolios will be assessed using a standards-aligned rubric. Students will complete a scholarly research project that further allows them to demonstrate accomplishment of program outcomes. All master's degree program student learning outcomes are mapped to a set of Master's Level Learning Outcomes (MLOs) that represent University outcomes for graduates of all Stevenson's master's programs.

4. *Provide a list of courses with title, semester credit hours and course descriptions, along with a description of program requirements:*

REQUIRED COURSES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSED AREA OF CONCENTRATION

Core Courses

NURS 515 – Concepts of Nursing Informatics (3 credits)
Draws from computer science, information science, cognitive and decision sciences, and nursing science. This course provides students with an overview of informatics and the theoretical foundation for information management within the health care setting.

NURS 520 – Quantitative Methods in Nursing Research (3 credits)
Focuses on the application of quantitative research designs. Practice and management questions are discussed, and quantitative research strategies are developed to produce data and to examine the results of nursing research.

NURS 530 – Qualitative Inquiry in Nursing (3 credits)
Examines the conceptual issues of qualitative inquiry and introduces the student to grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography, and historical research. Connections between current issues in practice and management and qualitative research strategies will be explored. Students will conduct interviews and write narratives that reflect their understanding of nursing knowledge.

NURS 547 – Global Health Care Perspectives (3 credits)
Provides an intensive overview of global health issues. This course focuses on global determinates of health, global health policies, global health research methods, effects of

economics on global healthcare, complementary and alternative medicine, and organizations working in the field of global health. Students will consider the impact of global health issues such as infectious diseases, chronic diseases, cancer, violence, nutrition, mental health and environmental health. Topics covered include the special issues of reproduction, infants, and children.

NURS 557 – Project and Resource Management (3 credits)
Provides students with the essential principles and tools of project management and an understanding of the human, organizational, and fiscal factors involved. Students will study issues and acquire skills related to personnel selection, managing an increasingly diverse workforce, project definition, budgeting, quality, and outcomes. The role of strategic planning in healthcare organizations will be explored.

Concentration Courses

NURS 615 – Advanced Health Assessment (3 credits)
Provides advanced content in the area of health assessment across the lifespan required for evidence-based practice in hospital, academic, or community settings. This course will build on previously learned skills and knowledge from baccalaureate education and nursing practice experience. The students will develop the advanced skills needed to obtain, conduct, and teach others how to complete a comprehensive health history and physical assessment. This course includes a hands-on experience to assess application of course content.

FSCOR 601 – Foundations of Justice (3 credits)
Provides students with the opportunity to examine the history, philosophy, and social development of investigations, courts, and correctional institutions in a democratic society. Local, state and federal agencies involved in administration of criminal justice, as well as the court and trial process are examined.

ED 606 – Socio-political and Cultural Influences on Families, Organizations, and Communities (3 credits)
Examines the socio-political and historical contexts of families, organizations, and communities in contemporary society through various cultural perspectives including values, norms, symbols, rituals, and expressions. Students will explore the structure and dynamics of these groups in relation to formal and non-formal systems of education and the role of culturally relevant teaching.

FSCI 762 - Expert Witness Preparation and Practice (3 credits)
Prepares students to critically analyze forensic evidence and present testimony as an expert witness in legal proceedings. The course emphasizes the use of exhibits and reports as aids to oral testimony and the application of relevant rules of evidence.

NURS XXX – Introduction to Forensic Nursing (3 credits) new course
Introduction to the definitions and principles of medico-legal care of the individual experiencing trauma, abuse, neglect, rape, and death. This course provides students with an overview of judicial system and the skills and knowledge essential to forensic nursing; including identification of intentional and unintentional wounds, collection of evidence (DNA, photographic, written), creation of a judicial system summary, and

resources available to victims of intimate crime. The role of the forensic nurse as a community leader, supporting diverse populations through collaboration with civic and legal entities will be explored.

NURS 737 – Graduate Nursing Capstone (3 credits)
This course emphasizes analysis and evaluation of concepts of teaching and learning; demonstration of competencies needed to deliver content effectively; assessment and evaluation of student and program outcomes; participation in curriculum planning and development; and analysis of regulatory, ethical, legal and accreditation issues. Students will develop a professional portfolio and a scholarly paper and presentation. The course includes an on-campus residency requirement.

