

APPROVED
DECEMBER 12, 2017

Item #V-20
December 12, 2017

**NURSING SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2018 AWARDS**

Submitted for: Action.

Summary: This item presents a recommendation for six institutions to receive grant awards under the Nursing School Grant Program administered by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The goal of this program is to increase the number of nurses graduating from Illinois institutions of higher learning who are prepared for careers as registered nurses.

This grant program is tied to Goal 3 of the *Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success*, increase the number of high-quality postsecondary credentials to meet the demands of the economy. Nursing continues to be a high-demand field where the annual supply of newly licensed registered nurses continues to be lower than the demand. This grant program provides institutions with financial assistance directed to expand their capacity or improve student performance to help meet the statewide demand for registered nurses.

Action Requested: That the Illinois Board of Higher Education approves the Fiscal Year 2018 awards totaling \$274,578 for two Expansion Grants and four Improvement Grants under the Nursing School Grant Program.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**NURSING SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2018 AWARDS**

It has been three years since the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) has received an appropriation of state funds for the Nursing School Grant Program. Board members may recall that the most recent appropriation was for Fiscal Year 2015 but the funding was suspended midway through the fiscal year and no grants were awarded. The Fiscal Year 2018 appropriation for the program is \$373,900 but IBHE received a total of only \$274,578 in requests for proposals. Thus, the staff recommends that the Executive Director be given additional authority to increase the award amounts for any one or more of the recommended grants, pending the grantee's ability to demonstrate how the additional support will increase the number of graduates who are prepared for careers as registered nurses.

Eligible Institutions

Participation in this program is open to Illinois institutions of higher learning offering associate and baccalaureate level registered nursing degree programs. All institutions that participate in this grant program must meet specific eligibility requirements based on the type of degree program offered:

- Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) must be approved by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR); be accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) formerly known as the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission; and have an articulation agreement in place with at least one institution of higher learning that offers a baccalaureate degree in nursing.
- Baccalaureate (BSN) programs must be approved by IDFPR and be accredited by either the ACEN or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).
- Baccalaureate completion (RN-BSN) programs must be accredited by the ACEN or the CCNE.

Two Types of Grants

This program provides for two types of competitive grants: Expansion Grants and Improvement Grants.

Expansion Grants are designed for high-performing nursing schools who agree to expand their capacity to increase the number of students preparing for careers as registered nurses. Expansion grants are renewable for up to three years based on sustained program progress and evaluation results. The grant also requires the retention of an external evaluator, one who is jointly agreed to by the institution and the Board staff, to review the activities and report on the grantee's progress.

- Fiscal Year 2018 Applications: Expansion Grant Applications were posted on the Board web site on September 14, 2017. The Illinois Center for Nursing assisted the Board staff with notifying the nursing schools about the grant program and application. Applicants were asked not to exceed \$224,340 (or 60 percent of the appropriation amount).

- **Fiscal Year 2018 Eligibility:** The ADN and BSN programs must have licensure pass rates for first-time test-takers that is equal to or greater than 85 percent and a program attrition rate that is equal to or less than 15 percent. The RN-BSN completion programs must have a program attrition rate that is equal to or less than 15 percent.
- **Uses:** Expansion grant funds may be used to hire additional nursing faculty; develop or expand instructional programs; develop or expand academic support services; increase classroom space and clinical space; improve existing classroom space; purchase equipment and instructional materials; and conduct requisite program audits and evaluations.
- **Evaluation Criteria:** Applications are evaluated based on the proposed strategies to increase the number of nurses while maintaining the quality of instruction, student retention, and licensure examination pass rates; proposed budget; proposed evaluation by external evaluator; evidence of institutional support and sustainability; and performance measures, i.e., retention rates, job placement rates, and number of degrees conferred.

Improvement Grants are designed to support lower-performing nursing schools by providing financial assistance to make improvements aimed at increasing student retention and improving licensure examination pass rates. Grants are awarded on an annual basis. An in-house program evaluation focused on measuring progress in meeting objectives and outcomes is required at the end of the grant period.

