

BACKGROUND AND REQUEST

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY-ASHTABULA CAMPUS Associate of Applied Science in Respiratory Therapy Technology

Executive Summary/Recommendation

This program meets Regents' standards for associate degree programs. Concerns raised during the review of this proposed program regarding program duplication and the availability of clinical sites in the region were addressed by representatives of the Kent State University-Ashtabula campus.

Request: Kent State University-Ashtabula proposes an Associate of Applied Science degree in Respiratory Therapy Technology in response to the growing need for trained Respiratory Therapists in northeast Ohio. Respiratory Therapists function as a member of a healthcare professional team and have the skills to evaluate, treat, and manage patients with respiratory illnesses and other cardiopulmonary disorders.

The Office of Vice President for Regional Development at Kent State University commissioned a study in 2006 to determine the need for allied health programs in northeast Ohio. The study was conducted by Eduventures, who examined information and data provided by the Ohio Department of Labor, hospital administrators in the region, and the Northeast Ohio Nursing Initiative (NEONI). The results of the study indicated the healthcare industry in northeast Ohio is expected to grow faster than total employment in the region. Currently it is anticipated that 8,000 new healthcare positions will be needed to accommodate this growth. The projected growth for respiratory therapists is 29.6% by 2011.

Representatives from the Ashtabula County Medical Center and other healthcare providers in the region met with the Ashtabula Campus Dean and other campus personnel to express their current and projected need for respiratory therapists in their healthcare facilities. Several of the healthcare providers related their willingness to expand the availability of clinical sites to accommodate the additional students from this proposed program. One healthcare provider offered to pay the salary of a clinical site supervisor to further indicate its endorsement and support of the program's development.

Program Purpose/Mission: The Kent State University Regional Campus system is charged with delivering a wide variety of technical education and training programs to the communities served by its regional campuses and with delivering programs and services that encourage economic development by enhancing business and employment opportunities.

The proposed Respiratory Therapy Technology program supports the mission of the Ashtabula campus and offers students interested in a healthcare career pathway an opportunity for employment and advancement in Ohio's growing healthcare industry. The proposed program compliments several degree programs already approved in Nursing, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Physical Therapist Assistant and Radiologic Technology.

Enrollment: The Ashtabula campus is projecting an enrollment of 30 full-time students and 10 part-time students beginning spring of 2009. To increase the student enrollment in the program each year, the College plans to use targeted marketing efforts directed towards healthcare providers

in the region, the Adult Career Centers, College Tech Prep Programs and recent high school graduates.

Curriculum: The proposed program curriculum is designed to meet the Standards and Guidelines for the Profession of Respiratory Care of the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs requires that programs applying for initial accreditation convene a study group whose membership includes representatives from potential clinical sites, employers of potential graduates and at least one program director from an accredited, unaffiliated Respiratory Care education program in the region. A study group was formed by the campus and the study group sent its 'statement of support' for the development of the program to CAAHEP. The College will continue to use the study group to ensure all accreditation requirements are met.

The accreditation standards require that general education, science and respiratory care courses be offered in an appropriate sequence to ensure classroom, laboratory, and clinical activities are incorporated into the curriculum. Students successfully completing the proposed program will be eligible to take the registry examination to become a Registered Respiratory Therapist.

The proposed program will begin spring 2009, allowing high school graduates and returning [adults](#) [adult's](#) time to complete the pre-requisites and/or developmental courses required for this proposed program. The spring start-up date also assures the availability of clinical practicum sites in the region, as there are a number of two-year campuses who use the same hospitals, clinics and other healthcare facilities for their clinical practicum experiences.

Faculty/Resource Needs: The proposed program will be a part of the College of Education, Health and Human Services Department, within the School of Speech Pathology and Audiology. The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs standards requires specific program positions be a part of the proposed program. The Program Director must be a Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) and hold a professional license or certificate as required by the state in which he or she is employed. The Program Director will be responsible for all aspects of the proposed program including organization, administration, continuous review and program effectiveness. The proposed program will also be required to have a full-time Director of Clinical Education and a part-time Medical Director. Credentialed faculty members will be used to teach the required general education and basic science courses.

The construction of a new state-of-the-art Health and Science building is underway with an anticipated completion date of spring 2009. The new Health and Science building will have a number of classrooms and labs available for students, including functional patient care stations, a Human Patient Simulator, and a Cadaver Anatomy lab (one of only a few in the area).

The College is financially prepared to support the cost of implementing this new program.

Program Duplication: The two closest post-secondary institutions offering the same program in region are Lakeland Community College, located more than 38 miles away from the campus and Gannon University, a private institution located in Pennsylvania and more than 55 miles away from the campus. Ashtabula campus representatives contacted the two campuses during the development of this proposed program. One campus raised a concern regarding program duplication and the impact it could have on established clinical sites where multiple campuses use the same clinical site. Communication and cooperation between the two institutions continues as both want to ensure that students enrolled in this proposed program have an opportunity to achieve an accessible and affordable education, as well as be able to complete the clinical site practicum experiences needed for graduation.