NURS XXX – Forensic Nursing Practicum (3 credits) new course
This course is designed to provide an opportunity for students in the forensic nursing concentration to apply concepts of forensic nursing in a selected civic, legal, or health care delivery environments during a 135-hour practicum experience. Students will have the opportunity to focus on a specific area of forensic nursing (e.g. Forensic Nurse Examiner, Correctional Nursing, Coroner/Death investigation, Disaster preparedness, Legal Nurse Consulting, Forensic Mental Health Nursing). Students will complete a project relevant to the role of the forensics nurse in the specific setting.

5. *Discuss how general education requirements will be met, if applicable.*

   Not applicable.

6. *Identify any specialized accreditation or graduate certification requirements for this program and its students.*

   Accreditation through Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education will be sought within the normal review cycle.

7. *If contracting with another institution or non-collegiate organization, provide a copy of the written contract.*

    Not applicable.

8. *Provide assurance and any appropriate evidence that the proposed program will provide students with clear, complete, and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, assumptions about technology competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, learning management system, availability of academic support services and financial aid resources, and costs and payment policies.*

As this program is in the proposal stage, specific evidence is not available directly for this program. However, the University will provide similar resources to students in the Professional Studies as it does for other programs. Hence, evidence is provided for existing programs, which demonstrates standard practices by Stevenson University.

Information regarding curriculum and degree requirements is provided to students via the catalog and degree audit for their academic year. The degree audit is individualized and

requires secure login. The current and previous SUO catalogs are published on the following web site: http://www.stevenson.edu/academics/catalog/

The nature of faculty/student interaction is addressed in a few places: in the "Course Information" and "Discussion Boards" tutorials on SUO's "Online Learning" web page (http://www.stevenson.edu/online/about-us/online-learning/), in a document called "SUO Student Expectations, which is published on the "Current Student Resources" web page (http://www.stevenson.edu/online/about-us/current-student-resources/) and the "Accepted Student Resources" web page (http://www.stevenson.edu/online/about-us/accepted-student-resources/index.html), and in GPS 100 New Student Orientation (requires login).

Assumptions about technology competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, and the learning management system (Blackboard) can be found on the "Current Student Resources" web page (http://www.stevenson.edu/online/about-us/current-student-resources/) and the "Accepted Student Resources" web page (http://www.stevenson.edu/online/about-us/accepted-student-resources/index.html), and in GPS 100 New Student Orientation (requires login).

Information about availability of academic support services, financial aid resources, costs, and payment policies can be found on the following web pages:

- On the "Current Student Resources" web page (http://www.stevenson.edu/online/about-us/current-student-resources/), there is a section called "Academic Support" that contains sources of academic support for students.
- Financial aid resources: https://www.stevenson.edu/online/admissions-aid/financial-aid/
- Costs: All program web pages include a tab called "Admissions/Tuition", which delineates tuition information. Below is a link to the web page for the undergraduate program in business administration as an example of a typical program page: https://www.stevenson.edu/online/academics/online-graduate-programs
- Payment Policies and Payment Plan:

  https://www.stevenson.edu/about/campus-services/student-accounts/

  https://stevenson.afford.com/

The Master of Science, Forensic Nursing program faculty will provide students with clear, complete, and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, assumptions about technology competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, learning management system, availability of academic support services and financial aid resources, and costs and payment policies.

9. ***Provide assurance and any appropriate evidence that advertising, recruiting, and admissions materials will clearly and accurately represent the proposed program and the services available.***

The SUO home page has five majors' sections. Two of these sections, Admissions & Aid and Academic, contain advertising, recruiting, and admissions content. For example, the Admissions and Aid web page (https://www.stevenson.edu/online/admissions-aid/) provides

prospective students with starts dates for the next session, and information about admissions requirements, transferring, financial aid, veterans. In addition, there is a form on the right side of the page where students can request information. This page applies to all programs offered by SUO.

In addition, under Academics (http://www.stevenson.edu/online/academics/) all program web pages have sections that contain information that is of interest to prospective students: program overview, admissions/tuition, and program requirements. All printed materials are consistent with electronic publications. Finally, all electronic and printed materials are reviewed for accuracy regularly (at least twice a year).

Any advertising, recruiting, and admissions materials related to the Master of Science, Forensic Nursing program will clearly and accurately represent the proposed program and the services available.

H. Adequacy of Articulation

1. *If applicable, discuss how the program supports articulation with programs at partner institutions. Provide all relevant articulation agreements.*

Not applicable.

I. Adequacy of Faculty Resources (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.11).

1. *Provide a brief narrative demonstrating the quality of program faculty. Include a summary list of faculty with appointment type, <u>terminal degree title and field</u>, academic title/rank, status (full-time, part-time, adjunct) and the course(s) each faulty member will teach in the proposed program.*

Stevenson University's distance education programs are developed and overseen by faculty members specifically selected for their subject matter expertise as well as their ability to teach in the online environment.