- **Fiscal Year 2018 Applications:** Improvement Grant Applications were posted on the Board web site on September 14, 2017. The Illinois Center for Nursing assisted the Board staff with notifying the nursing schools about the grant program and application. Applicants were asked not to exceed \$37,390 (four awards that total \$149,560 or 40 percent of the appropriation amount).
- **Fiscal Year 2018 Eligibility:** The ADN and BSN programs must have licensure pass rates for first-time test-takers that are less than 85 percent or program attrition rates that are greater than 15 percent. The RN-BSN completion programs must have a program attrition rate that is greater than 15 percent.
- **Uses:** Grant funds may be used to develop or expand instructional programs; develop or expand academic support services; improve existing classroom space; purchase equipment and instructional materials; and conduct requisite program audit.
- **Evaluation Criteria:** Applications are evaluated based upon the proposed strategies to improve the quality of instruction, increase student retention, and increase licensure examination pass rates; proposed budget; proposed evaluation; evidence of institutional support and sustainability; and performance measures, i.e., retention rates, job placement rates, and number of degrees conferred.

Recommended Awards

In the fall of 2017 the Board received six applications for the Fiscal Year 2018 Nursing School Grant Program, two Expansion Grants and four Improvement Grants. The staff recommendation is to award two Expansion Grants and four Improvement Grant projects from the \$373,900 appropriation for the Nursing School Grant Program. Shown below are the institutions recommended for funding, the amounts of recommended funding, and a brief description of each proposal.

Expansion Grant

Illinois Wesleyan University (\$100,000). The private university will use the grant funds to address one key challenge in the University's expansion efforts that has yet to be remedied, attrition rates of first year nursing majors in the BSN program. The School of Nursing accepts first year students directly into the nursing program but many are challenged with successfully navigating anatomy and physiology during their first two semesters. Although the first year attrition rate for 2016-2017 is 13 percent, it is quadruple the rate prior to the University's expansion efforts (e.g., 3.1 percent in 2008-2009). The criterion for the Expansion Grant is 15 percent or less.

The funding will cover the cost of an advanced anatomy medical imaging table with an extensive library of digital materials. See Appendix 1 for pictures of the technology. This equipment will provide a virtual dissection table tailored to the learning styles of today's students that go beyond lecture based courses and traditional laboratory assignments. Onsite training for faculty and staff in the Department of Biology and the School of Nursing will be provided. The University plans to use the portable table beyond the first year prerequisite science course with full integration into courses during the first year of the nursing curriculum.

An external evaluator will observe utilization of the table in the classroom and laboratory settings as well as be given access to Instructor and Course Evaluation Form outcomes for the anatomy and physiology classes using the table. Incorporation of hands on learning using the table will begin the first year of study to increase retention by reducing the number of first year students who leave after failing anatomy and physiology. This will provide an opportunity to disseminate data-driven findings about learning outcomes using a virtual dissection table to improve student comprehension of knowledge of anatomy and physiology.

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (\$30,488). The public university will use the grant funds to support their online accelerated RN-BS program. The plan is to incorporate Lightboard technology to boost student engagement and enrollment. See Appendix 1 for pictures of the technology. Some registered nurses are reluctant to enroll in a fully online program because the media is unfamiliar or they dislike the sense of disconnectedness to the faculty or class. The Lightboard technology helps to remedy those issues by providing a visual instructional delivery system that allows faculty to face their students, simulating a face-to-face interaction, and present difficult content in a dynamic manner, while still in a fully online, asynchronous format.

The funding will cover the costs of Lightboard installation and faculty time to modify course content using the new technology to provide a more interactive and engaging format. Content using the Lightboard will be created by designated faculty in all six courses in the RN to BSN program, i.e., pathophysiology, health assessment, care of populations, scholarly inquiry, quality and safety, and leadership. The newly created course content will be delivered to one section of students in each of the six courses during the spring 2018 term (the experimental group). Students in the remaining sections will serve as the control group, receiving the same content but without the use of lightboard technology. The combined experimental and combined control groups will have a sample size of approximately 125 students each.

An evaluation measure will be developed by the investigator and then administered to students in all course sections to rate their experience. Questions will include items related to knowledge and understanding of the presented content, perceived engagement with the faculty member, and satisfaction with the delivery modality of content. Faculty will also be asked to

evaluate their experience with the Lightboard technology, including ease of use, perceived engagement with students, and any barriers to implementation.

Improvement Grants

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC), Olney, Fairfield, Robinson, and Mt. Carmel (\$37,390). The IECC will use the grant funds to upgrade their human patient simulation equipment from low to medium fidelity as part of their Technology Initiative. The upgrades will help retain the millennial-aged students who are accustomed to technology in the classroom and will help students gain the critical thinking skills needed in the professional field of nursing. IECC students will have unlimited access to information which will reflect current professional practice and instill within the students a sense of confidence in their abilities to perform high-quality patient assessment in the workplace.

