

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

LEARNING x DOING

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE US BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS projects 46% growth in demand for nurses with advanced degrees between 2021 and 2031. Nursing also tops the Bureau of Labor Statistics' list of the Fastest Growing Occupations. While demand for nurses is growing, the existing pool of nurses is shrinking. The median age of a Registered Nurse (RN) is 52 years, with more than one in five RNs intending to retire within 5 years. The San Luis Valley is no exception and is suffering from a nursing shortage. Shortages are amplified by the lack of master's qualified nursing faculty to teach in the undergraduate nursing program. Establishing a graduate nursing program would both help create a nursing faculty pipeline for Adams and help upskill the San Luis Valley workforce. In an attempt to meet this market need and in an attempt to address those local challenges, this document puts forward a proposal for the Masters of Science in Nursing graduate program.

2 INTRODUCTION

The authors propose expanding the current portfolio of graduate programs by introducing a professional nursing program at the master's level. The proposed program, the Masters of Science in Nursing (MSN), would offer early career nurses an opportunity to advance their education in nursing through online coursework and practical experience. Enrolled students would enjoy the flexibility of completing coursework online, helping them balance their education, work, and personal responsibilities. The coursework would equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to advance their nursing careers and progress within their employer's ranks. At the core of this proposal is a commitment to society and the San Luis Valley (SLV) community by addressing the critical need for nurses who hold advanced degrees and preparing students to meet the evolving needs of the healthcare industry. The proposed program structure, duration, and offered specializations are summarized in the following five bullet points.

- *Program Tracks.* Students will be able to choose between two tracks: Nursing Leadership Systems or Nurse Educator. The Nursing Leadership Systems track focuses on developing leadership skills and knowledge in nursing administration and management, preparing students for roles such as nurse manager, nursing director, or chief nursing officer. The Nurse Educator track focuses on developing teaching skills, preparing students for roles such as nurse educator, faculty member, or academic program coordinator.
- *Program Structure.* Classes will be delivered on a mini-mester system. Each mini-mester lasts eight weeks, with seven weeks of coursework and one week of exams, plus an inter-semester break. There are six mini-mesters each academic year: Fall 1 & 2, Spring 1 & 2, and Summer 1 & 2. Each class is worth three credit hours, and students can take up to two classes simultaneously. Initially, the program will admit students every long semester (every two mini-mesters, or 16 weeks), with the ultimate goal of admitting students on a rolling basis every mini-mester, every eight weeks.
- *Program Duration.* Depending on the selected specialization, the program can be completed in 30 credits (Nursing Leadership) or 33 credits (Nurse Educator). Students can finish the program in one year by taking two courses each mini-mester or in two years by taking one class per mini-mester. The program will offer flexible options to accommodate students who fall out of sync with their cohort.

- *Program Focus.* The program will focus on two elements: cultural competence and practical application of knowledge. Each course will include a significant “learning-by-doing” component. The program will culminate with a series of capstone courses, where students will have the opportunity to apply the knowledge developed during the program in real-world situations. Capstone courses help integrate knowledge gained throughout the curriculum and advance the skills needed to succeed in nursing careers. The development of cultural competence and diversity will be woven into each of the courses offered.

PROGRAM FEATURES. Based on market research and the study of successful nursing programs offered by other institutions, Adams’ Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program is built on the following core characteristics:

- *100% Online.* Students complete all their coursework online with a capstone project in their own community.
- *Quick semesters.* Courses are offered in short 7-week bursts, allowing students to focus on one or maximum two courses at a time. The seven-week course schedule is followed by one week of combined finals and inter-semester break.
- *Choice of two tracks.* Students can choose between the Nursing Leadership Systems or Nurse Educator tracks, allowing them to specialize in their area of interest.
- *Practical experiences.* Students will have the opportunity to gain practical experience through capstone courses and hands-on learning components.
- *Experienced faculty.* The program is taught by industry experts, seasoned practitioners, and experienced nursing faculty.

PROGRAM BENEFITS. The program is designed to offer the following core benefits to students and graduates:

- *Advanced knowledge and skills.* The MSN program provides students with an advanced education in nursing, preparing them for specialized or leadership roles in the healthcare industry or in education.
- *Increased earning potential.* By earning a Master of Science in Nursing degree, students can increase their earning potential by up to 100%.
- *Accelerated Career Path.* Nurses with advanced degrees are more likely to move up faster in the ranks of their employers.
- *Flexibility.* The largely asynchronous, online coursework allows students to complete the program on their own schedule, providing them with the flexibility to balance their education with other responsibilities. The program curriculum offers flexible paths that accommodate various entry and exit points.

WHAT SETS THIS PROGRAM APART FROM THE COMPETITION?

- *Focus on diversity and rural populations.* In addition to providing a solid general foundation in nursing, the program offers a focus on serving diverse populations and rural communities.
- *Flexibility.* The MSN program is offered completely online, providing students with the flexibility to complete their coursework on their own schedule. This allows students to balance their education with work and personal responsibilities.

- *Short semesters.* The program will offer six 2-month mini-semesters and, starting from the second year of operation, will admit students every 8 weeks.
- *Accelerated option.* The program offers the option of earning a degree in as little as one year while also providing flexible pathways to finish the program in two years or less with lighter course loads.
- *Cost.* The tuition is priced below that of our nearest competition, including CSU-Pueblo. For a detailed analysis of the tuition market, see Table 3 on page 29.
- *Learning by Doing Component.* The program includes a significant practical component in which students learn by completing applied tasks, projects and assignments.

WHAT ARE THE NEEDS MET BY THE PROGRAM THAT MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS?

- *Career advancement.* Many nurses with a bachelor's degree seek to advance their career by obtaining a master's degree. The MSN program provides the education and training necessary to assume leadership roles within the healthcare industry.
- *Specialized knowledge.* The program offers two specialized tracks, Nursing Leadership Systems and Nurse Educator, providing students with the opportunity to gain specialized knowledge in their area of interest.
- *Increased earning potential.* Holding an advanced nursing degree can lead to higher salaries and increased earning potential. The MSN program can provide a pathway to higher paying positions.
- *Flexibility.* The program is offered entirely online, allowing students to complete their coursework on their own schedule and balance their education with work and personal responsibilities.
- *Affordability.* The program is priced below that of our competitors, making it a cost-effective option. As a program that prioritizes serving rural and diverse populations, our students may expect to work in locations where salaries may not be high. Therefore, our tuition structure is adjusted to reflect this, providing quality education and potential career advancement at a reasonable cost.

COMMUNITY NEEDS ADDRESSED BY THE PROGRAM. The MSN program addresses the following needs:

- *Meeting the growing demand for nurses with advanced degrees.* The US Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 46% increase in demand for nurses with advanced degrees between 2021 and 2031. As the nursing field continues to evolve, nurses with advanced degrees will be needed to fill specialized roles and leadership positions.
- *Addressing shortages of nursing faculty.* Without a graduate program in nursing, the shortage of master's qualified nursing faculty in undergraduate programs will persist. By offering an MSN program, Adams can develop a cadre of future nursing faculty, helping to address its own faculty shortages, as well as shortages at partner institutions (e.g., Trinidad State College) that often feed students into Adams.
- *Preparing nurses for leadership roles.* As healthcare becomes more complex, nurses with advanced degrees are needed to take on leadership roles in healthcare organizations. An MSN program prepares nurses for these roles by providing advanced training in healthcare administration, healthcare policy, and healthcare leadership.
- *Addressing healthcare disparities.* Rural communities often experience shortages of healthcare providers, including nurses. By developing a cadre of qualified nurses from rural areas, for rural areas, and in rural areas, the MSN program can help address healthcare disparities and improve access to healthcare for underserved

communities.

- *Addressing the shortage of culturally immersed nurses.* Understanding the cultural context of the served population translates into better quality of care and better health outcomes. However, communities in the most dire need of nurses are often not the ones that “produce” future nurses. By educating students from these communities, you capitalize on their existing knowledge of the cultural context and enable them to return to serve their communities where they better understand the holistic context of their patients and where the community trusts them.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- *Become a scientist-practitioner.* Apply advanced knowledge of nursing theory, research, and practice to improve patient outcomes and healthcare delivery systems.
- *Apply critical thinking and decision-making skills.* Use critical thinking and decision-making skills in the provision of culturally responsive, safe, and effective nursing care.
- *Master evidence-based practice.* Locate evidence from interdisciplinary bodies of knowledge and translate it into practical interventions promoting health and preventing disease throughout the lifespan.
- *Advance transferable skills.* Utilize leadership, collaboration, and communication skills to work effectively within diverse and/or interdisciplinary teams and promote positive patient outcomes.
- *Become familiar with modern nursing technology and informatics.* Identify and analyze technologies that can optimize patient care, improve cost-effectiveness, and facilitate better health outcomes.
- *Advance cultural competence.* Demonstrate cultural competence and sensitivity in providing care to diverse patient populations.
- *Develop a health equity perspective.* Develop an understanding of social justice and health equity for underserved populations and promote population health.

3 MISSION AND VISION

VISION STATEMENT. Our vision is to be recognized as a leader in nursing education, producing skilled and compassionate nurses that positively impact the health and well-being of individuals and communities, with a particular focus on serving diverse and rural patient populations.

MISSION STATEMENT. Our mission is to provide an innovative, challenging, and student-centered learning experience that prepares nurses for advanced practice and leadership roles. Through our *Learning by Doing* approach, we focus on applying acquired knowledge to solve real-world problems, helping to improve patient care and promote health equity in underserved communities.

PURPOSE. The purpose of the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) graduate program is to provide registered nurses (RNs) with advanced knowledge and specialized skills in nursing practice, education, research, and leadership. The program prepares graduates to assume advanced nursing roles in a variety of settings, including hospitals,

clinics, community health centers, long-term care facilities, schools, and other healthcare organizations. The program provides a rigorous curriculum that builds upon the foundational knowledge and skills obtained in a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program and prepares graduates to assume leadership roles in education and healthcare delivery.