Faculty	Terminal degree/field	Academic title/rank, status	Proposed Courses in Forensic Concentration
Diane Lehmann, DNP, RN, CNE, FNE-A	DNP/Nursing	Assistant Professor, Full-time	NURS 615 Advanced Health Assessment; NURS XXX Intro to Forensic Nursing; NURS 737 Graduate Nursing Capstone; NURS XXX Forensic Nursing Practicum
Joyce Williams, DNP, FAAN, DF-IAFN, FAAFS	DNP/Nursing	Adjunct Professor, Part-time	NURS XXX Intro to Forensic Nursing; NURS 547
Laura Petri, PhD, RN, NPD-BC	PhD/Nursing	Program Coordinator, Graduate Nursing & Assistant Professor, Full-time	NURS 520 Quantitative Methods in Nursing Research; NURS 530 Qualitative Inquiry in Nursing
Deborah King, PhD, MS, RN	PhD/Nursing	Adjunct Professor, Part-time	NURS 530 Qualitative Inquiry in Nursing

Faculty	Terminal degree/field	Academic title/rank, status	Proposed Courses in Forensic Concentration
Michelle D'Alessandro	MS/Nursing	Adjunct Professor, Part-time	NURS 515 Concepts of Nursing Informatics
Rebecca Pisano, PhD	PhD, Comparative/International Studies in Education	U.S. State Department, Director of Student Study Abroad, Adjunct Professor, Part-time	ED 606 Socio-political & Cultural Influences on Families, Organizations, & Communities
Carolyn Johnson, Esq.	JD, University of Maryland School of Law	Department Chair of Forensics, Professor, Forensic Studies, Full-time	FSCOR 601 Foundations of Justice; FSCI 762 Expert Witness Preparation & Practice

2. *Demonstrate how the institution will provide ongoing pedagogy training for faculty in evidenced-based best practices, including training in:*
   a) *Pedagogy that meets the needs of the students*

All courses in the distance education program provide appropriate student-to-faculty and student-to-student interaction. This interaction is generally asynchronous using discussion board forums, wikis, blogs, journals or interactive software. Faculty members are required to provide feedback to students using these modalities. Synchronous, real-time interaction is available through the use of a variety of web appropriate methods, such as Adobe Connect, WebEx, or Skype.

All faculty members have access to the training opportunities routinely provided by the instructional design staff of Stevenson University Online (SUO). The schedule for faculty professional development includes training in the use of available technologies for enhancing online and face-to-face instruction and use of Blackboard^{TM} at both a beginner and advanced level. Individual appointments with instructional design staff are also encouraged. Twice yearly SUO offers professional development seminars for faculty related to andragogy and the best practices for teaching adult students. Online help resources are made available to all faculty and the instructional design team provides onsite and online training as well.

   b) *The learning management system*

All faculty members hired to teach in the online environment must participate in a faculty in-take session. During the in-take session, faculty members are assessed for appropriate teaching skills and ability to interact effectively with students in the online environment through a series of Blackboard^{TM} learning management system activities that include the following: (1) grading student papers; (2) responding to student discussion forums; (3) participating in an online live collaboration through media such as WebEx or Skype; and (4) creating an online presentation using media. Faculty members are also required to participate in an online faculty development course that includes facilitating adult learning, developing course management techniques, using grading rubrics, avoiding and recognizing plagiarism and cheating, among other topics. Only faculty members who successfully complete these activities are selected to teach and develop distance education courses. The university also maintains full-time instructional designers to enable faculty to utilize the latest online technologies to optimize the learning environment for Stevenson graduate students.

Resources for online courses include a robust learning management environment provided through Blackboard SaaS and a variety of learning technologies to promote engagement including VoiceThread, BlueJeans and Office365. Instructional designers work with the faculty members to implement and maintain courses for online delivery. Instructional designers are provided by the Learning Technologies and Instructional Design Services (LTID) team which reports to the CIO and the Office of Information Technology. This administrative unit consists of four professionals with a director, two instructional designers and an instructional technologist. The director and instructional designers who have work responsibilities for SUO courses have graduate degrees in education with specialties in instructional technology and distance learning. All three hold certifications with Quality Matters, a global organization leading quality assurance in online and innovative digital teaching and learning environments. The Director of LTID works closely with the Dean of SUO to ensure that faculty have sufficient professional development and technology resources for their courses.

