**Metropolitan State University of Denver Department of Nursing**

**Dual Enrollment Coordinator Position Brief**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this brief is to provide both quantitative and qualitative support for the funding of a benefits eligible, 1 FTE, Administrative Staff position in the Department of Nursing dedicated to managing the Dual Enrollment Pathway Program and to the tracking, retention and success of students in the Baccalaureate Registered Nursing Completion Option (BRNCO) program. This position, currently titled Dual Enrollment Coordinator, will be grant funded within the Department of Nursing through August 2017, at which point the department hopes MSU Denver will agree to provide funding support.

**Introduction – What is Dual Enrollment?**

Dual Enrollment for Nursing at MSU Denver is a pathway intended for students who are pursuing an Associate’s Degree in Nursing (ADN) at a partner community college and intend to bridge to their Bachelor’s in Nursing (BSN) with MSU Denver in the BRNCO program. The pathway allows students to utilize time and financial aid at their community college, or home school, to complete prerequisites and other requirements for a BSN at MSU Denver, before transferring to MSU Denver fully to complete the BRNCO program.

**Background for the Dual Enrollment Pathway Program and Coordinator Position**

MSU Denver first established a Dual Enrollment Pathway Program in the 2013-14 academic/fiscal year, after receiving a pair of grants from The Caring for Colorado Foundation and The Colorado Health Foundation to help launch the program. Approximately $202,000 was awarded to fund marketing materials, travel expenses, curriculum updates, and the salary and benefits for a full time Dual Enrollment Coordinator. This grant money is expected to last until August 2017 and, at that point, will have funded 1 FTE, travel, and marketing for the equivalent of 3 years.

Upon creation, the primary responsibilities of the Coordinator position were to collaborate with community college representatives, develop marketing materials, and manage all aspects of onboarding students entering the Dual Enrollment Pathway. After the first employee in the Coordinator position moved on and the Nursing Department hired for a new employee, the position was re-written to include advising and information sessions for students and staff, student tracking, grant reporting, and budget management, on top of the previous responsibilities. In essence, the position became full management of the Dual Enrollment Pathway Program, from initial contact with an interested student through to the student’s BSN graduation from MSU Denver.

**Program and Position Outputs and Accomplishments**

Since its inception, the Dual Enrollment Pathway has had strong results and continues to contribute to enrollment of students in the BRNCO program. In 2016, the Dual Enrollment Coordinator made 46 community college visits to engage in marketing, recruitment, and advising of potential and current students, with about 1000 individual student touches overall.

The number of students served and community college partners continues to grow. Some notable data include:

* Community College Partnerships – 5 community colleges (7 campuses), 2 pending partnerships
* Students in the Dual Enrollment Pathway - 229
  + 175 community college students
  + 54 ADN graduates pursuing BSN coursework enrollment
  + Before 2016 – 56 (from start of position to 1/2016)
  + 2016 – 100
  + 2017 – 19 to date (2/17)
* Dual Enrollment Students currently enrolled in BRNCO Nursing courses - 22
* Dual Enrollment Students who have graduated the BRNCO program – 5

**Position Impact at MSU Denver**

Perhaps the most significant impact of the position, outside of the individual impact on students, is the overall impact on enrollment and retention at MSU Denver.

First, the position directly impacts enrollment in the BRNCO program, which brings tuition revenue into MSU Denver as a whole. This impact has been increasing with the presence of a consistent Dual Enrollment Coordinator in the role. Some data that supports this is:

* BRNCO program students overall – 166
  + Percentage of current BRNCO enrollment that comes from Dual Enrollment: 13%
    - Percentage of Fall 2016 Class: 26%
    - Percentage of Spring 2017 Class: 57%
    - Percentage of current Summer 2017 applicants: 91%

The enrollment impact of a 6 month vacancy in the Dual Enrollment Coordinator position further demonstrates this point:

* Spring 2015 ADN graduates Dual Enrolled: 17.
  + Graduates enrolled in BRNCO: 1
* Fall 2015 ADN graduates Dual Enrolled: 17.
  + Graduated enrolled during vacancy: 0
  + Graduates enrolled after vacancy: 6

Beyond the direct impact on Nursing Department enrollment, the loss of the position has the potential to cause retention issues at MSU Denver overall. Without the Dual Enrollment Coordinator, there is only 1 advisor in the department of nursing, tasked with serving every Undeclared Nursing Interest (UNN) major at the university. UNN is MSU Denver’s largest major and is also one of the top 3 majors for transfer students from all transfer admissions partnerships.

UNN students are a high-need group, and there are over 800 students with this major designation that have attended classes at MSU Denver in the past 4 semesters. While advisor caseload varies based on institution size and type as well as student need, a NACADA recommended caseload for MSU Denver would be somewhere between 300 and 600 students. Having a Dual Enrollment Coordinator takes approximately 200 of the highest-need students off the advising caseload and will increase quality of advising, which will have a ripple of effects on student satisfaction, retention, and overall success. In addition, it has the potential to decrease issues of enrollment, retention, and clogging of the system in Admissions, the Office of the Registrar, Transfer Services, and other student support areas.

Furthermore, MSU Denver is in competition with 4 other institutions for Dual Enrollment, so the lack of a physical staff presence at recruitment and advising events will inevitably hurt overall enrollment in UNN students, a large number of whom change majors and complete other degrees at MSU Denver once they arrive.

**Additional Considerations**

The Dual Enrollment Pathway Program is in line with other strategic initiatives at MSU Denver:

* + Increase in online program offerings
  + Potential for new Dual Enrollment Pathway partnerships in the future
  + MSU Denver’s mission to serve all students, especially those underserved by others

The Dual Enrollment Coordinator Position is the only position in the Department of Nursing solely dedicated to serving this population of students from start to finish. This position is accompanied in the Nursing Department by only 1 other position with an advising role. In addition, MSU Denver does not contribute budget dollars to funding any other staff positions in the Department of Nursing; all other staff FTE are funded from the cash revenue budget of the Traditional and Accelerated Nursing Programs, despite revenue brought into MSU Denver through UNN and BRNCO student enrollment.

**Arguments Against and Potential Solutions**

With MSU Denver’s current and recurring enrollment and budget crunch, it is clear that a major argument against continuing to fund the position, or re-designing the position to better fit the needs of the department, is financial. It is important to be transparent about projected position costs, as well as offer creative solutions to this concern.

As a reminder, the department has managed to fund the position and all related costs for the equivalent of 3 years on the $202,000 grant budget. This comes out to about $67,000 per year for full program expense. In addition, no tuition revenue generated by UNN or BRNCO students is coming back to the department in the form of staff position funding.

As far as costs to the department, the BRNCO and cash funded budgets should provide all necessary funding for position travel and program marketing costs. This leaves the university with only the cost of the salary, benefits, and unemployment coverage for the Dual Enrollment Coordinator Position. The Department of Nursing is open to conversation about cost-sharing or creative solutions for this portion of the cost to the university, including pulling from the cash-funded program budget or re-allocating summer dollars that have previous been disallowed for salary costs. However, MSU Denver should strongly consider the importance of investing in the position based on rationale mentioned above.