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SEMO Sets Online Nursing Program Fees

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CAPE GIRARDEAU - The Southeast Missouri State University Board of Regents recently approved incidental fees equal to in-state undergraduate incidental fees for all students enrolled in the totally online Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN to BSN) degree program.

The Board also approved a \$100 per credit hour special course fee for required online nursing courses in the program effective for the spring 2012 term.

Under the new schedule, online RN to BSN students will pay the current incidental fee rate for in-state students of \$187.80 per credit hour, \$30.70 per credit hour in general fees and \$12.50 per credit hour in online course fees.

“These fees are intended to assist in funding the technology infrastructure required for online instruction,” said Kathy Mangels, vice president for finance and administration.

She says nursing has higher than average instruction costs. The \$100 per credit hour special course fee is designed to attract and retain quality nursing faculty to teach and administer the program.

Due to changes in Southeast’s current RN to BSN program, the University has seen a steady increase in enrollment from the first online class admitted in fall 2008, Provost Ron Rosati said.

He says the growth is reflective of several curriculum changes implemented, including moving from offering face to face to totally online RN to BSN courses; offering courses in eight-week blocks; and allowing registered nurses to complete all nursing course requirements (25 hours or six courses) in two semesters.

More than 70 registered nurses have been accepted into the nursing RN to BSN online program at Southeast, Rosati said.

A single incidental fee rate for students in an online major recognizes that enrollment is not limited by physical location of the student. It also expands accessibility of the program beyond the geographic boundaries of Southeast campuses, Mangels said. This fall, only five out-of- state students are in the RN to BSN major. The Department of Nursing’s goal is to enroll 60 new students in the major for next spring.

Rosati said most nurses in the United States are prepared at the associate degree level. “Currently 65.9 percent of RNS do not have a BSN,” he said.

Research shows the majority of these RNS are employed full-time, working 40 to 60 hours per week in health care settings. In 2001, a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services panel called for two-thirds of the nursing workforce to have a baccalaureate or higher degree in nursing by 2010. The effect of advanced education research linking a BSN-prepared workforce and better patient outcomes has been the driving force behind promoting BSN-in-10 legislation, including in Missouri, Rosati said.

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