

New RN degree program meets community need

Reduces wait time to enter programs and workforce

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Editor in Chief

Beginning spring 2010, the new RN Associate Degree in Nursing Program will hold classes on the Oceanside campus. "The entire nursing faculty is excited to offer this to our students," said Sandy Comstock, Associate Dean of Nursing and Allied Health. "There has been a shortage [of nurses] for a long time and we anticipate a shortage through 2020."

The program already has a waiting list to fall 2012 and beginning Feb. 1, will accept applications on an ongoing basis. The wait list for similar programs can be three to four years. MCC's new program will help reduce the wait list for the program and meet a community need. Students who were on waiting lists at other colleges have applied to MCC. "The wait list is technically to fall 2012 but will most likely become shorter as people drop off the list," said Aimee Gralla, Secretary, Nursing and Allied Health.

"It creates more opportunity for the students with another 30 students per year into the workforce," said Gralla. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, registered nurses constitute the largest health care occupation with 2.5 million jobs, 59 percent of which are in hospitals. "Registered nurses are projected to generate about 587,000 new jobs over the 2006-2016 period, one of the largest numbers among all occupations, overall job opportunities are expected to be excellent, but may vary by employment setting," according to the BLS Web site.

MCC's Registered Nursing program is approved by the California Board of Registered Nursing. Graduates from the program are eligible to take the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Licensing Exam for licensure as a registered nurse. Program units also transfer to any 4-year college or university BSN program. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median annual salary for registered nurses was \$57,280 in May 2006.

Graduates may also qualify for the student loan forgiveness program

offered through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services called NELRP. The program repays 60 percent of the qualifying nursing educational loan balance of Registered Nurses selected in exchange for two years of service at a critical shortage facility. The purpose of the NELRP is to assist in the recruitment and retention of professional RNs to provide health care in facilities with a crucial shortage of nurses.

Before students can apply to MCC's RN Associate Degree in Nursing Program they must complete with a grade of no less than C, science prerequisites of Human Anatomy, Human Physiology and Microbiology. Also required are general education prerequisites of English 100 and Math 101. In addition to prerequisites, students must pass a background check, drug screen and health assessment.

The RN program is a two year full time curriculum. The RN Associate Degree in Nursing Program replaces the full time LVN program. The part time LVN program will still be available to students as well as the LVN-RN Step up program.