IECC will update the nursing program by using active learning strategies in the classrooms for the 210-250 students who enroll each year. With smart TVs in each classroom, faculty can present information from their iPads via Apple TV and engage students through conceptual learning modules, PowerPoint presentations, discussions, and other learning options. In addition, smart TVs in the campus labs will be used for case studies, simulations, and videos. IECC will update their current simulation equipment by purchasing replacement parts for the older manikins and updating simulation packs for improved and more interactive simulations.

The IECC will monitor the project and will provide institutional support. Progress towards improving student retention and the pass rates for RN licensing will be measured over multiple semesters. The evaluation methods include the use of faculty and student surveys and the tracking and analysis of exam scores, course grades, and institutional enrollment reports. The IECC will support this project by providing the installation, maintenance, software upgrades, and professional development for faculty.

Kaskaskia College (KC), Centralia (\$37,390). The community college will use the grant funds to decrease the program attrition rate to below 15 percent. Utilizing previous grant funds awarded by IBHE in 2013, KC analyzed data and adopted three significant policy changes that successfully improved the first time pass rate for the RN licensure exam from 83 percent in 2011 to 91 percent in 2016. While the adoption of new policies all contributed significantly to the improvement in test scores, it also led to the loss of students who were unable to successfully meet the high standards.

This project will focus on increasing the use of human patient simulation scenarios to capture theoretical content that is most frequently deficient among the KC students. This project includes professional development for new and existing faculty to implement teaching strategies associated with simulation learning and how to properly use the simulation equipment. A simulation lab technician and a project coordinator will assist faculty members in linking course content to simulation through pre-briefing, simulation, and de-briefing.

A team of IECC faculty and administration members will support the project by dedicating time to evaluate the progress on five goals each semester. They will regularly measure course failure rates, faculty use and confidence with simulation equipment, use of simulation in course curriculum, student mastery of content, and student evaluations.

Morton College, Cicero (\$37,390). The community college will use the grant funds to help improve student pass rates on RN licensure exams and rates of student retention. The plan is

to improve through increasing student engagement by providing the preferred learning styles of the Hispanic millennial students. Morton College will update teaching styles and upgrade technology in the classroom through the use of interactive whiteboards or Smart boards (a large touch-sensitive whiteboard that uses a sensor for detecting user input equivalent to using a mouse or keyboard). Lectures delivered with Smart board technology have been found to increase the academic achievement of nursing students by increasing interest and motivation to learn. The use of the technology in the classroom allows for activities to be saved and used for later review. Visuals and presentations can be annotated and marked up by the instructor (or by students) to be saved and distributed.

Morton College will purchase three Smart board systems (each system consists of an interactive whiteboard, a computer, a projector and software) and professional development for the faculty in using and incorporating this technology in the classroom. Faculty will implement new teaching strategies using the Smart board with an awareness of the learning preference of the millennial generation. Use of the new technology will be constantly monitored to ensure faculty members become knowledgeable and proficient in the use of Smart board technology and to ensure students are satisfied with technological resources and teaching methods in the classrooms. Attainment of student learning outcomes, improved retention and improved pass rates on RN licensure exams will be used to evaluate the success of the program.

Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights (\$31,920). The private, not-for-profit college will use the grant funds to help increase student retention in the BSN program. The goal is for the attrition rate to go from 27 percent down to less than ten percent. There has been a consistent struggle with the retention of students past the first semester in the junior year and the most common cause is failing to meet the required exam score to progress. As a result, interventions developed to increase clinical student retention are focused on helping students to improve their exam scores.

Trinity Christian College will use the funds to (1) purchase computers to be used by students for practice tests and by faculty to better align curriculum and tests; (2) expand the College's peer tutoring program using recent RN graduates; (3) compensate faculty for off-contract work on curriculum and test-writing during the summer; (4) provide additional supplies and equipment for medication calculation training to help improve safety; and (5) enroll faculty in the test-writing course by the National Center for State Board of Nursing.