Academic support for learning is provided through Smarthinking, 24-hour tutoring service for writing and select subjects, and Hoonuit, an on-demand training site with 24/7 access to step-by-step video tutorials and workshops on a variety of topics including student success and 200+ technology applications.

 c) *Evidenced-based best practices for distance education, if distance education is offered.*

Faculty members adhere to Quality Matters standards and to principles of best practice which include the following: (1) providing clear guidelines for student-to-student and student-to faculty interaction; (2) creating well designed discussion assignments that facilitate meaningful dialogue among students; (3) developing student assessments which include project-based assignments to facilitate critical thinking in addition to tests and quizzes; (4) providing timely feedback; (5) providing regularly distributed deadlines to encourage course/program completion; (6) communicating high expectations; and (7) facilitating student participation in selection of project and paper topics. Courses are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are meeting these standards.

Faculty members are provided support specifically related to teaching in a distance education format throughout their entire time of teaching for Stevenson University. As noted above, prior to teaching a distance education course, faculty members are required to participate in an online faculty development course. In addition, faculty members are invited to campus for an orientation session. This session is streamed live via the web to faculty members who live out-of-state or are otherwise unable to come to campus.

Continuing professional development workshops are offered twice a year to help faculty members to improve their teaching effectiveness in an online environment. These workshops are also streamed live via the web to faculty who live out-of-state or who are otherwise unable to come to campus. Workshop topics have included the following: (1) Introduction to Blackboard; (2) Advanced Blackboard Training; (3) Use of the Grade Center; (4) Facilitating Discussion Boards; (5) How Interaction Aids Learning; (6) Developing Accelerated Online Courses; (7) Best Practices in Accelerating Courses; (8) Available Technologies to Facilitate Online Learning; (9) Teaching a Course You Did Not Develop; (10) Working with Master Courses; (11) Designing Tests to Reduce Cheating; and

(12) Faculty Presence in Online Courses. Each workshop is evaluated and based upon the evaluations the workshops have been improved over time.

J. Adequacy of Library Resources (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.12)

1. *Describe the library resources available and/or the measures to be taken to ensure resources are adequate to support the proposed program.*

   Library Facilities

   Library resources at Stevenson University are available through the library's webpage at stevensonlibrary.org and at three convenient campus locations: Greenspring, Owings Mills and Owings Mills North. Currently, construction is underway to build a new library space at Owings Mills North, which will provide additional space for library collections and archives as well as individual and group study. This new building will also include instructional space and space for library events.

   The main Stevenson University Library physical collection is maintained at the Greenspring campus location. In addition to print books, videos and other materials at Greenspring, students enjoy access to many specialized databases, featuring the full text of electronic journals, magazines, books, newspapers, and more. A few of the databases to which the Stevenson University Library subscribes include Artstor, SciFinder, Lexis-Nexis Academic, Business Source Complete, The Baltimore Sun, and Science Direct. Approximately 70,000 full text magazines, journals, and newspapers are available, as well as over 200,000 eBooks forming a significant academic resource for students. All are searchable from home or office. The OneSearch tool, available from the Library website, enables researchers to easily find books, articles and more through a single search box.

   Stevenson University researchers also have access to books, videos and articles through the library's interlibrary loan services and membership in the BREILL Consortium which, in partnership with other Baltimore-area libraries, allows quick turnaround of materials using a daily courier service.

   Knowledgeable and friendly library staff members assist Stevenson University Online students to identify and locate vetted resources appropriate for their assignments. Reference and research help are available in person, by phone, and electronically via text, chat and email. Through AskUsNow, Stevenson students have live chat access to a librarian 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

   Additionally, students have access to a wide variety of online resources available through other Maryland libraries (Sailor), the Library of Congress and World Cat. One Search and PubMed are also resources that are used for science proposals. In addition, students have borrowing privileges through Stevenson's partnership with the Baltimore Area Library Consortium (BALC) and MICUA Consortia.

K. Adequacy of Physical Facilities, Infrastructure and Instructional Equipment
   (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.13)

1. *Provide an assurance that physical facilities, infrastructure and instruction equipment are adequate to initiate the program, particularly as related to spaces for classrooms, staff and faculty offices, and laboratories for studies in the technologies and sciences*.

The University anticipates little or no impact on the use of existing facilities and equipment to provide this online program. Courses will not require additional classroom space or office space for faculty/staff.