UNIQUE APPROACH TO NURSING EDUCATION GUIDED BY DATA AND FORESIGHT. Our approach to nursing education focuses on promoting diversity and inclusion among nursing leaders in the service of better patient care. With the United States becoming increasingly diverse, there is a need for a cadre of culturally competent nurses. Nurses from diverse populations are equipped with contextual knowledge that is often unknown or unrecognized by those outside their communities. They are uniquely equipped to provide care, taking into account this cultural knowledge. This results in better quality of care, better health outcomes, and higher patient satisfaction.

We weave diversity into every step of our program, beginning with recruiting and retaining cohorts of diverse nurses and fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Our training aims to advance cultural competency, helping to develop transferable skills that prepare our graduates to excel in increasingly diverse teams. Healthcare is already among the most diverse sectors and this trend is projected to intensify further. Preparing students to work, lead, and flourish in increasingly diverse workplaces gives them an edge over students in more traditional programs.

The focus on seeking diverse students, broadening the cultural competency they bring to the program, and using the process of learning in diverse groups to develop diverse teamwork skills makes us unique.

GUIDING VALUES:

- *Compassion and empathy.* Nursing is a caring profession, and we value compassion and empathy in patient care.
- *Cultural competence.* We value cultural competence and the ability to provide care that respects the cultural beliefs, values, and practices of our patients.
- *Professionalism.* Our program emphasizes professionalism and ethical behavior in all aspects of nursing practice.
- *Patient-centered care.* The program emphasizes the importance of patient-centered care and the need to focus on the individual needs and preferences of each patient.
- *Evidence-based practice.* The MSN program values the use of evidence-based practice and encourages nurses to use the latest research to inform their practice.
- *Lifelong learning.* The MSN program values ongoing education and encourages nurses to continue learning throughout their careers.
- *Interdisciplinary collaboration.* Collaboration with other healthcare professionals, such as physicians, pharmacists, and social workers, is essential to providing the best possible patient care.

SUMMARY: MAKING A DIFFERENCE IS MAKING US DIFFERENT. By focusing on evidence-based practice, serving diverse populations, and leadership development, the MSN program empowers graduates to have a positive impact on patient outcomes in their communities. Our program educates nurses who are skilled in modern technologies and fluent in best practices, helping improve quality of care. Our ultimate goal is to produce a cadre of culturally aware leaders who can transform healthcare and advance the nursing profession.

4 SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS helps capitalize on strengths in what we do best while helping minimize or mitigate our weaknesses. It provides a survey of internal (strengths, weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities, threats) and helps guide us towards managing risk and optimizing outcomes. The following sections describe our strengths, key challenges (weaknesses), and our opportunities and threats.

STRENGTHS

- Relatively low cost of delivering the program.
- Market niche for rural health and serving diverse populations.
- Germane to the institutional mission.
- Low competition within the San Luis Valley.
- Home turf advantage for recruitment.
- Access to a reasonably sized health system.
- Well-developed Academic Instruction Technology Center.
- The program is expected to be both a high enrollment and high-yield.
- HSI expertise. Demographic changes and the growing Hispanic / Latinx population.

WEAKNESSES

- Low unit efficiency at the institutional level (outside of the School of Nursing).
- Very low accountability at all levels of the institution.
- Rural location away from large centers of population.
- Low staffing, difficult and lengthy hiring/approval process.
- Very limited marketing and graphic design support.
- Inadequate IT support hampers automation attempts.
- Significant resistance to adopting new IT solutions.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Aging United States population requiring more medical care.
- Nursing staff shortages nationwide.

- Amplified rural nursing shortages.
- The projected largest growth in nursing jobs in western and mountain states.
- Need for nurses with advanced degrees to educate the cadre of future nurses.
- Relatively high return on investment for nurses seeking advanced degrees.
- Need for the upskilling of current nursing faculty and resulting growth in undergraduate nursing enrollments.

THREATS

- Competition from for-profit colleges.
- Competition from Colorado State University–Pueblo (CSU-Pueblo).
- Low density of population in the immediate service area.
- Risk of saturating the local applicant market.
- Need for recruitment outside of the immediate service area and the geographic stronghold.

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES for the MSN program can include:

- *Academic risks.* Seek accreditation from recognized accrediting bodies such as the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) or the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) to ensure quality education and enhance the reputation of the program.
- *Enrollment risks.* Balancing enrollment risks can be achieved by diversifying recruitment markets, recruitment channels, and segments of the population.
- *Faculty recruitment and retention.* Attract and retain highly qualified faculty to ensure quality education and maintain program's standards. Diversify sources of recruitment; for example, recruit from a variety of health systems, both from the San Luis Valley and from online clinical faculty.
- *Student retention.* Implement strategies to retain students, such as providing academic and emotional support and creating a positive learning environment. Provide individualized attention from instructors to students. Leverage data to identify at-risk students, for example, using Blackboard login and session statistics as a marker of student academic engagement.
- *Financial stability.* Ensure that the program is financially stable by developing a sound business plan, monitoring expenses, and diversifying revenue streams. For example, establish partnerships with health systems and develop memorandums of understanding and employer-funded educational incentives.
- *Risk assessment and mitigation.* Conduct periodic risk assessments to identify potential risks and implement strategies to mitigate them. For example, perform an annual SWOT analysis.
- *Data security and privacy.* Ensure that student and faculty data are secure and comply with privacy regulations such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), for example, by mandating completion of relevant Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program training modules.

5 MARKET ANALYSIS

LABOR MARKET. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 46% growth in demand for nurses with advanced degrees between 2021 and 2031 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022a). Nursing leads the Bureau of Labor Statistics list of the Fastest Growing Occupations (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022a) and LinkedIn's most in-demand jobs for the first quarter of 2023 (Lewis & Mohapatra, 2023). The fastest growth is projected for the West and Mountain regions (Haddad et al., 2023).

With an abundance of open positions, nursing offers high salaries that facilitate upward mobility for students. In 2021 median pay of a nurse with an advanced degree was \$120,680 per year (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022b), almost double the salary of a nurse with a bachelor's degree U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022c. The summary of nursing career paths and opportunities provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics summarizes it as "*The more they learn, the more they earn*" (Chi, 2018, pg. 2).

However, the existing supply of nurses is projected to shrink as demand continues to grow. According to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing and the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers, in 2020, the median age of Registered Nurses (RNs) was 52 years, and more than one in five nurses intended to retire within 5 years (Smiley et al., 2021). The pandemic only accelerated this trend. According to the 2022 National Nursing Workforce Survey, the median age of RNs dropped to 46 due to the loss of over 200,000 nurses from the workforce (Smiley et al., 2023).

Nurse shortages are more pronounced in rural communities, which often cannot match the salaries offered in metropolitan areas or provide the same amenities as cities. To address this issue, developing a cadre of qualified nurses from rural areas, in rural areas, and for rural areas is critical. Adams is in a perfect position to fill this market niche while pursuing its mission of serving communities in the San Luis Valley. Without a graduate program in nursing, the university faces a shortage of master's-qualified nursing faculty in its undergraduate program. Without the graduate program, the university cannot grow its undergraduate program or upskill the current workforce in the San Luis Valley.

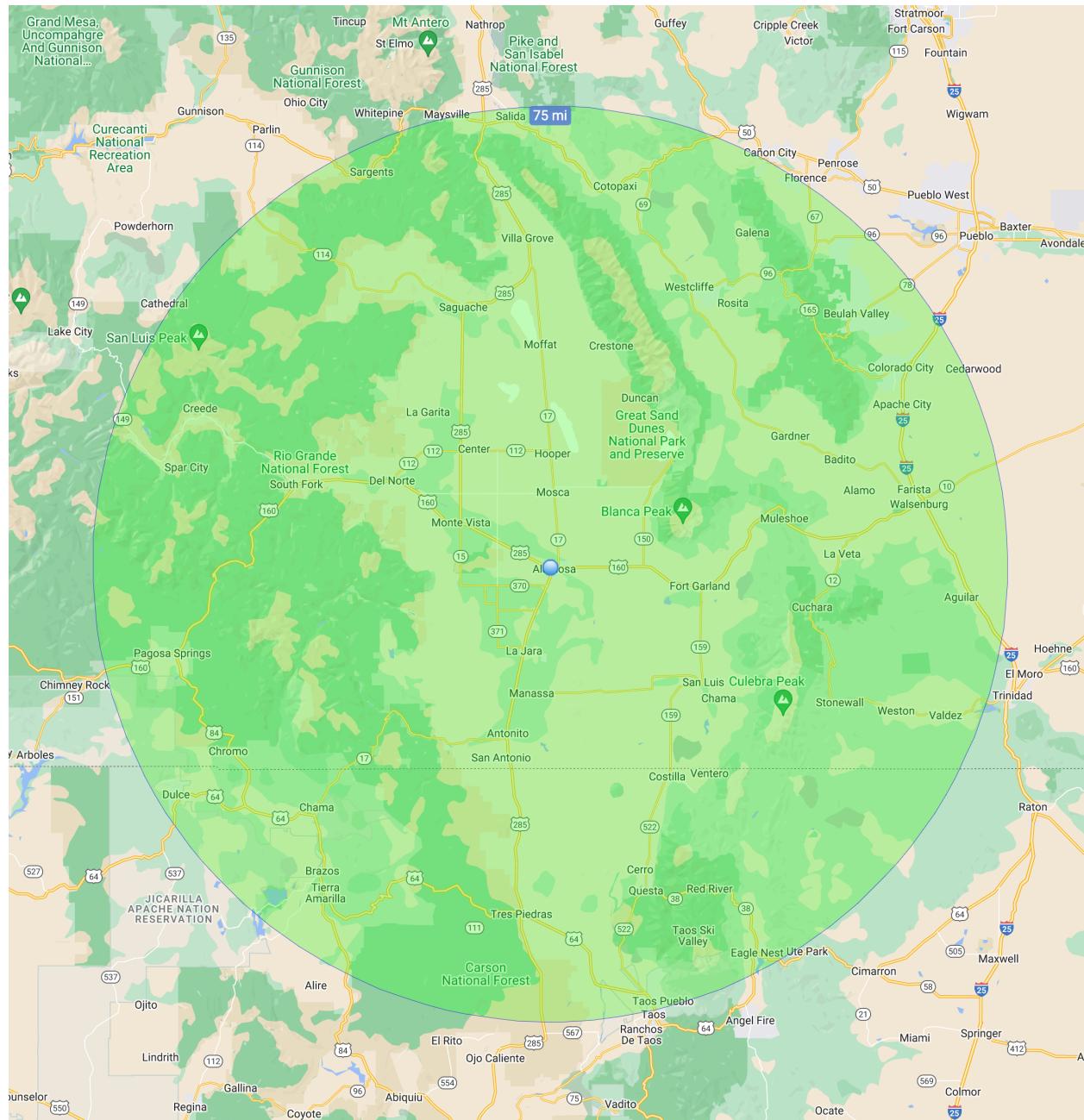
For a more in-depth analysis of nursing labor shortages, refer to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's (2021b) Nursing Shortage Fact Sheet and the International Council of Nurses' (2021) Policy Brief. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing's (2023) Database provides a comprehensive snapshot of the state of the nursing profession, and the Survey of Registered Nurses offers detailed demographic analysis of the nursing profession (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, National Center for Health Workforce Analysis, 2019).

