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December 14, 2021

To: University Curriculum Council Program Committee
CC: Dr. Ben Bates, Chair
Re: Intent to expand the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program to Ohio University --
Lancaster

Dear Committee:

It is with great excitement that I write this letter as notification of the Ohio University -- Lancaster's ("OUL") intent to expand the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program to our campus. Currently, OUL is the only regional campus in the Ohio University system without a nursing program. The BSN program will be hosted by the OUL campus as a satellite location of Ohio University's very reputable nursing program. We are grateful for the support from Dr. Char Miller, Director of the Ohio University School of Nursing, and Dr. John McCarthy, Dean of the College of Health Science Professions.

Ohio University boasts a collection of well-known, high quality nursing programs. As we conducted our research in the Central, Southeast, and East Central Ohio regions, it became clear that health care providers not only knew of Ohio University's quality, but also that Ohio University was a preferred provider of nurses. Our team discussed the extension of the program with several health care providers including Ohio Health, Genesis Hospital System, Nationwide Children's Hospital, and Fairfield Medical Center as well as many others. Our research included several face-to-face meetings with chief nursing officers, academic practicum officers, and other administrators. Additionally, we sent a questionnaire to operators of all levels of health care providers with a 73% return rate. The message was clear from our health care community that there exists a dire need for nurses trained at the college level. This need is not only immediate in that there is a gross shortage of nursing professionals but there is a looming wave of retirements for which the health care industry must prepare for now so that the nursing shortage does not become even more acute. The need is not only experienced in our area but also nationally as in just a few years, there will be well over 1,000,000 vacant nursing positions in the United States. Currently, 40% of the nursing workforce is over age 51.

As we discussed the extension of program, we discussed the need for clinical placements. We have secured support from the four major health care providers including Fairfield Medical Center, Nationwide Children's Hospital, Genesis Hospital System, and Ohio Health. With confidence, other health care providers will provide clinical opportunities in our areas upon request.

Given the critical need for nurses, and the willingness for health care providers in our regions to provide clinical opportunities, there should be no concern over the competition for students. In other words, the demand for nurses by area health care providers dwarfs the capacity found in existing nursing programs – especially in Central Ohio. What also became clear in our research is that higher education, state government, and health care providers must work together to get the necessary number of nurses practicing as soon as possible. Ohio University should continue to be the leader in this effort.



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Relatedly, Ohio University should use this opportunity to expand its market for health care education in the Central Ohio area which is experiencing rapid population growth.

This opportunity to expand the nursing program is largely made possible by a generous gift from Dr. Joyce Herrold. We discussed the opportunity with Dr. Herrold, a successful oncologist, to establish a nursing program at Ohio University during the spring of 2021. Dr. Herrold, given her thorough knowledge of the health care system, quickly decided to support the extension of the nursing program.

One of the chief advantages of Ohio University is its network of regional campuses that benefit from the ability to offer strong programs developed by the Athens campus schools and departments. We anticipate the ability to share faculty expertise with the main and other regional campuses. Faculty in other academic departments, especially those faculty teaching the general education curriculum, will enjoy an uptick in student enrollment. There exists capacity within the regional higher education system to teach these new students. All general education and prerequisite courses are currently offered at OUL and within the regional campus system.

OUL would like to begin offering the program to incoming freshmen students for the fall 2021 term. Our campus will continue to rely on the noted expertise and support of the School of Nursing and the College of Health Science Professions through the development of this program.

Sincerely,

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