2. *Provide assurance and any appropriate evidence that the institution will ensure students enrolled in and faculty teaching in distance education will have adequate access to:*
    a) *An institutional electronic mailing system, and*

All full-time and part-time faculty are issued a secure Stevenson.edu email account upon hire or re-hire. In addition, all new students are issued a secure Stevenson.edu email account upon admission. All Stevenson faculty, staff, and students are expected to use their secure university email account to conduct university business and are expected to check the account regularly.

    b) *A learning management system that provides the necessary technological support for distance education.*

Resources for online courses include a robust learning management environment provided through Blackboard SaaS and a variety learning technologies to promote engagement including VoiceThread, BlueJeans and Office365. Instructional designers work with the faculty members to implement and maintain courses for online delivery. Instructional designers are provided by the Learning Technologies and Instructional Design Services (LTID) team which reports to the CIO and the Office of Information Technology. This administrative unit consists of four professionals with a director, two instructional designers and an instructional technologist. The director and instructional designers who have work responsibilities for SUO courses have graduate degrees in education with specialties in instructional technology and distance learning. All three hold certifications with Quality Matters, a global organization leading quality assurance in online and innovative digital teaching and learning environments.   The Director of LTID works closely with the Dean of SUO to ensure that faculty have sufficient professional development and technology resources for their courses.

Academic support for learning is provided through Smarthinking, 24-hour tutoring service for writing and select subjects, and Hoonuit, an on-demand training site with 24/7 access to step-by-step video tutorials and workshops on a variety of topics including student success and 200+ technology applications.

L. **Adequacy of Financial Resources with Documentation**
    (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.14)

1. *Complete Table 1: Resources and Narrative Rationale. Provide finance data for the first five years of program implementation. Enter figures into each cell and provide a total for each year. Also provide a narrative rationale for each resource category. If resources have been or will be reallocated to support the proposed program, briefly discuss the sources of those funds.*

TABLE 1: RESOURCES:					
Resource Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
1. Reallocated Funds	0	0	0	0	0
2. Tuition/Fee Revenue (c + g below)	$25,335	$67,560	$74,316	$81,072	$81,072
a. Number of F/T Students*	0	0	0	0	0
b. Annual Tuition/Fee Rate	0	0	0	0	0
c. Total F/T Revenue (a x b)	0	0	0	0	0
d. Number of P/T Students	5	10	11	12	12
e. Credit Hour Rate	$563	$563	$563	$563	$563
f. Annual Credit Hour Rate**	9	12	12	12	12
g. Total P/T Revenue (d x e x f)	$25,335	$67,560	$74,316	$81,072	$81,072
3. Grants, contracts & Other External Sources	0	0	0	0	0
4. Other Sources	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL (Add 1 - 4)	**$25,335**	**$67,560**	**$74,316**	**$81,072**	**$81,072**

TABLE 1: RESOURCES – NARRATIVE

Reallocated Funds
No reallocation of funds is planned as part of delivering this new academic program

Tuition and Fee Revenue
Tuition makes up the total revenue generated for the support of the program as no fees are assessed. The enrollment projections are conservative, with only 5 students enrolled in Year 1 (see section C.4. for more detailed rationale of enrollment projections), with growth expected each year thereafter. All students will be part-time, as is the case with other graduate programs at Stevenson. The assumption in the tuition revenue projection is that in the initial year students will average 9 credit hours, and each year after students will average 12 credits/yr.

Grants and Contracts
There are no resources from grants, contracts, or other external sources that are designated for implementation of this program.

Other Sources
No resources from other sources are necessary for the delivery of this new academic program.

Total Year
No additional explanations or comments are included.

2. *Complete Table 2: Program Expenditures and Narrative Rationale . Provide finance data for the first five years of program implementation. Enter figures into each cell and provide a total for each year. Also provide a narrative rationale for each expenditure category.*

TABLE 2: EXPENDITURES					
Expenditure Categories	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**	**Year 5**
1. Faculty (b + c below)	**$3,900**	**$3,900**	**$13,600**	**$14,008**	**$14,428**
a. # FTE	0	0	0.125	0.125	0.125
b. Total Salary	$3,900	$3,900	$10,625	$10,944	$11,272
c. Total Benefits	$0	$0	$2,975	$3,064	$3,156
2. Admin. Staff (b + c below)	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
a. # FTE	0	0	0	0	0
b. Total Salary	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
c. Total Benefits	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
3. Support Staff (b + c below)	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
a. #FTE	0	0	0	0	0
b. Total Salary	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
c. Total Benefits	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
4. Equipment (Computer hardware and software)	0	0	0	0	0
5. Library	0	0	0	0	0
6. New or Renovated Space	0	0	0	0	0
7. Other Expenses	2,000	1000	1000	1,000	1,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES (Add 1 - 7)	**$5,900**	**$4,900**	**$14,600**	**$15,008**	**$15,428**