TARGET GEOGRAPHIC MARKET Data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) suggest that 69% of Colorado residents who go to college choose a school in their home state (U.S. Department of Education, 2022, Table 309.30). American Council on Education estimates that in the public university segment, the average distance between the student's home and the campus is 82 miles (Hillman & Weichman, 2016, pg. 3). Although these statistics pertain to undergraduate student populations, they provide window into potential geographic reach.

Because consumers show a significant home bias, even online-only programs have markets limited by geography. Adams' location in the remote part of the state, the geographic barriers that separate it from large centers of population, and distance from a large airport largely limit the geographic market to relative regional proximity.

PRIMARY MARKET. The authors identify the primary target market for the MSN program as a 75-mile radius from campus including the San Luis Valley, Salida, Creede, Pagosa Springs, La Veta, Walsenburg, and area traditionally defined as Northern New Mexico.

Figure 1: Primary market representing the 75-mile radius from campus



PRIMARY MARKET:

- Colorado
 - San Luis Valley
 - Salida
 - Pagosa Springs
 - Walsenburg
 - Creede
 - La Veta
- New Mexico
 - Taos*
 - Costilla
 - Questa
 - Red River
 - Eagle Nest
 - Tres Piedras
 - Chama

SECONDARY MARKET. The authors identify the secondary geographic market for the MSN program as a 50-mile belt outside of the primary geographic market. This is the areas between 76 and 125 miles from campus. It includes Trinidad, Pueblo, Colorado Springs, and Cañon City to the east. Durango, Lake City, and the Ouray-Telluride-Silverton cluster to the west. In the State of New Mexico that area is bound by Des Moines to the east, Santa Fe to the south, and Aztec to the west.

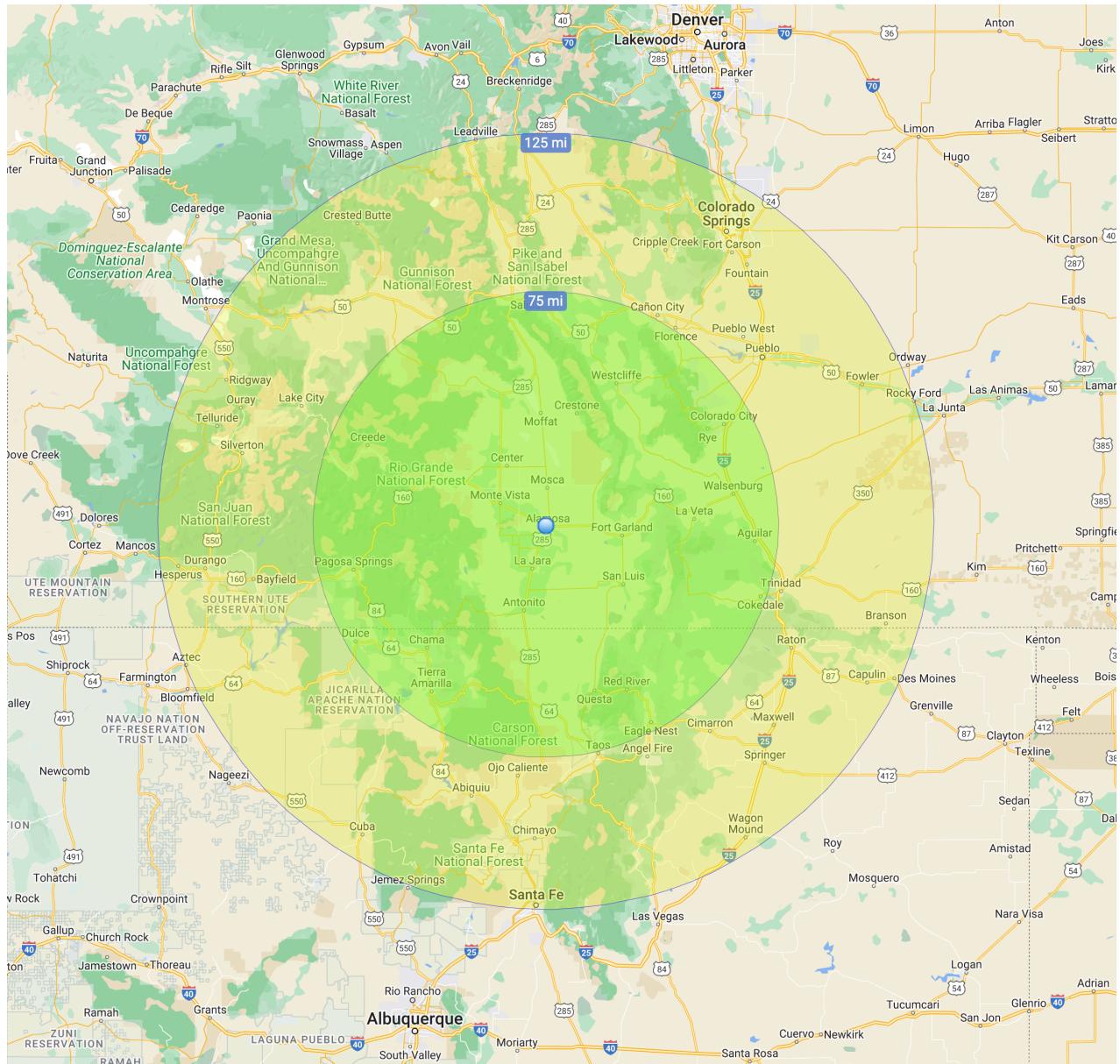
SECONDARY MARKET:

- Colorado
 - Trinidad
 - Pueblo
 - Durango
 - Colorado Springs
 - Cañon City-Florence**
 - Leadville
 - Ouray-Telluride-Silverton
 - Crested Butte
 - Southern Colorado
- New Mexico
 - Santa Fe
 - Raton
 - Wagon Mound
 - Springer
 - Angel Fire
 - Ojo Caliente
 - Española
 - Chimayo
 - Northern New Mexico

* There are both cultural and spatial relationships between Taos and the San Luis Valley (Montgomery, 2002; Sanchez, 2020) and we include it as part of the primary market.

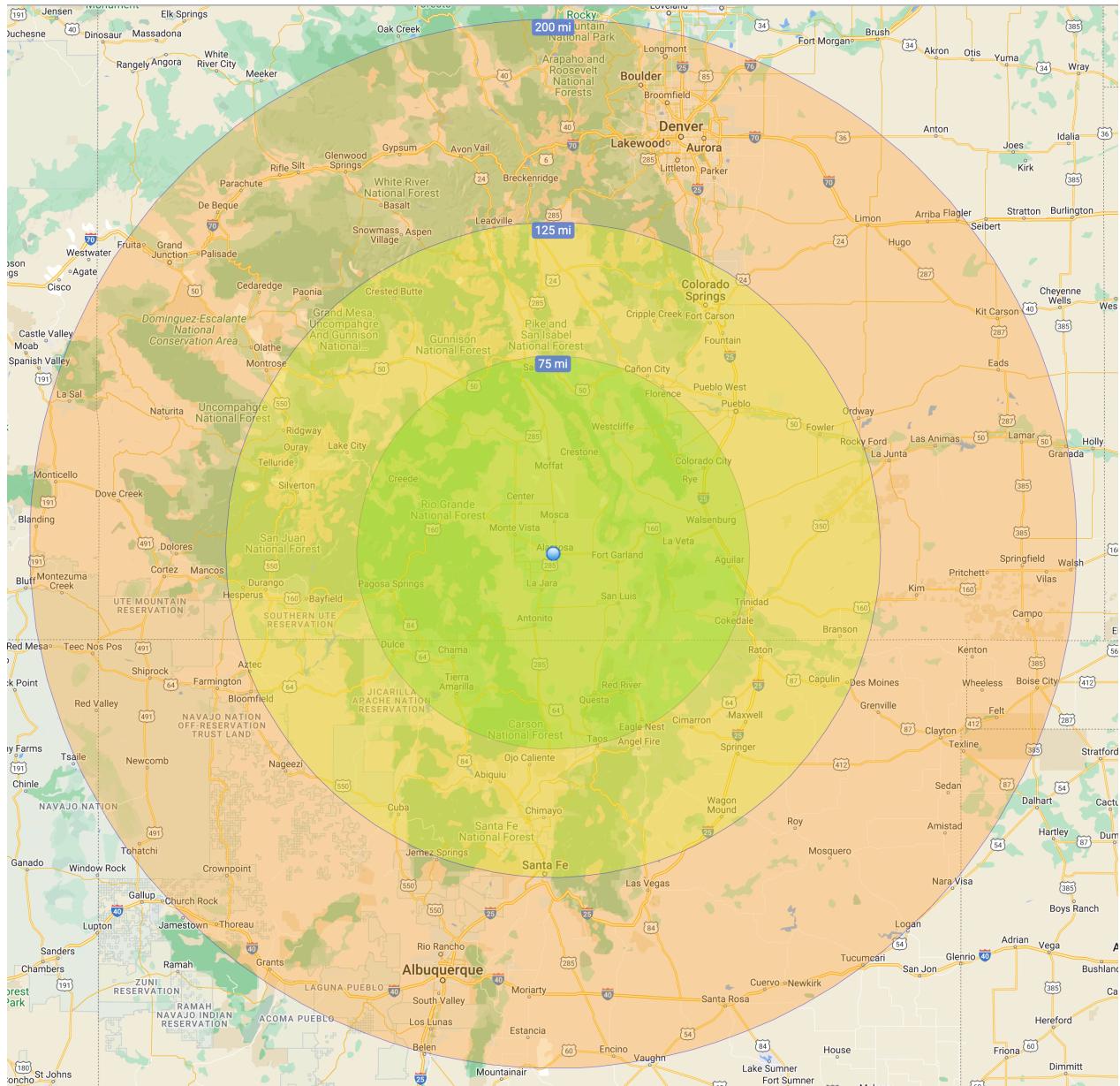
** Cañon City tends to be associated with Pueblo more than with the San Luis Valley. It is part of the Pueblo-Cañon City, CO Combined Statistical Area and therefore we include it in the secondary market where Pueblo is classified. However, in reality this is a flip of the coin classification based on intuition rather than a firm, data-driven decision.

