

Making the Case for Program Fees in the Fay W. Whitney School of Nursing (SON)

August 24, 2016

I. Case for Program Fees for the SON

As a professional discipline, nursing education requires nursing students to have a variety of clinical experiences in simulated and as well as actually clinical settings. Providing this type of education requires additional resources beyond the usual costs associated with higher education. For example, most schools of nursing have sophisticated simulation centers where students can learn key professional skills, e.g., inserting a nasogastric tube. Moreover, students spend significant time in clinical facilities, such as hospitals and nursing homes, providing patient care to real patients. This requires supervision by nursing faculty to ensure that the student is attaining the required professional competencies and is providing safe patient care.

Given the nature of professional nursing education, a variety of additional resources are needed, such as the following:

- In order for students to practice in the school's Clinical Simulation Center, high-tech mannequins and other simulation equipment and supplies are needed.
- Supervision of students in clinical facilities requires faculty travel around the state and region.
- Students need preparation for the NCLEX, the national licensing examination required for practice.

Furthermore, nursing graduates are in high demand with 90-100% employment of UW graduates in Wyoming and the rest of the country. The average annual salary for a registered nurse in Wyoming is \$62,080 (Bureau of Lab Statistics, 2015).

II. Comparison to Tuition and Fees at Comparator Universities

For the purposes of our analysis, the University of Wyoming identified eleven (11) peer institutions (Utah State, Nevada-Reno, New Mexico State, Oklahoma State, Rhode Island, Maine, Idaho, Montana State, South Dakota State, North Dakota State and Montana) and nine (9) aspirational peers (Kansas State, West Virginia, Clemson, Colorado State, Washington State, Nebraska, Texas Tech and Utah). Not all of these universities have nursing programs and are not included in the comparison (Oklahoma State, Idaho, Montana, Kansas State, Nebraska-Lincoln, although University of Nebraska Medical Center does have a nursing program and it is included in this comparison). In addition, several other peer institutions were included that have nursing programs.

Of these institutions with nursing programs, all but two charge some form of course fee or program fee (Washington State University and Texas Tech are the exceptions; See Table 1). The average course fee charged by peer institutions is \$76 per credit hour. The average course fee for aspirational peers is \$59. The average program fee charged by peer and aspirational institutions is \$1029, in addition to their base tuition which is significantly higher than UW's base tuition. The findings are similar for other School of Nursing peers.

Table 1: Course and Program Fees Comparison with Peer and Aspirational Institutions

Institution Name	Base Resident Tuition (30 cr hrs)	Mandatory Fees	Total Base	Nursing	Info based on program costs only (not base) UW	
					UW Equivalent cost to student	Equivalent income based on current Nursing enrollment
University of Wyoming School of Nursing Basic BSN program enrolls 96 students at 59 NURS program credits.						
UW Peer Institutions Charging Per Credit Fees						
University of Nevada - Reno	\$6,218	\$974	\$7,192	\$157	\$9,091	\$872,688
University of Maine	\$8,370	\$2,258	\$10,628	\$50	\$5,888	\$565,248
South Dakota State University	\$7,170	\$1,020	\$8,190	\$98	\$7,319	\$702,624
Utah State - Logan, UT	\$5,814	\$1,052	\$6,866	\$0	\$4,388	\$421,248
New Mexico State U - Las Cruces, NM*	\$5,307	\$1,422	\$6,729			
Montana State U - Bozeman, MT **	\$5,330	\$1,557	\$6,887			
Average Peer	\$6,368	\$1,380	\$7,749	\$76	\$6,671	\$640,452
University of Wyoming	\$3,720	\$1,335	\$4,388	\$30	\$5,288	\$507,648
* NMSU charges \$50-\$150/course which is equiv. to \$4763-\$5513 UW cost.						
**MSU website notes a program fee, but unable to locate amount.						
UW Aspirational Peers Charging Per Credit Fees						
West Virginia University	\$6,720	\$1,272	\$7,992	\$103	\$7,478	\$717,888
Texas Tech U (HSC)- Lubbock, TX	\$5,610	\$3,702	\$9,312	\$0	\$4,388	\$421,248
University of Utah - Salt Lake City, UT	\$7,452	\$1,110	\$8,562	\$73	\$6,579	\$631,574
Average Aspirational Peer	\$6,594	\$2,028	\$8,622	\$59	\$6,148	\$590,237
University of Wyoming	\$3,720	\$1,335	\$4,388	\$30	\$5,288	\$507,648
UW Peer and Aspirationals Charging Program Fees						
Clemson University - Clemson, SC	\$13,418	\$900	\$14,318	\$270	\$12,488	\$1,198,848
University of Rhode Island	\$11,128	\$1,756	\$12,844	\$1,600	\$7,588	\$728,448
North Dakota State U-Main Campus	\$6,924	\$1,283	\$8,207	\$1,088	\$6,564	\$630,144
University of Utah	\$7,408	\$1,110	\$8,518	\$400	\$5,188	\$498,048
Washington State University - Spokane WA ***	\$10,916	\$1,050	\$11,966		\$4,388	\$421,248
Average	\$8,487	\$1,383	\$9,856	\$1,029	\$6,447	\$695,347
University of Wyoming	\$3,720	\$1,335	\$4,388	\$989	\$5,377	\$516,193
***note WSU charges \$226-388/year, which is equiv. to \$4614-\$4776 UW cost.						