TABLE 2: EXPENDITURES – NARRATIVE

Faculty

Given the conservative enrollment estimates during the launch of this new program, as well as the fact that all core courses are currently taught within the existing MS Nursing degree, there is expected to be minimal initial faculty cost incurred. The expenditure for the first two years assumes adjunct faculty costs for one additional course section to account for Forensic Nursing students ($3900/course). As students move into the concentration courses, it is expected that the Forensic Nursing courses will be taught as 1/8 of an existing full-time faculty's existing load. Adjunct faculty salary does not include benefits. Salary projections for year 3 and beyond include a three percent salary increase per year for full-time faculty and a benefit rate of 28% of salary.

Administrative and Support Staff

This new program will not require any additional administrative or support staff. Support will be provided by existing staff who already support the MS in Nursing degree.

Library

No new library resources will be needed for this degree.

Other

Other expenses include course development costs at $1,000 per course. Year 1 costs is for two new courses and Year 2 costs are for one additional new course. Years 3 through 5 expenses are for course redevelopment, maintenance, and software purchases to enhance course communication interactive activities.

M.   **Adequacy of Provisions for Evaluation of Program**
   (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.15)

1.   *Discuss procedures for evaluating courses, faculty and student learning outcomes.*

Courses are routinely monitored by program coordinators/department chairs/associate deans to ensure that best online teaching practices are being maintained by faculty including: (1) frequent faculty-to-student and student-to-student interaction; (2) prompt feedback; (3) clear expectations for completing assignments and other activities; and (4) opportunities for active learning among students. Stevenson utilizes the Quality Matters Standards rubric as a guideline for all online courses. Faculty presence in each course is monitored. Courses are managed by a course manager and instructional designer with expertise in online course development to ensure that the courses include a sequence of learning activities that students can easily navigate, and a communication strategy is in place for the unexpected. Academic program coordinators/department chairs/associate deans and instructional designers ensure there is continued alignment between assignments and course objectives and faculty communicate high expectations for student performance. Finally, faculty are able to avail themselves of ongoing assistance in the performance of their responsibilities through access to the technical and academic assistance provided by the instructional design staff and academic program coordinators/department chairs/associate deans.

Assessment and documentation of student achievement of learning outcomes occurs throughout the distance education programs. Each course syllabus clearly identifies the desired learning outcomes for students. Assignments are designed so that all course outcomes are assessed, and each graded assignment is scored often using a rubric to determine if the student has demonstrated proficiency with the related outcome. Student portfolios demonstrate student mastery of outcomes across all courses in the program and are assessed using a standards-aligned rubric during the capstone course of the program.

Student course evaluations are routinely administered at the end of each session and are analyzed. Alumni are surveyed periodically to ascertain their opinions about whether they had attained the skills and knowledge required for their jobs and to provide their judgment about the strengths and areas for improvement in their program.

Faculty adhere to Quality Matters standards and to principles of best practice which include the following: (1) providing clear guidelines for student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction; (2) creating well designed discussion assignments that facilitate meaningful dialogue among students; (3) developing student assessments which include project-based assignments to facilitate critical thinking in addition to tests and quizzes; (4) providing timely feedback; (5) providing regularly distributed deadlines to encourage course/program completion; (6) communicating high expectations; and (7) facilitating student participation in

the selection of project and paper topics. Courses regularly are reviewed to ensure that they are meeting these standards.

2. ***Explain how the institution will evaluate the proposed program's educational effectiveness, including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, student and faculty satisfaction, and cost-effectiveness.***

Programs within Stevenson University Online (SUO) undergo an annual cycle of program effectiveness review. Each Program Chair compiles an annual assessment report that includes performance metrics on student enrollments, retention, grade distributions, and graduation rates, employment placement data, and student learning outcomes. Student learning outcomes are assessed through collection and scoring of student artifacts that have been mapped via curricular maps to program outcomes and Master's Level Learning Outcomes (MLOs). The MLOs represent outcomes for any student graduating from one of Stevenson's master's programs.

Program chairs meet within program teams – consisting of program faculty, admissions and advising staff to review, analyze, and set goals for the coming year to ensure continuous improvement. Where concerns arise, re-assessment follows changes to the program curriculum. Program chairs submit their report and analyses annually to the Dean of SUO.