Figure 2: Secondary market representing the 76 to 125-mile radius from campus



TERTIARY MARKET. The authors identify the tertiary geographic market for the MSN program as the area between 126 and 200 miles from campus. It includes major centers of population in the Denver–Aurora–Lakewood, CO Metropolitan Statistical Area and the Boulder, CO Metropolitan Statistical Area, the I-70 corridor between Denver and Grand Junction, as well as western portion of the state including Four Corners, and eastern portion bound by Flagler, Kit Carson, Lamar, Granada, Walsh, and Campo. In the State of New Mexico that area includes Albuquerque, Shiprock, Farmington, and is bound to the south by the I-40 corridor between Tucumcari and Gallup. Area includes sparsely populated corner of the Texas Panhandle stretching from Texline to almost Dalhart.

Figure 3: Tertiary market representing the 126 to 200-mile radius from campus



TERTIARY MARKET:

- Colorado
 - Denver Metro
 - I-70 corridor Flagler-Grand Junction
 - Aspen-Snowmass-Basalt, Breckenridge
 - Lamar
 - Cortez, Montrose
- New Mexico
 - Albuquerque
 - I-40 corridor Tucumcari-Gallup
 - Farmington, Shiprock
 - Las Vegas
 - Clayton

TARGET POPULATION. The target audience for the MSN program are nurses who hold a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree and are licensed Registered Nurses (RNs). Specifically, the program may appeal to RNs who aspire to leadership roles in healthcare organizations, as well as those who wish to pursue careers in nursing education. The program may also appeal to nurses who seek to specialize in a particular area of nursing practice, such as rural nursing or nursing in diverse populations.

IDENTIFIED NEEDS AND PREFERENCES OF THE TARGET AUDIENCE. The needs and preferences of the target customers for the MSN program include:

- *Advancement opportunities.* Nurses who pursue a MSN typically do so with the goal of advancing their career and assuming leadership roles in healthcare organizations. They may be seeking greater responsibility, higher salaries, and opportunities for professional growth.
- *Flexibility.* Many nurses who pursue a MSN are already employed in the healthcare industry and may have demanding work schedules. As a result, they may prefer a program that offers flexible scheduling options and the ability to complete coursework online.
- *Specialization.* Some nurses may have a particular area of interest or expertise and may be seeking a program that offers opportunities to specialize in a particular area of nursing practice, such as nursing leadership or education.
- *Cost-effectiveness.* While many nurses recognize the long-term benefits of obtaining a MSN degree, they may also be concerned about the cost of the program. As a result, they may prefer a program that is cost effective and offers opportunities for financial assistance, such as scholarships or grants.

COMPETITORS. The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program will face competition from other nursing schools or universities that offer similar programs in the same region or online. Some of the major competitors will include:

- *Regional universities.* Other public and private universities in the extended service area that offer MSN programs with similar areas of specialization. By virtue of distance, the chief competitor will be CSU-Pueblo. Competitors also include: Regis University, Colorado Mesa University, University of Northern Colorado, University of New Mexico, CU-Anschutz.
- *Online programs.* Online nursing schools or universities that offer flexible learning options and remote courses. Competitors include: Regis, Colorado Mesa University, Colorado Christina University.
- *For-profit colleges.* For-profit institutions that offer MSN programs including: American Sentinel, Aspen University, American College of Education, Grand Canyon University, Colorado Technical University, Western Governors University, Walden University, Southern New Hampshire University.
- *Universities nationwide.* Major universities across the United States that offer MSN programs, which can attract students looking for a wider range of programs or specialized areas of study.

Answer to challenges posed by the competition: The program will differentiate itself from the competition by focusing on its unique value propositions such as serving diverse or rural populations, developing leadership skills, affordability and a significant *learning by doing* component.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE COMPETITION.

- *Regional universities.* Other universities that offer similar MSN programs have established reputations and extensive alumni networks, which can attract potential students. However, they also have higher tuition fees and often offer less flexibility in terms of program structure. Their alumni networks may also not be concentrated in Colorado, and certainly not in the San Luis Valley.
- *Online programs.* Many online nursing programs offer flexible learning options that can attract students who require flexibility in their learning environment. Many if not all of those programs have markedly higher tuition than Adams.
- *For-profit colleges.* For-profit institutions that offer MSN programs may appeal to students who want an accelerated degree completion timeline and seek an easy degree rather than in-depth training. These programs have higher tuition fees and often enforce less rigorous academic standards. Those programs also do not provide the diversity/rural service emphasis.
- *Universities nationwide.* National and international universities that offer MSN programs may have a wider range of program offerings and specialized areas of study, but are geographically distant, lack a local alumni network, and lack partnerships with local healthcare organizations. Although it may seem counter-intuitive, every university brand has a geographical boundary beyond which it becomes less effective.

TRENDS AND CHALLENGES IN GRADUATE NURSING EDUCATION.

Current trends and challenges in graduate nursing education include:

- *Increasing demand.* With an aging population and a growing need for healthcare services, the demand for nurses with advanced degrees is increasing. This trend is expected to continue in the coming years.
- *Shifting healthcare landscape.* The healthcare industry is undergoing significant changes, with a greater focus on patient-centered care, population health, and technology. Nursing graduate programs must adapt to these changes by incorporating new technologies and teaching new skills.
- *Diversity and inclusion.* Nursing graduate programs must address diversity and inclusion to better reflect the communities they serve and prepare nurses to work with diverse patient populations.
- *Faculty shortages.* Nursing graduate programs may struggle to find qualified faculty members, which can impact the quality of education they provide. This may be due to retirement of current faculty members, difficulty in attracting new faculty, or competition for qualified candidates.
- *Financial constraints.* Nursing graduate programs may face financial constraints, including reduced government funding for education and increased competition for limited resources. This can impact the ability to attract and retain students and faculty.
- *Competing demands on students.* Nursing graduate students may have competing demands, such as family responsibilities, work obligations, and financial constraints, which can affect their ability to complete their degree.

6 MARKETING PLAN

RECRUITMENT CHANNELS. The MSN program will use the following channels to reach prospective students:

- *Social media.* We will use social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram to promote the program and engage with potential students.
- *Search engine marketing.* We will utilize search engine marketing strategies such as Google AdWords to target people looking for nursing graduate programs.
- *Email marketing.* We will send email campaigns to individuals who have expressed interest in the program or have previously applied.
- *Recruitment events.* We will attend nursing conferences and career fairs to meet potential students and provide information about the program.
- *Referral program.* We will encourage current students and alumni to refer prospective students to the program by offering custom application fee waivers and Adams-branded promotional items.
- *Direct mail.* We will send brochures and other promotional materials to individuals in our database or on purchased mailing lists.
- *Website.* We will ensure that our website is optimized for search engines and provides clear and comprehensive information about the program, including program details, curriculum, admission requirements, and student testimonials.
- *Chatbot.* Virtual assistant, a conversational chatbot, will help answer questions from prospective students.

MESSAGING THEMES. Our marketing will focus on the following messaging themes:

- *Increased Earning Potential.* The MSN program can open new opportunities for nurses to advance their careers and earn higher salaries. By obtaining an advanced nursing degree, students can gain the skills and knowledge necessary to rise the ranks of their employers and increase their earning potential.
- *Flexibility and Convenience.* Our MSN program is designed with working nurses in mind. Classes are offered every 8 weeks, and students take two classes at a time with 3 credit hours each. This allows students to continue working while completing their degree.
- *Learning x Doing.* Our program is designed to provide a variety of engaging learning opportunities, including a significant learning-by-doing component. Students apply theoretical knowledge to real-life situations or learn the theoretical foundations by solving real-world problems.
- *Community-Focused.* Our program is dedicated to serving the needs of rural communities in the San Luis Valley. By developing a cadre of qualified nurses from rural areas, in rural areas, and for rural areas, we address a critical need and make a difference in the lives of those we serve.
- *Scholarship Opportunities.* We offer various scholarship opportunities for students in need of financial assistance. This makes our program more accessible and affordable to a wider range of students.
- *Career Support.* Our program offers career support services to help students succeed after graduation. This includes job placement assistance, networking opportunities, and professional development resources.

MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT METRICS. To measure marketing performance and the success of recruitment efforts, the MSN program will track the following key performance indicators (KPIs):

- *Number of inquiries.* Track the number of inquiries received through different channels, such as the program website, email, phone calls, or events.
- *Conversion rate.* Track the conversion rate at each level of the enrollment funnel starting with inquiries to applications, application to completed applications, completed applications to admitted students, admitted students to enrolled students, and enrolled students to retained students. This will help assess the effectiveness of the recruitment and admission processes and identify any bottlenecks.
- *Application completion rate.* Track the percentage of completed applications received compared to the total number of inquiries. This will help identify any issues with the application process and optimize it for better conversion rates.
- *Cost per lead and cost per enrollment.* Track the cost per lead and the cost per enrollment from different marketing channels, such as social media, search engine ads, or events. This will help optimize the marketing budget and allocate resources more effectively.

By tracking these KPIs, the MSN program can evaluate the performance of its marketing efforts at each stage of the enrollment funnel as proposed in Table 2 on page 19.

CLICK-THROUGH RATES. The average click-through rate (CTR) of online ads varies depending on the platform, the geographical market, and the format of the ad. General estimates for marketing campaigns are 0.05% for display ads, 1.90% for search ads in the top ad spots, and 0.35% for the second and third ad spots. Social media ads have a CTR of 0.90%. The average CTR assumed in this proposal is 1%.

