



NOTRE DAME
OF MARYLAND
UNIVERSITY

Sent via EMAIL

November 1, 2017

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

RE: NDMU Response to UMSON Objection – MSN Off-Campus Location

Dear Secretary Fielder:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the objection letter submitted by Dean Jane Kirschling from the University of Maryland School of Nursing (UMSON) regarding Notre Dame of Maryland University's (NDMU) submission of a proposal to offer our Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program off-campus at the Arundel Mills Regional Higher Education Center. NDMU received notification of UMSON's objection from the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) on October 24, 2017. Dean Kirschling described two concerns: 1) duplication of programs and 2) competition for graduate-level precepted educational and leadership experiences. The following narratives address reasons why NDMU's MSN program with concentrations in Leadership in Nursing Administration and Leadership in Nursing Education should receive MHEC approval to be offered at an additional site.

Respectfully, we wish to note that it is challenging to respond to an objection based on program duplication, given that UMSON does not provide "detailed data and information supporting the reasons for the objection" as required under COMAR 13B.02.03.27B(5).

MHEC Approval

MHEC approved NDMU's MSN program in 2007. Since that time, the MSN program has consistently enrolled students twice a year on the University's main campus in Baltimore City. Enrollment, as of September 2017, is 93 students. Notre Dame is presently seeking approval to offer the MSN program at an off-site location (Arundel Mills Regional Higher Education Center) to provide increased access to baccalaureate-prepared professional registered nurses (RNs) in Anne Arundel and surrounding counties in Maryland. This off-site location in Anne Arundel county will provide increased access to RNs who seek educational advancement in a location closer to their work and/or home in an on-ground, face-to-face delivery format.

Nursing Shortage

Nurse Educators

The shortage of nursing faculty has been well-documented (American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), 2017). AACN cites Fang and Kersten (2017) in which current data show one-third of the rapidly aging nurse faculty workforce is projected to retire by 2025. Additionally, according to a *Special Survey on Vacant Faculty Positions* released by the AACN in October 2016, a total of 1,567 faculty vacancies were identified in a survey of 821 nursing schools with baccalaureate and/or graduate programs across the country (85.7% response rate). Besides the vacancies, schools cited the need to create an additional 133 faculty positions to accommodate student demand. The data show a national nurse faculty vacancy rate of 7.9%.

On a regional level, the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) Occupational Projections in Maryland (2014-2024) projects average annual openings for nursing instructors to be 138. Additionally, in the most recent U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016-2026), 7,300 annual openings are expected throughout the country. These regional and national data sets suggest that in order to meet the projected postsecondary nursing instructor and teacher openings in Maryland, a need exists for NDMU to offer the MSN program with a concentration in Leadership in Nursing Education at additional sites in Maryland.

Nurse Administrators

There is an equal need for nurses in administrative positions to create systems and processes needed to lead complex healthcare environments. The Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) identified nursing leadership as an essential force in shaping health care service models to accomplish this goal. In a simplified google search using the phrase— 'nursing leadership positions in Maryland'—over 1,500 links to Director and Executive Director open positions on Indeed.com were generated. (<https://www.indeed.com/q-Nurse-Manager-l-Maryland-jobs.html>)

On a regional level, the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) Occupational Projections in Maryland (2014-2024) projects an average total annual openings for medical and health services managers at 514. Additionally, in the most recent U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016-2026), 36,400 annual openings are expected throughout the country.

In summary, over the last five years, NDMU has graduated close to 300 aspiring nurse leaders and educators committed to serving in Maryland. This proposed additional off-site location will generate at least 20 new nurse leaders and 20 new nurse educators every two years to help fill Maryland workforce gaps in healthcare facilities and academic institutions throughout Maryland.

Distinctions between NDMU and UMSO Programs

MSN Program: Theoretical Underpinning

The MSN program at Notre Dame of Maryland is grounded in the Catholic liberal arts tradition and guided by the premises of Caring Science that sets Notre Dame apart from UMSO. Notre Dame's philosophy rests on the Catholic church's social teaching, which proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. Notre Dame's MSN curricula is intentionally designed to educate students to become nurse leaders and nurse educators with insight, knowledge, skills, compassion, and caring to address inequity and

disparities of vulnerable populations in Baltimore and across the state.