Student satisfaction is collected via an electronic course evaluation process as well as through student surveys and alumni surveys assesses students self-reported satisfaction with the program and achievement of goals following graduation. Each session, faculty receive their course evaluations and review with program chairs to consider course adjustments. Students are also provided opportunities to provide feedback via surveys on their experience in the admission process so that the SUO enrollment team can adjust as needed to improve student support services.

Faculty participate in once a semester program meeting as well as meeting individually with program chairs to discuss course curricula, program goals, and participate in assessment activities. These meetings allow faculty to express any concerns.

Twice a year SUO completes a competitor cost analysis to determine if its tuition rate for master's programs remains reasonable in the marketplace. Currently, SUO's tuition rate are around the mid-point among online competitors. As a result of these biannual cost comparisons, the tuition rates for education master's degrees has remained consistent for a 6-year period with no plans for any tuition increases.

N. **Consistency with the State's Minority Student Achievement Goals**
(as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.05)

3. ***Discuss how the proposed program addresses minority student access & success, and the institution's cultural diversity goals and initiatives.***

Stevenson University's minority student population is among the highest within Maryland's private colleges and universities. In the 2018-2019 academic year, 45% of undergraduate students and 49% of graduate students represented minority groups.9 Among the University's guiding documents is the following Diversity and Inclusion Statement:

Stevenson University commits itself to diversity as it relates to awareness, education, respect and practice at every level of the organization. The University embraces people of all backgrounds, defined by, but not limited to, ethnicity, culture, race, gender, class, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, physical ability, learning differences, and political perspectives. The University believes its core values are strengthened when all its members have voice and representation. The resulting inclusive organizational climate promotes the development of broad-minded members of the University who positively influence their local and global communities.10

To support the commitment to diversity, Stevenson has a Center for Diversity and Inclusion with a full-time staff member serving as Director of Diversity and Inclusion reporting directly to the Vice President for Student Affairs. In addition, a President-appointed Diversity and Inclusion Committee, co-chaired by two members of Cabinet, is responsible for supporting related campus-wide initiatives.

The proposed program supports and promotes the priorities outlined in the State Plan to ensure equal opportunity for Maryland's diverse citizenry as demonstrated through Stevenson University's commitment to diversity and inclusion among its students, faculty, and staff.

O. Relationship to Low Productivity Programs Identified by the Commission:

1. *If the proposed program is directly related to an identified low productivity program, discuss how the fiscal resources (including faculty, administration, library resources and general operating expenses) may be redistributed to this program.*

    Not Applicable.

P. Adequacy of Distance Education Programs (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.22)

1. *Provide affirmation and any appropriate evidence that the institution is eligible to provide Distance Education.*

Stevenson University is fully accredited to provide distance education programs. The University has been offering quality distance education programming since 2006. The University is regionally accreditation through Middle States Commission on Higher Education. In addition, two programs that are offered via distance learning have programmatic accreditation or approval. The RN to MS in Nursing is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and the B.S. in Legal Studies is approved by the American Bar Association (ABA). All three of these governing bodies have standards and/or requirements for distance education and the online programs are fully accredited or approved.

2. *Provide assurance and any appropriate evidence that the institution complies with the C-RAC guidelines, particularly as it relates to the proposed program.*

Evidence that Stevenson complies with C-RAC guidelines #1-9 is addressed below:

C-RAC guidelines #1: *Online learning is appropriate to the institution's mission and purposes.*

Online learning is consistent with the University's mission and purposes as described in Section A of this proposal, specifically to provide accessible, affordable, career focused education. Further, Stevenson's online programs are fully supported by a dedicated recruitment, admissions, and advising team with a dedicated leader, Dean of Stevenson University Online.

C-RAC guidelines #2: *The institution's plans for developing, sustaining, and, if appropriate, expanding online learning offerings are integrated into its regular planning and evaluation processes.*

In the 2019-2020 President's Strategic Initiatives, ten initiatives explicitly relate sustaining, improving, and expanding Stevenson University's online offerings. These initiatives are monitored regular with data collected for periodic assessment.

C-RAC guidelines #3: *Online learning is incorporated into the institution's systems of governance and academic oversight.*

Stevenson University Online is one of the University's seven schools and has dedicated leadership of a Dean. SUO has representation on Faculty Council as well as Faculty Council's standing committees such as Academic Affairs, Faculty Welfare, and Fiscal Affairs.