7 STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT PLAN

KEY GOAL

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE MSN PROGRAM

| | Year 1 FY2024 | Year 2 FY2025 | Year 3 FY2026 | Year 4 FY2027 | Year 5 FY2028 | Year 6 FY2029 | Year 7 FY2030 |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| New Fall | 14 | 18 | 22 | 27 | 34 | 36 | 38 |
| Continuing Fall | | 9 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 4 |
| TOTAL FALL | 14 | 26 | 30 | 35 | 41 | 43 | 42 |
| New Spring | 7 | 9 | 11 | 14 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| Continuing Spring | 13 | 19 | 21 | 24 | 28 | 27 | 25 |
| TOTAL SPRING | 20 | 28 | 32 | 37 | 45 | 45 | 44 |
| New Summer | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 8 |
| Continuing Summer | 19 | 20 | 22 | 26 | 31 | 28 | 26 |
| TOTAL SUMMER | 21 | 24 | 27 | 31 | 37 | 35 | 34 |
| Total Tuition Revenue | \$320,989 | \$447,334 | \$510,005 | \$597,962 | \$715,645 | \$714,791 | \$690,273 |

Table 1: *Enrollment goals and revenue projections @ \$482.50/credit*

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

SCHOOL OF NURSING, OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES, OFFICE OF GRADUATE ADMISSIONS, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS & MARKETING, SAN LUIS VALLEY HEALTH, VALLEY-WIDE HEALTH, SLV COMMUNITY PARTNERS.

LEAD

SCHOOL OF NURSING

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Table 2: Enrollment Funnel Goal Table, KPI metrics, conversion rates, and fall-to-fall retention

| Fall of | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|-----------------------------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Ads+Mailouts+Calls+Flyers+Posters | 87500 | 109375 | 136719 | 170898 | 213623 | 225000 | 237500 |
| Click/conversion % | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Inquiries received | 875 | 1094 | 1367 | 1709 | 2136 | 2250 | 2375 |
| Conversion % | 5% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 5% |
| Submitted applications | 44 | 55 | 68 | 85 | 107 | 113 | 119 |
| Conversion % | 50% | 50% | 50% | 50% | 50% | 50% | 50% |
| Completed applications | 22 | 27 | 34 | 43 | 53 | 56 | 59 |
| Conversion % | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% |
| Admitted students | 18 | 22 | 27 | 34 | 43 | 45 | 48 |
| Conversion % | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% |
| Enrolled students | 14 | 18 | 22 | 27 | 34 | 36 | 38 |
| Retention % | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% |
| Retained students | 11 | 14 | 18 | 22 | 27 | 29 | 30 |

MODEL ASSUMPTIONS

PROGRAM ENROLLMENT MODEL is developed based on the following set of assumptions:

- *Base enrollment of 14.* Base enrollment number is set to 14 for the first semester of operation, yielding two small program cohorts of 7 students in each track. This small initial number would allow us to test the program on a pilot group of students and resolve any unexpected difficulties while affecting only a limited group of students.
- *Annual base enrollment growth of 25%.* Base enrollment number is set to grow by 25% from previous year for the first 5 years. While the initial enrollment is set to 14 in year one it would grow to 18 in year two, 22 in year three, and so forth.
- *New Spring enrollment at 50% of the initial base enrollment for the year.* Since Fall cohorts traditionally are the largest model assumes that Spring cohort will be half the size of the Fall cohort.
- *New Summer enrollment at 20% of the initial base enrollment for the year.* Summers are when people have fun, rest, and enjoy the perfect Colorado weather. It is not the time when they think of doing schoolwork. The model assumes that Summer intake will be a fifth of the Fall cohort.
- *Semester-to-semester retention rate of 93% annualizing to 80% year-to-year.* Model assumes that semester to semester we will retain roughly 9 of every 10 students. Compounding over the entire year this will mean we would have annual retention rate of 80% or eight out of every ten students. Such retention rates are not unusual for closely knit graduate programs.

- *One year to complete.* Students are assumed to choose the 1-year track. This will likely end up being a mixed bag with some students advancing towards the degree faster than others.

STRATEGIES

Core strategies focus on improving dissemination of information about the program through a mix of digital marketing, old-fashioned outreach, recruitment, traditional print flyers/posters, as well as growing financial assistance available for nursing students and engaging the Adams' alumni network.

DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES

DIGITAL STRATEGY 1: Increase the number of online ad/adword impressions prioritizing coverage in the primary market

| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Goal | 20,000 | 25,000 | 30,000 | 35,000 | 40,000 | 45,000 | 50,000 |
| Actual | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: School of Nursing, Department of Public Relations & Marketing

LEAD: Department of Public Relations & Marketing

ACTIONS:

- Identify most effective digital advertisement channels and platforms
- Retain services of an experienced digital ad agency
- Purchase Google/Bing ad placements
- Explore purchasing narrowly targeted streaming ads

DIGITAL STRATEGY 2: Increase the number of promoted Facebook/Instagram/LinkedIn social media post/ads prioritizing coverage in the primary market

| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Goal | 50 | 65 | 80 | 100 | 125 | 125 | 125 |
| Actual | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: School of Nursing, Department of Public Relations & Marketing

LEAD: Department of Public Relations & Marketing

ACTIONS:

- Identify most effective social media platforms
- Retain services of an experienced digital ad agency

- Identify and geofence major health facilities in the extended San Luis Valley (SLVx), from Salida to Lake City
- Purchase Facebook ads and serve them prioritizing our primary geographic market
- Purchase Instagram ads and serve them prioritizing our primary geographic market
- Increase the number of MSN-related Instagram posts
- Increase the number of MSN-related Facebook posts
- Increase the number of MSN-related LinkedIn posts
- Consider purchasing LinkedIn ads

Appendix 5 on page 31 provides list of sample social messages. Some of those messages are rendered in the two mock tweets presented below.

 AdamsNursing @AdamsNursing ...

Did you know that nurses with an advanced degree earn a median pay of \$120,680 per year? Invest in your future and unlock higher earning potential with our #MSN program. Apply.adams.edu now and take the first step toward a brighter tomorrow.

#HigherEarnings #InvestInYourself #MSNProgram
#Nursing



MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

100% ONLINE
NO GRE REQUIRED
FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME
FINISH IN 2 YEARS

5 10 100 1k



AdamsNursing @AdamsNursing

Making a Difference Makes Us Different!

...



msn.adams.edu

Master of Science in Nursing @ Adams State

Are you passionate about improving healthcare in rural communities? Our #MSN program is designed to prepare nurses to meet the unique needs of underserved areas. Join us and make a difference in the lives of patients in rural America. #RuralHealthcare #UnderservedCommunities #Diversity #MSNProgram #Nursing

5

10

100

1k



DIGITAL STRATEGY 3: Improve search engine marketing placement of the Adams MSN Website in primary, secondary, and tertiary markets through increasing number of placement buys

| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Goal | 12 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 | 30 | 30 |
| Actual | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: School of Nursing, Department of Public Relations & Marketing

LEAD: Department of Public Relations & Marketing

ACTIONS:

- Identify most effective social media platforms
- Retain services of an experienced digital ad agency
- Purchase sponsored Google search placements in the primary market
- Purchase sponsored Google search placements in the secondary market
- Purchase sponsored Google search placements in the tertiary market
- Purchase sponsored Bing search placements in the primary market
- Purchase sponsored Bing search placements in the secondary market
- Purchase sponsored Bing search placements in the tertiary market

DIGITAL STRATEGY 4: Increase the number of email leads in the Customer Relationship Management platform

| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Goal | 1000 | 2000 | 3000 | 4000 | 5000 | 5000 | 5000 |
| Actual | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: School of Nursing, Office of Graduate Studies

LEAD: Office of Graduate Studies

ACTIONS:

- Purchase email list from professional associations
- Purchase email lists from regional and national nursing conferences
- Source email lists from local and regional healthcare providers
- Promote prospect inquiry form sourcing self-submitted prospect inquires
- Leverage power of the website chatbot to generate interest and collect prospect information

DIGITAL STRATEGY 5: Increase the number of email campaigns that target prospective nursing students

| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Goal | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Actual | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: School of Nursing, Office of Graduate Studies

LEAD: Office of Graduate Studies

ACTIONS:

- Purchase email list from professional associations
- Purchase email lists from regional and national nursing conferences
- Source email lists from local and regional healthcare providers
- Promote prospect inquiry form sourcing self-submitted prospect inquiries
- Leverage power of the website chat-bot to generate interest and collect prospect information

PRINT MARKETING STRATEGIES

PRINT MARKETING STRATEGY 1: Increase the number of venues with displayed poster ads or distributed printed cards while prioritizing the primary market

| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Goal | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 |
| Actual | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: School of Nursing, SLV community, SLV Health, Valley-Wide Health, alumni, Alumni Relations

LEAD: School of Nursing

ACTIONS:

- Identify most effective venues to display promotional materials
- Engage SLV Health and Valley-Wide Health, in disseminating posters/flyers in their locations
- Place posters program at university campuses during recruitment circuits
- Engage students and alumni in disseminating promotional materials
- Engage Alumni Relations in identifying key alumni that would help disseminate information
- Incentivize help from students and alumni with Adams and MSN program swag

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN **NURSING**

100% ONLINE
NO GRE REQUIRED
FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME
FINISH IN 1+ YEAR
ACCELERATED 8-WEEK COURSES
MULTIPLE START DATES
FLEXIBLE PROGRAM PATHS