MSN Program at Notre Dame of Maryland: Student Base

Recruitment and Enrollment: The diversity of students in the MSN program in both concentrations is substantial. NDMU was awarded Nurse Support Program (NSP) II monies (NSP II 16-116) to implement strategies to increase MSN enrollment with a particular focus on underrepresented students to prepare them to serve and lead in Maryland hospitals and healthcare facilities. The School of Nursing's intentional recruitment strategies resulted in a steady increase in minority students in the MSN program as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: *Percentage of Minority Students in Nursing Programs*

Minority (non-white) students in	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16
MSN Program	37.6%	41.2%	50.5%	57.4%

It is noteworthy that minority representation in leadership positions within healthcare organizations has been reported as only 14% of hospital board members, 12% of senior leadership positions, 10% of Chief Nursing Officers, and 17% of first- and mid-level management positions (Witt & Kieffer, 2011). These data further support the need for an additional site to offer NDMU's MSN program with a concentration in Leadership in Nursing Administration. Rather than "unreasonable program duplication," as voiced by UMSON, Notre Dame's MSN program fills a void to educate underrepresented minorities for leadership and nurse educator positions.

In a *Policy Brief* published by AACN (2017), nationally only 15.9% of full-time nursing faculty come from diverse backgrounds. Maryland is higher than the national average; 24.7% of full-time nursing faculty are of a diverse background, while nearly 40% of students are of a diverse background. In order to address the projected RN shortage in Maryland, it is imperative that more persons from diverse groups recognize nursing as a viable career option and enter the pipeline. AACN notes "A lack of diverse nursing faculty has tremendous implications for the student body and academic nursing's infrastructure." NDMU's MSN program is in a solid position to fill the diversity gap among nursing faculty in Maryland.

Graduation and Employment Rates: NDMU's School of Nursing implemented retention and success strategies that resulted in 85% of students successfully completing the MSN program. At the time of graduation, nearly 100% of students held positions as nurse administrators or nurse educators in Maryland. Notre Dame is graduating a significant cadre of educationally-prepared and underrepresented minorities to assume first- and mid-level and senior leadership positions in healthcare facilities and academic institutions.

Differences in Curricula

Notre Dame of Maryland University students are prepared for leadership roles in a complex health care environment or as nurse educators in academia or staff development settings in healthcare facilities. The MSN program is 36 credits in which curricula in both concentrations—Leadership in Nursing Administration and Leadership in Nursing Education—are **specialized** with 23 credits dedicated to each concentration. Students graduate with a Master of Science in Nursing. The vast majority of enrolled MSN students are from NDMU's undergraduate RN to BSN program. Two courses taken as a RN to BSN student can be transferred into the MSN program. Thus students complete 32 credits, which decreases the amount of time and expense in the program.

This is in contrast to UMSO's Master of Health Services in Leadership and Management Specialty (HSLM) where the degree is 38 credits and is more **broad-based** with only nine (9) specialization credits. UMSO states that graduates of the HSLM specialty will be able to apply what they have learned in distinct settings such as acute care, ambulatory, long-term, or home health care. There is no specific reference to preparing graduates for positions in leadership, academia, or staff development in healthcare settings. UMSO students do not graduate with a Master of Science in Nursing, thus NDMU's MSN program is not in direct competition for persons who want to pursue an advanced degree in the discipline of nursing.

Delivery Method

NDMU's MSN program of study is offered in a **face-to-face**, cohort model. This type of delivery format strengthens authentic relationships with faculty and students, which is a key principle in the School of Nursing's philosophy of Caring Science. Faculty, with intentionality, create a learning environment where actions and strategies lead to developing and strengthening *student* relationships that create a path to grow as a nurse leader and nurse educator. UMSO's **online** HSLM program has a long withstanding solid reputation. However, by their own admission, UMSO's web page states "We understand that online learning is not for everyone."

Preceptorships in Clinical and Academic Facilities

Since the inception of the MSN program, the School of Nursing actively sought to establish firm collegial relationships. Presently, the NDMU School of Nursing partners with at least 15 hospitals and healthcare systems and 12 colleges and universities throughout Maryland who provide experientially and educationally-prepared preceptors. Because of our long-standing relationships with our regional affiliations and a large number of alumni who readily precept our students, School of Nursing faculty report experiencing minimal difficulty in securing nurse leaders in administration and nurse educators in academia or healthcare settings willing to serve as preceptors. Faculty anticipate that securing practicum placements for MSN students at the Arundel Mills Regional Higher Education Center will be achievable.

Conclusion

In summary, Notre Dame of Maryland University maintains that expanding our well-established MSN program at another off-site location will have a positive impact on the State and the region by graduating educationally prepared nurses to care for the residents of Maryland. If you have any questions about this response, please feel free to follow up with me at (410) 532-5321 or via email at cphillips@ndm.edu. We appreciate your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Clarendia Phillips, Ph.D.
Provost

Cc: Kathy Wisser, Dean of the School of Nursing, NDMU
Greg FitzGerald, Chief of Staff, NDMU
Jennifer Frank, Vice President of Academic Affairs, MICUA
Emily Dow, Assistant Secretary of Academic Affairs, MHEC