

Opening of Longwood University's Nursing Program

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A press conference was held on Tuesday, October 6, 2009 at 12:35pm in room 206 of Longwood University's Center for Communication Studies & Theatre. Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs, Roger Johnston, spoke and discussed the plans to kick off the start of the new nursing program opening at Longwood fall 2010.

According to Longwood University's website, the mission for this new program is: to promote excellence in nursing education and clinical competency, promote the development of citizen leaders in the nursing profession, promote partnerships to enhance health care and health care education in the region, to be one component of the solution to the nursing shortage, and to improve the health of the communities that we serve. The program consists of small classes, dedicated and high quality faculty, and the opportunity of real world experience. These are just a few of the promises and commitments Longwood has made to their students.

The nursing program will require a total of 121 credits; twenty of which will be in the natural science field. The opening of the program is delayed but has been adjusted to fit these changes and to accommodate students. These changes have been approved and/or accredited by the Virginia Board of Nursing and the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV). With the completion of this program students will earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN).

The nursing program will be held in Stevens Hall. Stevens Hall has been under construction over the past year in preparation for the new nursing program and was once the

home of the science department at Longwood. Like all of Longwood's programs, everyone is doing their best to make this program the utmost respectable and the best it can be. According to Johnston, the program will have top of the line equipment for an optimal learning environment for students.

One of these machines will be human patient simulators (HPS), which will give students the experience they need. These human patient simulators will be in the Clinical Simulation Learning Center. All of the technology in the Clinical Simulation Learning Center will provide students with the best hands on, real world experience they can get. These machines are costly though and will cost millions of dollars.

When asked how Longwood plans to afford this expensive new program Johnston assured us that they did not feel as if it would be much of an issue. Last month an allocation of \$348,000 was approved by the university's Board of Visitors. This allocation was from the General Auxiliary Reserve Fund and will go towards planning expenses for the BSN program's space. The program was also given a very generous gift by Edward Gordon which was helped out and was greatly appreciated.

Aside from the allocation given by the General Auxiliary Reserve Fund, Longwood hopes that their alumni will donate to this program. Longwood receives much of their funding for new programs from alumni donations. Apart from tuitions, alumni donations are a substantial income for the university. It is suspected that this program will be no different in the funds it receives.

When asked about the enrollment size for students in the nursing program, Johnston said, "The program is currently housing 37 students but will take an average of 35 students per year."

After four years this will leave the average amount of students enrolled in the program at one time to be approximately 140 students. The idea is to keep it small. “We don’t want the program to get too big too soon”, said Johnston.

Like all reputable programs, the nursing program at Longwood is expected to be very competitive. Though, Johnston expresses, it is not foreseen that this will diminish the number of students applying to the school and if anything, it will increase the number of millions of applicants each year. As for faculty, currently only two professors are employed full time in the nursing department but the goal is to eventually have a nursing department staff of at least eight full time professors.

“Longwood University is committed to providing our students with the best faculty, equipment and learning atmosphere possible. The installation of our Clinical Simulation Learning Center is on schedule, and our staff is excited to expand and grow along with the program.” Johnston said. More information concerning the new BSN program at Longwood can be found at www.longwood.edu/nursing.