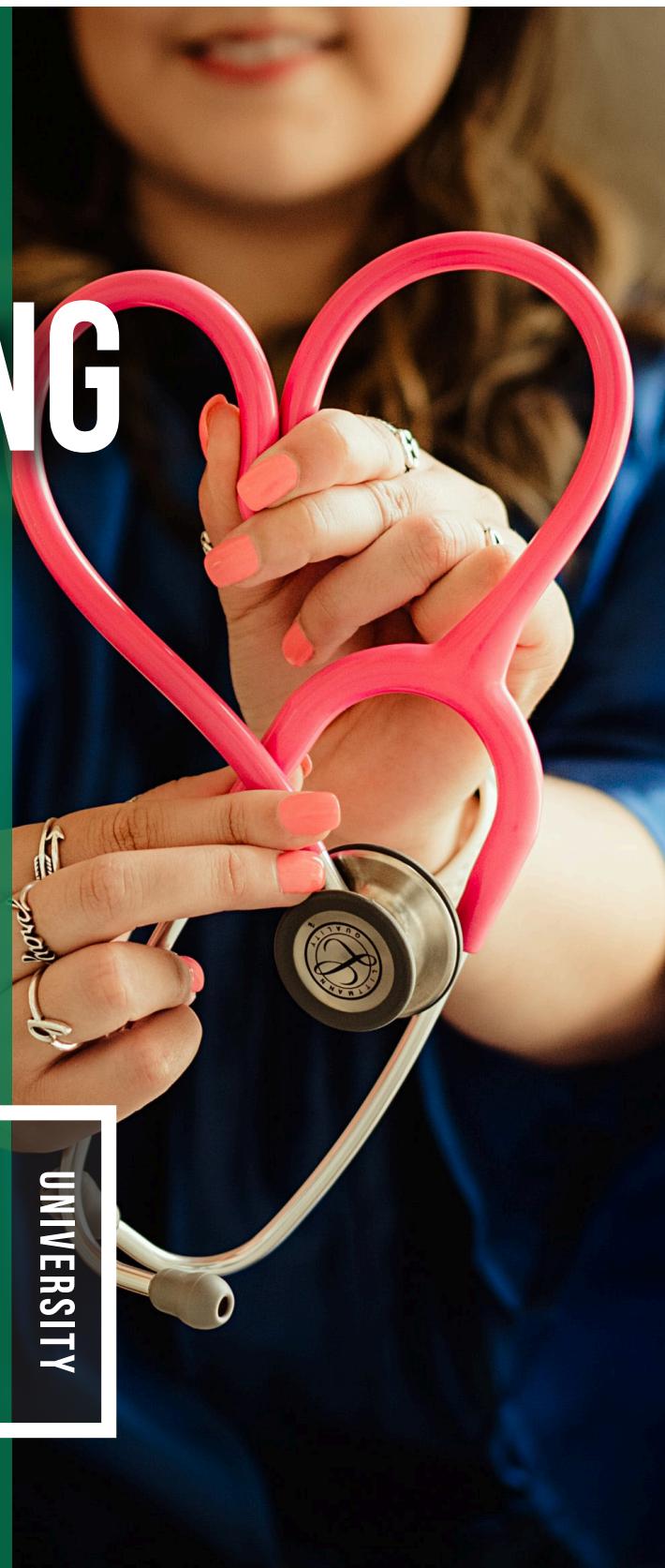
AVAILABLE TRACKS:

- NURSE EDUCATOR
- NURSING LEADERSHIP

**ADAMS
STATE**

UNIVERSITY

MSN.ADAMS.EDU



PRINT MARKETING STRATEGY 2: Increase the number of direct mail pieces sent to prospective students.

| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Goal | 500 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 |
| Actual | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: School of Nursing, Office of Graduate Studies

LEAD: Office of Graduate Studies

ACTIONS:

- Sent a regular letter to every person who might be interested in the MSN program
- Mail a prospect mail piece to every person that expressed interest in the program

RECRUITMENT MARKETING STRATEGIES

RECRUITMENT STRATEGY I: Increase the number of attended domestic in-person recruiting visits & venues

| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Goal | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 |
| Actual | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: Office of Graduate Studies, Nursing Faculty, community partners, health systems, Title V PPOHA, SLV Health, Valley-Wide Health,

LEAD: Office of Graduate Studies

ACTIONS:

- Host info-sessions, coffee hours, and chats at local healthcare facilities
- Attend all feasible healthcare job and college fairs in the immediate service area (primary market)
- Enlist recruitment help from the Office of Graduate Studies and the Title V PPOHA grant
- Engage, encourage, and incentivize faculty to recruit at conferences, symposia, and meetings
- Explore attending graduate fairs in targeted tertiary markets

RECRUITMENT STRATEGY 2: Increase the number of attended domestic virtual healthcare-oriented recruiting events.

| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Goal | 12 | 14 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| Actual | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: NURSING FACULTY, TITLE V PPOHA, OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

LEAD: NURSING FACULTY

ACTIONS:

- Maximize attendance at virtual healthcare career fairs across the United States
- Host virtual MSN program showcase events
- Host virtual MSN chats and Q&As

RECRUITMENT STRATEGY 3: Increase the number of Adams Nursing Alumni Ambassadors:

| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Goal | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| Actual | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: NURSING FACULTY, OFFICE OF ALUMNI RELATIONS

LEAD: NURSING FACULTY

ACTIONS:

- Recruit Adams Nursing Ambassadors from Adams graduates with MSN degrees from other schools
- Recruit Adams Nursing Ambassadors from adjunct faculty
- Recruit Adams Nursing Ambassadors from employees of local health systems
- Provide Adams Nursing Ambassadors with free swag
- Host annual dinner for Adams Nursing Ambassadors
- Create custom application fee waiver codes for each ambassador

FINANCIAL SUPPORT BASED RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

FINANCIAL SUPPORT STRATEGY I: Increase the number of MSN students with scholarships (excluding federal financial aid):

| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Goal | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Actual | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: NURSING FACULTY, SLV HEALTH, VALLEY-WIDE HEALTH, OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES, ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION. COUNTIES: ALAMOSA, ARCHULETA, CHAFFEE, CONEJOS, COSTILLA, HINSDALE, MINERAL, SAGUACHE, AND RIO GRANDE. MUNICIPALITIES: ALAMOSA, ANTONITO, CAPULIN, CENTER, CREEDE, CRESTONE, DEL NORTE, FORT GARLAND, HOOPER, LA JARA, MANASSA, MONTE VISTA, MOSCA, SAGUACHE, SALIDA, SAN ACACIO, SANFORD, SAN LUIS, SOUTH FORK, AND VILLA GROVE

LEAD: NURSING FACULTY, OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

ACTIONS:

- Seek to establish partnerships that could help partially or completely offset cost of graduate nursing education
- Reach out to SLV Health and Valley-Wide Health, to explore potential of creating employer-funded MSN education for their nurses
- Reach out to local healthcare providers exploring potential of endowing \$100,000 scholarship that would annually generate \$5,000 scholarship for graduate nursing students
- Reach out to each San Luis Valley county and adjacent counties seeking to establish articulation agreements to fund scholarships to develop their nurses.
- Reach out to each San Luis Valley municipality and to municipalities in SLV-adjacent counties to establish articulation agreements to fund scholarships to develop their nurses.

8 TUITION PRICING

TUITION STUDY Select group of peers from the geographic market and competing online universities have been selected for the tuition study. Comparison of number of credits required to complete those programs, cost of tuition per credit hour, and total cost of attendance is summarized in Table 3 on page 29.

ANALYSIS OF THE TUITION RATES Descriptive statistics and rates of dispersion were calculated for the tuition comparison group. Regis University was determined to be an outlier and excluded from the analysis. Average and median costs of one credit hour of MSN coursework costed approximately \$550 per credit hour. On average cost of a credit hour varied by approximately \$125. Lowest credit hour cost was \$364 at a private, for-profit, unranked university. The first quartile of credit hour cost was at \$470 and highest cost was at \$740. Previously eliminated outlier, Regis University, had credit hour cost almost double of that amount.

Average cost of pursuing the MSN program was at nearly \$19,000 with the median cost of attendance at nearly \$20,000. On average total cost of attendance varied by \$4,000. The lowest cost of attendance was at \$13,120. The first quartile of the attendance cost was at \$15,300 and highest quartile was at \$24,650. Descriptive statistics are summarized in Table 4 on page 29.

Table 3: *Comparison of tuition rates*

| University Name | Type | Credits | Cost per credit | Total cost |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Post University / American Sentinel | Private, for-profit | 36 | \$560 | \$20,160 |
| Aspen University | Private, for-profit | 36 | \$364 | \$13,120 |
| American College of Education | Private, for-profit | 31 | \$515 | \$15,965 |
| Regis University | Private, non-profit | 39 | \$1,235 | \$48,165 |
| CSU-Pueblo | Public, R2 | 30-36 | \$550 | \$16,500–\$19,800 |
| Colorado Mesa University | Public, Open Access | 36 | \$636 | \$22,896 |
| CU-Anschutz | Public, R1 | 30 | \$740 | \$22,200 |
| University of Northern Colorado | Public, R2 | 30 | \$672 | \$20,160 |
| University of New Mexico | Public, R1 | 34 | \$725 | \$24,643 |
| Western New Mexico University | Public, Open Access | 33 | \$413 | \$13,620 |
| Eastern New Mexico University | Public, Open Access | 36 | \$418.50 | \$15,066 |
| Colorado Technical University | Private, for-profit | 36 | \$542 | \$19,500.00 |

Table 4: *Competitors' tuition characteristics*

| | Cost (per credit) | Cost (total) |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Average: | \$558 | \$18,733 |
| Standard Deviation | \$127 | \$4,051 |
| Minimum | \$364 | \$13,120 |
| Quartile 1 | \$467 | \$15,291 |
| Median / Quartile 2 | \$550 | \$19,830 |
| Quartile 3 | \$654 | \$21,690 |
| Quartile 4 / Maximum | \$740 | \$24,643 |
| Excluded Outlier Maximum | \$1,235 | \$48,165 |

TUITION COST DETERMINATION. Informed by the analysis of the tuition cost of our immediate competitors, the goal was to set the tuition rate above the first quartile but below the average and median value. The appealing strategy was to position the tuition rate in the lowest portion of the range between first and second quartiles. The nearest round number above the first quartile was an hourly tuition rate of \$500. We subtracted from this number \$17.50 technology fee resulting in a net credit hour cost of \$482.50 and the tuition plus a fee cost of \$500 per credit. This brings the total cost of attendance including fees to between \$15,000 (nursing leadership) and \$16,500 (nurse educator). This sticker cost might be further reduced by scholarships though federal financial aid on graduate level is mostly limited to subsidized and unsubsidized loans.