C-RAC guidelines #4: *Curricula for the institution's online learning offerings are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.*

All courses in the distance education program are subject to the same design and approval process as those offered in traditional instructional formats. All courses, whether in a distance education or traditional format, are initially proposed by the academic departments. The courses are reviewed first by the academic program coordinator/department chair/associate dean and then by the dean of the school which oversees the academic department. The courses are then reviewed by the school's representative to the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) subcommittee of the University's Faculty Council, as well as by an AAC non-school representative; a representative from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment; and a University librarian to ensure that the appropriate materials are available to the students. Courses are then submitted for review and approval by the Deans' Council, which is comprised of the deans from all seven schools in the University. Finally, the courses are submitted for review and approval by the AAC. The course content and student learning outcomes are identical regardless of whether a course is offered in a traditional format or a distance learning format. This thorough review process ensures the curriculum for distance education programs is coherent, cohesive and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.

C-RAC guidelines #5: *The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its online learning offerings, including the extent to which the online learning goals are achieved, and uses the results of its evaluations to enhance the attainment of the goals.*

Assessment and documentation of student achievement of learning outcomes occurs throughout the distance education programs. Each course syllabus will clearly identify the desired course objectives for students. Specifically, a course alignment map delineates how each module objective aligns with course objectives, learning activities, and graded assessments. Course alignment maps are carefully reviewed to ensure that each course

objective is met in at least one module, ensuring that all course objectives are assessed. In addition, all assignments are must be mapped to at least one course objective. Most graded assignment will be scored using a rubric to determine if the student has demonstrated proficiency with the related objective. Graduate programs are assessed through scoring of student artifacts and rubrics to ensure that program outcomes are met. Program outcomes are mapped to broader level of master's level outcomes expected of all master's degree graduates.

C-RAC guidelines #6: *Faculty responsible for delivering the online learning curricula and evaluating the students' success in achieving the online learning goals are appropriately qualified and effectively supported.*

Stevenson University distance education programs are developed and overseen by faculty members specifically selected for their subject matter expertise as well as their ability to teach in the online environment. All faculty members hired to teach in the online environment must participate in a faculty in-take session. During the in-take session, faculty are assessed for appropriate teaching skills and ability to interact effectively with students in the online environment through a series of Blackboard learning management system activities that include the following: (1) grading student papers; (2) responding to student discussion forums; and (3) creating an online presentation using media. Faculty are also required to participate in a subsequent online development course that includes facilitating adult learning, developing course management techniques, using grading rubrics, avoiding and recognizing plagiarism and cheating, among other topics. Only faculty who successfully complete these activities are selected to teach distance education courses.

Faculty are supported in several ways. All SUO faculty are invited to a virtual faculty meeting every fall and spring semester. This meeting includes faculty development. Also, every course in Blackboard has a "Need Course Help?" tab that directs faculty to a form (generates a ticket) they can submit any time they need instructional design (ISD) assistance. In addition, the SUO ISD Team maintains a web site called "Just in Time Course Design" (https://isd4su.com/) for faculty who need instructional design support. This site has three main sections: self-help, training, and request help (submit a ticket). Finally, the SUO section of the Portal (requires login) has a section called "Faculty information" where faculty can learn about upcoming events, professional development opportunities, Blackboard resources, and other helpful information.

C-RAC guidelines #7: *The institution provides effective student and academic services to support students enrolled in online learning offerings.*

Online tutoring is accessible through Smarthinking. Online tutoring services are provided to students through a variety of means including one-on-one live online tutoring sessions, drop-in tutoring sessions, scheduled tutoring sessions, or through submission of writing assignments for feedback. Students can access these online tutoring activities from any computer facilities available to them. In addition, students can obtain supplemental instruction at their discretion via Hoonuit. Students are provided personalized academic advising by full-time professional advisors that are dedicated to online students.

C-RAC guidelines #8: *The institution provides sufficient resources to support and, if appropriate, expand its online learning offerings.*

The University has made the financial commitment to support this proposed program. Please refer to Section L of this proposal.

<u>C-RAC guidelines #9</u>: *The institution assures the integrity of its online offerings.*

Integrity is an institutional value. The University has an Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) and an Academic Dishonesty Policy that the AIO ensures is implemented. Students complete a mandatory orientation to online learning that includes academic integrity policies and procedures. Faculty are encouraged to ask students to add the University's Honor Pledge to their assessments. Faculty are encouraged to create assessments in a manner that prevents academic misconduct such as selecting test settings that discourage cheating and creating written assignments in a manner that discourages plagiarism, such as submitting assignments in stages. Blackboard's SafeAssign program is available for faculty to use and many do. Students must log in to their online courses using their secure login credentials that are unique to them.