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Three Rivers To Run Nursing Program

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Three Rivers College will soon oversee the Practical Nurse programs located in Kennett and Hayti, MO. The Practical Nursing programs are one-year Licensed Practical Nurse certificate programs offered at the Career Technical Centers in both towns.

“Typically, adult learners enter these classes who have not necessarily taken college classes,” said Kim Shackelford, former Director of Nursing at Three Rivers. Shackelford has since stepped down from the position, which is now held by Staci Campbell.

“There are no general education requirements for these programs,” said Shackelford, regarding the programs’ accessibility. “All of those pieces are built into the curriculum. Students train to become eligible to sit for the NLCEX PN exam to become a licensed practical nurse. From there, they can build up experience or attend additional classes, like LPN-to-RN bridge programs, pending additional general education requirements.”

“According to the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC), the state of Missouri will need an additional 7,800 Licensed Practical Nurses by the year 2018,” reported Campbell. “The rate of growth for this profession is expected to triple that of the state’s average growth, so there is expected to be a high demand for LPNs. The average yearly salary for a LPN in the state of Missouri is \$34,178 with entry level at \$28,654.”

Administrators of the two practical nursing programs at the Career Technical Centers in Hayti and Kennett contacted Three Rivers officials in the spring of 2012.

“The CTCs at Hayti and Kennett are on a cash-based accounting system,” said Shackleford. “In order for them to continue to offer the PN programs and for the students to be financial-aid eligible, they would have been required by the federal government to switch over to an accrual-based system.”

According to Shackleford, this would’ve been cost-prohibitive, as the PN programs were their only adult education programs at the CTCs, and the only programs that would require this switch in accounting.

“With Three Rivers administering the program, students in these areas can continue to get this training and receive financial aid to pay for it,” said Shackleford.

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The program is Pell-grant eligible, so several forms of financial aid can be used to pay for the training, including WIA and TRA funds.

“The Practical Nursing programs are a valuable resource for the community,” said Campbell. “They allow residents to obtain an education that will provide them with a life-long career. Three Rivers College welcomed the opportunity to assist in continuing the education of practical nurses in southeast Missouri. Both programs have a history of success, and Three Rivers hopes to continue that tradition as we take the programs into the future.”

“We’ve admitted the first class, and they’ll start on July 23,” said Shackleford. “Our deadline for admission to the next class will be February 1, 2013.”

“What’s great about us taking over leadership of the two PN programs is that we can start to advise these students from the beginning,” said Shackleford. “Gen education courses are not required in the PN program, but students can actually take gen ed classes while they’re in the program so that they’re 100 percent ready to enter our bridge program once they’ve become an LPN.”

The PN programs teach basic nursing skills with a pediatric component, an obstetrics component, mental health, geriatrics, surgery, IV therapy, plus training in leadership and management roles.

“The PN program offers more hands-on, practical didactic experience, whereas the RN program focuses more on the theory behind the application of nursing,” stated Shackleford, who also said that the programs will be very similar to what the CTCs

offered before.

“The biggest difference is that we’ve converted the coursework from non-credit hour to credit-hour curriculum,” said Shackelford. “This is a 65-credit hour program, so they’ll actually be getting 65 college credit hours, but the amount of course work and clinical work is virtually the same. If another institution that teaches nursing has an articulation agreement with LPN schools like us, they’ll accept those hours and transfer credits toward an Registered Nurse degree, and graduates of our program would only have to take one additional year to become an RN.”

The program will accept applications again in 2013. Applicants must hold a high school diploma or GED, must take the TEAS-V exam and go through an interview process. Those admitted to the program are determined by a combined score based on the results of both their TEAS-V exam and their interviews.

For more information, contact the Nursing and Allied Health Center at Three Rivers, the Career and Technical Center in Kennett or Pemiscot County Career and Technical Center.

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