9 FINANCIAL PLAN

ENROLLMENTS AND TUITION REVENUE. The revenue projection based on hourly tuition rate of \$500 per credit and cohort enrollments beginning with 14 students. New Spring enrollments are set at 50% of this base number, and new summer enrollments are established at 20% of this number. The long semester to semester retention is set at 93%, which yields an annual retention rate of 80%. Students will take 6 credits during each mini-term for a total of 12 credits each long semester. The enrollment is expected to increase by 25% each year. Enrollment growth is capped in year 6. The projected enrollments and associated tuition revenue are summarized in Table 1 on page 18.

SALARY COST. Salaries start with one non-tenure-track program coordinator line budgeted at \$61,000. This is a 12-month contract, and this individual holds a terminal nursing degree. Beginning in the second year of the program, a full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty with a terminal nursing degree is added with an estimated salary of \$80,000. Most of the courses in the program are to be taught by adjunct faculty paid \$4,000 per course. During the first two years, there are 10 adjunct-taught sections each year. Starting year three, the number of adjunct sections doubles to 20. This is done to accommodate growing cohorts that exceed Higher Learning Commission (HLC) mandated section caps of 20 to 22 students. Both full-time and adjunct salaries have a 3% cost of living adjustment calculated each year. The projected expenses are summarized in Table ?? on page ??.

ADVERTISING AND OPERATING BUDGETS. Advertising budget starts at \$15,000 per year and grows by 25% each year to generate online impressions sufficient to support the planned 25% annual growth in enrollment growth. Enrollment growth is capped in year 6 and advertising budget also caps that year at \$40,000. The operating budget is set to a fixed rate of \$1,000 each month for a total of \$12,000 per fiscal year. This number is stable for all years. Advertising and operating expenses are summarized in Table 5 on page 31.

PROFITABILITY. The MSN program is projected to have both high enrollment and high yield and is projected to become profitable in year one, year two at the latest. The projected balance sheet summary is presented in Table 5 on page 31.

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | FY2024 | FY2025 | FY2026 | FY2027 | FY2028 | FY2029 | FY2030 |
| Total Tuition Revenue | \$320,989 | \$447,334 | \$510,005 | \$597,962 | \$715,645 | \$714,791 | \$690,273 |
| Grand Total Cost | (\$158,028) | (\$270,967) | (\$330,056) | (\$342,311) | (\$356,175) | (\$366,240) | (\$373,076) |
| Net Tuition Revenue | \$162,961 | \$176,367 | \$179,950 | \$255,652 | \$359,470 | \$348,551 | \$317,197 |
| Contribution Margin | 51% | 39% | 35% | 43% | 50% | 49% | 46% |

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | FY2024 | FY2025 | FY2026 | FY2027 | FY2028 | FY2029 | FY2030 |
| Full-time Instructor Salary | 61,000 | 143,106 | 145,968 | 148,887 | 151,865 | 154,902 | 158,000 |
| Full-time Benefits | 10,980 | 11,309 | 11,648 | 11,997 | 12,357 | 12,728 | 13,110 |
| Adjuncts @ \$4,000/course | 40,000 | 40,800 | 83,232 | 84,897 | 86,595 | 88,327 | 90,094 |
| Benefit cost - PT Salaries | 7,200 | 7,344 | 14,982 | 15,281 | 15,587 | 15,899 | 16,217 |
| Operating | 12,000 | 12,000 | 12,000 | 12,000 | 12,000 | 12,000 | 12,000 |
| Advertising | 15,000 | 18,750 | 23,438 | 29,297 | 36,621 | 40,000 | 40,000 |
| TOTAL SALARY COST | 131,028 | 240,217 | 294,618 | 301,014 | 307,554 | 314,240 | 321,076 |
| TOTAL OTHER COST | 27,000 | 30,750 | 35,438 | 41,297 | 48,621 | 52,000 | 52,000 |
| GRAND TOTAL COST | 158,028 | 270,967 | 330,056 | 342,311 | 356,175 | 366,240 | 373,076 |

Table 5: Balance Sheet and Breakdown of Expenses

10 SUMMARY

| Category | Summary |
|--------------------------------|--|
| One Liner | Online MSN program providing nursing professionals with the opportunity to specialize in Nursing Leadership Systems or Nurse Educator tracks, increasing earning potential and career advancement opportunities. |
| Target Group | Registered Nurses with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) seeking to advance their education and career in the nursing profession. |
| Students' Pain Points to Solve | Limited time to attend on-campus classes, lack of specialized knowledge in Nursing Leadership Systems or Nurse Education, difficulty advancing in current position without an advanced degree. |
| Value Propositions | 100% online, on your own schedule, degree in as little as 12 months, quick 8-week semesters, increased earning potential and career advancement opportunities., focus on diverse populations, learning by doing |
| Sales & Marketing Channels | Social media advertising, email marketing, healthcare industry conferences and events, word of mouth referrals. |
| Cost Structure | Faculty salaries and benefits, marketing and advertising expenses |
| Key Activities | Program development and curriculum design, faculty recruitment, student recruitment, student support, marketing and advertising initiatives, teaching. |
| Key Resources | Experienced faculty members with expertise in Nursing Leadership Systems or Nurse Education, partnerships with healthcare organizations for recruitment. |
| Key Partners | Healthcare organizations, healthcare industry associations for networking and referral opportunities. |
| Idea Validation Steps | Market research to determine demand for an online MSN program, surveys and focus groups with nursing professionals to gather feedback and input on program features and delivery. |
| Potential Business Challenges | Competition from other online MSN programs, difficulty in attracting and retaining experienced faculty members, challenges in securing startup funding. |

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APPENDIX A: CURRICULUM

Table 6: *MSN Curriculum Map*

| Course | Title | FALL SPRING SUMMER | | | | | | Load | Adjunct |
|----------|--|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|---------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | | |
| NURS 501 | CORE: Nursing Research & Evidence Based Practice | x | | | | | | ABURCH | x |
| NURS 507 | EDU: Assessment of Learning | x | | | | | | RMIDDLETON | x |
| NURS 523 | LEAD: Healthcare Leadership | x | | | | | | BEAN | x |
| NURS 502 | CORE: Caring for and Understanding Diverse Populations | x | | | | | | ABURCH | x |
| NURS 534 | EDU: Diversity in Learning | x | | | | | | MFREEMAN? | x |
| NURS 522 | LEAD: Finance and Health Policy | x | | | | | | KMARTIN? | x |
| NURS 503 | CORE: Ethics in Nursing Practice | x | | | | | | ABURCH | x |
| NURS 533 | EDU: Curriculum Design | x | | | | | | RMIDDLETON | x |
| NURS 540 | LEAD: Management & Strategic Planning | x | | | | | | | x |
| NURS 504 | CORE: Quality Improvement | x | | | | | | KCHACON | x |
| NURS 530 | EDU: Advanced Health Care Core | x | | | | | | MD | x |
| NURS 525 | LEAD: CAPSTONE I | x | | | | | | ABURCH | x |
| NURS 505 | CORE: Informatics in Nursing | x | | | | | | ANEWBYY?? | x |
| NURS 535 | EDU: CAPSTONE I | x | | | | | | ABURCH | x |
| NURS 526 | LEAD: CAPSTONE II | x | | | | | | ABURCH | x |
| NURS 536 | EDU: CAPSTONE II | x | | | | | | ABURCH | x |
| VARIES | Out-of-sync high demand course TBD | x | | | | | | TBD | |

LIST OF LEADERSHIP CONCENTRATION BUSINESS COURSE SUBSTITUTES:

- BUS 500 Leadership Skills for Managers
- BUS 540 Strategy
- BUS 545 Leading Entrepreneurial Orgs
- BUS 555 Leading for Results
- BUS 550 Technology and Innovation
- BUS 580 Public / Nonprofit Management
- BUS 585 Public Budgeting and Finance

LIST OF POTENTIAL NURSE EDUCATOR COURSE SUBSTITUTES FROM THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION:

- ED 507 Integrated Instruction & Assessment
- ED 534 Multicultural Perspectives
- ED 547 Teaching, Learning, & Technology

LIST OF POTENTIAL CORE COURSE CASE-BY-CASE SUBSTITUTES: SPECIALS CASES, BY PERMISSION ONLY:

- HCA 545 Public Health
- HCA 550 Elderly and Managed Care
- HCA 555 Health Policy

COURSE SEGMENT SUMMARIES:

- Core Courses 15 credits
- Nurse Educator Courses 12 credits edu + 6 credits capstone
- Nurse Leadership Courses 9 credits edu + 6 credits capstone

PROGRAM TRACK SUMMARIES:

- Nurse Educator Track Duration $15 + 18 = 33$ credits
- Nurse Leadership Track Duration $15 + 15 = 30$ credits

APPENDIX B: COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

COURSE CLUSTERS. Following three pages outline the course groups for the shared nursing core and for the nurse leadership and nurse educator tracks. For each of these groups, the designators, course titles, and course descriptions are presented. Each course is mapped onto one or more essential nursing domains (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2021a). Nursing essential domain legend is presented below:

1. Knowledge for Nursing Practice
2. Person-centered Care
3. Population Health
4. Scholarship for the Nursing Discipline
5. Quality and Safety
6. Interprofessional Partnerships
7. Systems-based Practice
8. Informatics and Healthcare Technologies
9. Professionalism
10. Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development