Institution Name	Base Resident Tuition (30 cr hrs)	Mandatory Fees	Total Base	Nursing	Info based on program costs only (not base) UW	
					UW Equivalent cost to student	Equivalent income based on current Nursing enrollment
Schools of Nursing Peers Charging Program Fees						
University of North Dakota	\$6,679	\$1,458	\$8,137	\$1,000	\$5,388	\$517,248
Idaho State University	\$6,956		\$6,956	\$1,780	\$6,168	\$592,128
Boise State	\$7,080		\$7,080	\$850	\$5,238	\$502,848
University of Nebraska Medical Center****	\$8,845		\$8,845	\$5,022	\$9,410	\$903,360
Average	\$7,390	\$1,458	\$7,755	\$2,163	\$5,598	\$628,896
University of Wyoming	\$3,720	\$1,335	\$4,388	\$989	\$5,377	\$516,193
****UNMC has differential tuition and fees for each major and for each year.						
Schools of Nursing Peers Charging Per Credit Fees						
University of Northern Colorado- Greeley	\$8,250	\$2,748	\$10,998	\$64	\$6,308	\$605,568
University of South Dakota	\$7,155	\$1,302	\$8,457	\$98	\$7,319	\$702,624
University of Colorado - Colorado Springs	\$11,490	\$1,685	\$13,175	\$14	\$4,808	\$461,568
University of Connecticut*****	\$14,070	\$15,840	\$29,910	\$13	\$4,788	\$459,610
University of New Mexico-Main Campus	\$5,286	\$1,664	\$6,950	\$185	\$9,938	\$954,048
Average	\$10,241	\$5,394	\$15,635	\$47	\$5,806	\$636,684
University of Wyoming	\$3,720	\$1,335	\$4,388	\$30	\$5,288	\$507,648
*****UCONN fee breakdown (rough average of \$400 per year or \$13.32 per credit based on 68 credits.						

III. Instructional and Experiential Costs Associated with Delivering High Quality Nursing Education

Table 2 outlines the costs associated with delivering high quality nursing education at the Fay W. Whitney School of Nursing. In order to meet our promise of national licensure readiness and clinical practice readiness (See section VI), the proposed program fees will support professional examination preparation, simulation supplies and equipment, faculty supervision of clinical education, clinical teaching supplementation, accreditation costs, student leadership development and emergency instructional needs.

Table 2: Required Expenditures for High Quality Nursing Education

Service/Consumable	Total Amt per Year
Support for Clinical Instruction	\$48,285
Faculty Supervision of Clinical Education	\$11,616
Simulation Lab Supplies and Equipment	\$10,800
NCLEX Preparation & Assessment	\$13,723
Accreditation Costs	\$1,920
Student Leadership Development	\$4,080
5% emergency funds	\$4,521
Total	\$94,945

IV. Credit Hours in School of Nursing

The SON has a class size limited to 96 students. Each student takes 67 credits specific to the nursing major for a total of 6432 credits/year for all Basic BSN nursing students.

V. Proposed Program fee for Basic BSN students

The SON proposes a program fee for all Basic BSN students of \$30.00/credit to cover the additional costs of professional nursing education. Students registered in courses with the NURS designation and sections from 1 – 39 (not Outreach sections) in the Basic BSN program of study will pay the program fee. The additional program fee will cost Basic BSN nursing students an additional \$2,010 in addition to tuition and mandatory fees. The Nursing Program fee with the addition of the \$12/credit for Health Sciences Fees and SciQ fees will bring the cost of a 4 year degree for the Basic BSN student to \$3,844 in addition to UW tuition and mandatory fees.

VI. Promise to Students :

- a. Readiness for national licensure (the NCLEX).
- b. Clinical readiness to practice as a registered nurse

VII. Measures of Success and Accountability

- a. NCLEX pass rate

- b. Graduation rates and credits completed to graduation
- c. Employment rates

VIII. Steps Taken to Date to Cut Costs and Increase Efficiencies

The SON has already taken significant steps to increase efficiencies. Faculty job descriptions have been revised to ensure that faculty meet the standardized job description of 3/2 for tenure track faculty and 4/3 for academic professionals. In addition, the SON combined two staff positions into one position to gain more efficiencies in the student support infrastructure, and decreased the number of course sections by increasing course registration caps in our on-line BSN program for registered nurses. Moreover, the SON has dramatically increased enrollments and graduation rates over the last 5 years by partnering closely with the Outreach School to offer several undergraduate and graduate programs.