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The Georgia Board of Nursing Approves BSN Program for BPC **[1]**

On 14 May, 2021



Mrs. Debbi Bryarly (BPC Director of Nursing) with Dr. Steven Echols (BPC President) inside the newly renovated nursing lab on BPC's campus.

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MOUNT VERNON — On Thursday, May 6, The Georgia Board of Nursing met to review the nursing program application submitted by Brewton-Parker College (BPC). The board voted unanimously to allow BPC to offer a four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing with the Junior year nursing courses starting in the Fall of 2022.

The effort to establish a nursing program at BPC first began with a vision and formal proposal from Dr. Helene Peters, professor of biology and chair of the math and science division. Dr. Peters saw the great need for a Christian college nursing program that would help meet the shortage of nurses in South Georgia. As a result of the board action, Brewton-Parker College is now the only approved Christian college south of Macon that will offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

"The addition of a nursing program at BPC is a tremendous opportunity - not only to offer career-relevant healthcare classes and clinical rotations - but also to provide a well-rounded education that will help each student to develop as a person and as a professional. Within the larger liberal arts framework, nursing students will be stretched to think in different ways, challenged to appreciate their role in an increasingly global society and trained to communicate with diverse populations in order to make sound judgments," stated Dr. Helene Peters.

The two-year application process with the Georgia Board of Nursing began with Dr. Rennie Bailey who worked to secure the developmental approval. Professor Debbi Bryarly, who was appointed director of nursing on January 1, 2021, then led the effort of writing of the 165-page proposal and application which received unanimous approval for the implementation of the BSN degree. Dr. Echols noted that the college is extremely proud of the excellent work from the entire team that received a

very positive reaction from the board and its leadership.

By the end of May, BPC plans to submit a prospectus seeking approval of the nursing program from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the organization that accredits postsecondary institutions in the southeast region, including Georgia. Once that submission is filed, pending SACSCOC approval, BPC can begin recruiting students and hiring the additional faculty needed for the Fall 2022.

The Georgia Board of Nursing also requires that all new nursing education programs be accredited by one of the recognized national nursing accreditation bodies. While national accreditation is not a prerequisite to starting the program, BPC has already begun preparing its application to the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). CCNE accreditation supports and encourages continued growth and improvement of collegiate professional nursing programs.

Debbi Bryarly stated, “It is such a privilege to be part of this process and I am enjoying every minute of it. It is exciting to see what God is doing through the college and through the development of this program. I am looking forward to the time when our students will be able to take their nursing courses here and the impact that will have on our community as they graduate and join the nursing workforce.”

Based on a feasibility study done last year, the need for nurses is critical. As demand continues unabated, educators and healthcare providers are working together to supply the workforce. Areas with higher proportions of low-income and minority residents suffer most from a smaller pool of qualified physicians and other healthcare professionals. Addressing this need undergirds the college’s mission to “provide a transformational experience” not only to its students but also to the region it calls home.

Dr. Bailey noted “Local hospital directors are excited by the prospect of the new program and the opportunity it will afford to welcome students for clinical placement in hopes that they will remain in the area when commencing their nursing careers.” Dr. Echols affirmed the college’s deep gratitude for the strong financial support for the program from foundations and individuals that has produced over one million dollars in donations and commitments for funding. The funding includes money for start-up costs and building additional housing required for the increased number of students. A single-occupancy female dormitory is projected to be complete by July 2021.

Dr. Echols observed, “God has made a way for this program to become a reality through the financial provision and by especially sending to BPC an incredible team of people who not only envisioned this program but who have put in countless hours to make it possible. We believe that He has great things in store for BPC in the training of nurses who will go forth as ambassadors for Christ in this most important field!”

Brewton-Parker College [2] is the only accredited four-year Christian college south of Macon and north of Jacksonville, FL. As a comprehensive Georgia Baptist institution, Brewton-Parker College provides liberal arts and professional programs in a learning community of shared Christian values. Through the application of biblical truth in scholarship and a co-curricular focus on character, servant leadership, and cultural engagement, the college strives to provide a transformational experience that equips the whole student for lifelong learning and service in Christ..

Visit Brewton-Parker College online at www.bpc.edu [2].

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