Table 7: Core Courses, descriptions, and corresponding Nursing Domains

| Course # | Course Title | Description | Domains |
|----------|--|---|-----------|
| NURS 501 | Nursing Research & Evidence Based Practice | This is an introductory nursing research and theory course intended for current nurses to gain a better understanding of the purpose and importance of research; the application of quantitative, qualitative, and action research methods; enhance skills to evaluate and critique research and literature; and gain an appreciation for conducting research. The student will also gain an understanding of evidence-based practice and how that can be applied within their own professional practice through critiques, evaluations, and utilization. | 1,4,7 |
| NURS 502 | Caring for and Understanding Diverse Populations | This course explores diversity in healthcare with regard to patient care, with a strong focus on serving Hispanic communities. The student will gain a better understanding of population-specific care within the healthcare system as related to disease processes, health promotion, disease prevention, patient assessment, and care. | 2,3,7 |
| NURS 503 | Ethics in Nursing Practice | This course provides the experienced nurse with advanced skills in legal and ethical issues in nursing and healthcare. The student will be provided with the framework, theory, and knowledge needed for the resolution of ethical and legal conflicts within the nursing field. | 3,7,9 |
| NURS 504 | Informatics in Nursing | This course examines the history of healthcare informatics, current issues, advanced informatic concepts, and health information management systems for advanced practice nurses. The use of technology to help make decisions and improve the health status of the individual, family, and community will be emphasized. Students will apply informatics concepts to a current clinical practice setting, suggesting methods to use technology to improve patient safety and work effectiveness. The student will also learn to identify, gather, process, and manage advanced information/data. | 8 |
| NURS 505 | Patient Centered Care | This course exposes advanced nurses to the skills, behaviors, and knowledge needed to appropriately manage the care of various populations. Students will work to understand the value of the nurse-patient and family relationship and its influence on patient outcomes. Students will also gain insight into policy development within the healthcare setting. | 1,2,3,5,7 |

Table 8: Nurse Educator Courses, descriptions, and corresponding Nursing Domains

| Course # | Course Title | Description | Domains |
|----------|---------------------------------------|--|------------|
| NURS 530 | Advanced Health Care Core | This course provides the nurse with advanced skills in pathophysiology and the health assessment of various disease processes as well as the drugs used to treat or improve the quality of life with those experiencing these issues. | 1,2,3,5 |
| NURS 534 | Diversity in Learning | Students will learn the essentials of developing a culturally inclusive curriculum to meet the needs of an ever-growing diverse nursing workforce. Students will have opportunities to learn about effective approaches in educating various student populations in face-to-face and/or online environments. Students will also learn to navigate the context of higher education. | 1,4,6,8,10 |
| NURS 537 | Assessment and Evaluation of Learning | This course provides the nurse with the appropriate skills and tools that can be used in the classroom to evaluate student readiness to learn, as well as the assessment of student learning. The student will also receive the foundation for designing, applying, and evaluating student learning outcomes in education. This course supports candidates in aligning their beliefs and values to develop their teaching identity. Metacognitive processes will help candidates be aware of their own motives and empower them to actively participate in their own learning as they begin to develop their art of teaching. Alternative methods of facilitating instruction and assessing student performance and understanding will be investigated and implemented to increase the candidate's understanding of their students' abilities, interests, and needs. | 1,4,10 |
| NURS 533 | Curriculum Design and Implementation | This course assists the learner in developing interactive and multidimensional curriculum design applicable to nursing education environment. Students will be provided tools and strategies for the development of clinical and classroom curriculum. Students will also be provided with the framework for a concept-based curriculum that can be used in various areas of nursing education, including face-to-face and online platforms. | 1,4,6,8 |
| NURS 535 | Education Capstone I | Course encompasses two components: nursing education practicum and an evidence-based nursing education project. In collaboration with a nursing mentor, the student will evaluate the current needs of the institution during practicum experiences and develop a project that will address real-world issues in the nursing education setting. Students will integrate knowledge of evidence-based practice, quality and safety initiatives, leadership, and all previous coursework to implement the project. | 7,9,10 |
| NURS 535 | Education Capstone II | Same as above | 7,9,10 |

Table 9: *Nurse Leadership Courses, descriptions, and corresponding Nursing Domains*

| Course Number | Course Title | Description | Nursing Domains |
|---------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| NURS 521 | Quality improvement | Students will be exposed to knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) needed to continuously improve healthcare quality and safety. Students will be provided the essential knowledge of the Graduate QSEN competencies as outlined by the AACN. | 4,5 |
| NURS 522 | Finance and Health Policy | Students will survey healthcare finance, budget development, staffing needs/costs, and monitoring of cash flow into and out of the institution. This course will also cover healthcare policy development as well as interpreting and participating with legislation pertinent to higher education and nursing/nursing education. | 7 |
| NURS 523 | Healthcare Leadership | This course explores leadership theory, styles, and modern approaches to leadership within the current healthcare climate. The learner will gain a better understanding of leadership styles and their application into their own practice. | 1,4,6,9,10 |
| NURS 525 | Leadership Practicum & Capstone I | This course encompasses two main components: leadership practicum and the development of a evidence-based practice project to be used in the leadership field of nursing. During the experience, the student will work in collaboration with a member (nursing mentor) of the nursing leadership community. The student and the mentor will evaluate the current needs of the institution during practicum experiences and develop a project that will be designed to improve real-world issues in the leadership setting. Students will integrate knowledge of evidence-based practice, quality and safety initiatives, leadership, and all previous coursework to implement the project. | 7,9,10 |
| NURS 526 | Leadership Practicum & Capstone II | Same as above | 7,9,10 |

APPENDIX C: SELECT SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

FACEBOOK / LINKEDIN MESSAGES

Below is a selection of suggested social media messages broken down by length / platform.

“TAKE YOUR NURSING CAREER TO THE NEXT LEVEL WITH OUR MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM! OUR PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO HELP YOU ADVANCE YOUR SKILLS AND EXPAND YOUR CAREER OPPORTUNITIES. LEARN MORE TODAY”

“ARE YOU LOOKING FOR WAYS TO UPSKILL AND ADVANCE IN YOUR NURSING CAREER? OUR #MSN PROGRAM CAN HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS! WITH FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING AND EXPERIENCED FACULTY, YOU’LL BE PREPARED TO TAKE ON NEW CHALLENGES IN THE FIELD. APPLY NOW.”

“WITH NURSING POSITIONS IN HIGH DEMAND, NOW IS THE PERFECT TIME TO EARN YOUR MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING DEGREE. OUR PROGRAM WILL EQUIP YOU WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS YOU NEED TO SUCCEED IN THIS GROWING FIELD. JOIN US TODAY.”

“AT OUR #MSN PROGRAM, WE BELIEVE IN EMPOWERING OUR STUDENTS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF THEIR PATIENTS. WITH A FOCUS ON HANDS-ON LEARNING AND REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE, OUR PROGRAM PREPARES NURSES TO BE LEADERS IN THEIR FIELD. APPLY NOW!”

“WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF PATIENTS WHILE ADVANCING YOUR CAREER? OUR #MSN PROGRAM IS THE PERFECT WAY TO ACHIEVE BOTH GOALS. JOIN US TODAY AND TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD A BRIGHTER FUTURE IN NURSING.”

“ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT NURSING AND LOOKING FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW? OUR #MSN PROGRAM OFFERS A RANGE OF SPECIALTY TRACKS, INCLUDING NURSING EDUCATION AND NURSING LEADERSHIP, TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS. APPLY NOW AND TAKE THE NEXT STEP IN YOUR CAREER.”

“THE DEMAND FOR NURSES WITH ADVANCED DEGREES IS ON THE RISE, AND OUR #MSN PROGRAM IS THE PERFECT WAY TO STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE. WITH A FOCUS ON PRACTICAL SKILLS AND REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE, OUR PROGRAM WILL HELP YOU STAND OUT IN A COMPETITIVE JOB MARKET.”

“ARE YOU READY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY? OUR #MSN PROGRAM EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY-BASED CARE, WITH A FOCUS ON RURAL HEALTHCARE AND UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS. JOIN US AND HELP MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE WORLD AROUND YOU.”

“IF YOU’RE A NURSE IN COLORADO OR NEW MEXICO LOOKING TO TAKE YOUR CAREER TO THE NEXT LEVEL, OUR #MSN PROGRAM IS THE PERFECT CHOICE. WITH FLEXIBLE ONLINE COURSES AND A SUPPORTIVE FACULTY, YOU’LL HAVE THE TOOLS YOU NEED TO SUCCEED IN THE EVER-EVOLVING FIELD OF HEALTHCARE.”

“LOOKING FOR A NURSING PROGRAM THAT FITS YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE? OUR #MSN PROGRAM OFFERS FLEXIBLE ONLINE COURSES AND CLINICAL EXPERIENCES DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE WORKING NURSES. TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD YOUR ADVANCED DEGREE TODAY. #FLEXIBLELEARNING #ONLINECOURSES #MSNPROMGRAM #NURSING”

“DID YOU KNOW THAT NURSES WITH AN ADVANCED DEGREE EARN A MEDIAN PAY OF \$120,680 PER YEAR?

INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE AND UNLOCK HIGHER EARNING POTENTIAL WITH OUR #MSN PROGRAM. APPLY NOW AND TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS A BRIGHTER TOMORROW. #HIGHEREARNINGS #INVESTINYOURSELF #MSNPROGRAM #NURSING”

“ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT IMPROVING HEALTHCARE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES? OUR #MSN PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO PREPARE NURSES TO MEET THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF UNDERSERVED AREAS. JOIN US AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF PATIENTS IN RURAL AMERICA. #RURALHEALTHCARE #UNDERSERVEDCOMMUNITIES #DIVERSITY #MSNPROGRAM #MSN #NURSING ”

TWITTER MESSAGES

“ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT HEALTHCARE AND PATIENT CARE? OUR MSN PROGRAM WILL GIVE YOU THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF THOSE YOU SERVE.”

“THE DEMAND FOR ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSES IS ON THE RISE, AND OUR MSN PROGRAM CAN HELP YOU TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS EXCITING OPPORTUNITY. JOIN US AND PREPARE FOR AN IMPACTFUL CAREER IN NURSING.”

“AS THE NURSING FIELD CONTINUES TO EVOLVE, OUR MSN PROGRAM EQUIPS STUDENTS WITH THE LATEST KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE TO STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE. APPLY NOW AND GAIN THE SKILLS TO EXCEL IN YOUR CAREER.”

“ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A GRADUATE PROGRAM THAT WILL HELP YOU GROW BOTH PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY? OUR MSN PROGRAM COMBINES RIGOROUS COURSEWORK WITH HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE TO PREPARE YOU FOR SUCCESS IN NURSING.”

“WHETHER YOU’RE A RECENT NURSING GRADUATE OR A SEASONED PROFESSIONAL, OUR MSN PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO MEET YOUR UNIQUE NEEDS AND HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR CAREER GOALS. APPLY NOW AND SEE WHAT WE CAN DO FOR YOU!”