Recommendation

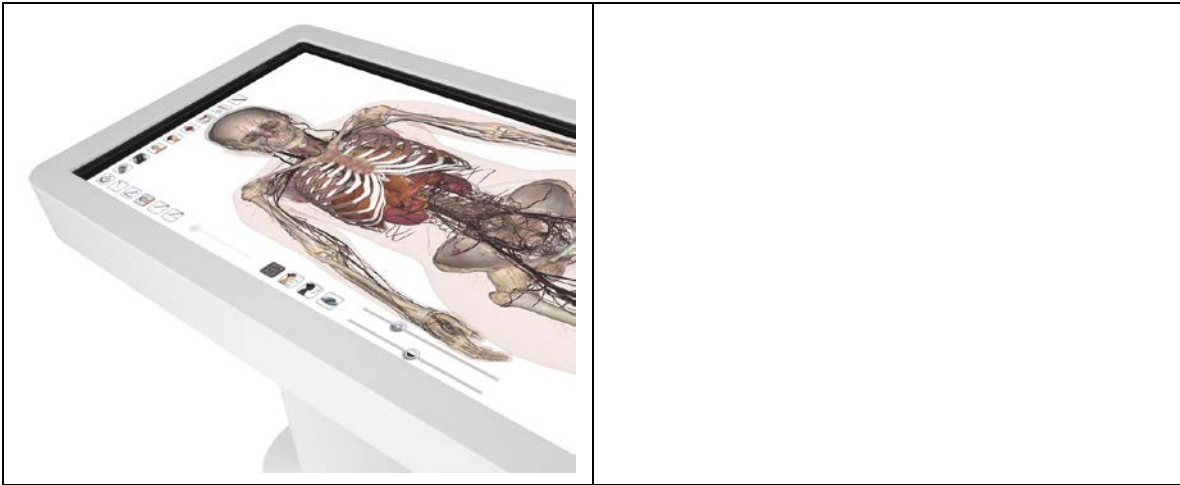
The staff recommends the adoption of the following resolution:

The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby approves the Fiscal Year 2018 awards totaling \$274,578 for Expansion and Improvement Grant projects under the Nursing School Grants Program as detailed in this item and shown in Appendix 1. The Board authorizes the Executive Director to adjust the award amounts in the event that grantees can use additional funds for their approved projects or to prorate the awards if the amount of funds appropriated is reduced.

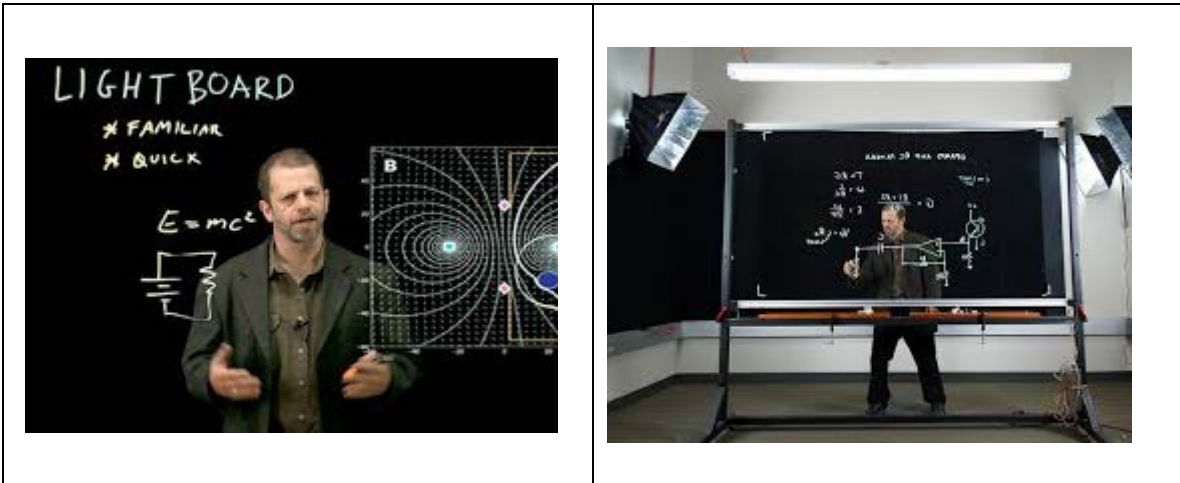
APPENDIX 1

Fiscal Year 2018 Nursing School Grant Program Recommendation

Illinois Wesleyan University
Anatmage 3D Medical Imaging Table Convertible



Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Lightboard System Package



APPENDIX 2

Fiscal Year 2018 Nursing School Grant Program Recommendations

	Fiscal Year 2018 Recommended Amount
<u>Expansion Grants</u>	
Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington (private not-for-profit)	\$100,000
Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville (public university)	30,488
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	\$130,488
<u>Improvement Grants</u>	
Illinois Eastern Community College, Olney (public community college)	\$ 37,390
Kaskaskia College, Centralia (public community college)	37,390
Morton College, Cicero (public community college)	37,390
Trinity Christian College, Palo Heights (private not-for-profit)	31,920
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	\$144,090
Total	\$274,578

