

The Florida Senate
PROFESSIONAL STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: Higher Education Committee

BILL: SB 1648

INTRODUCER: Senator Gaetz

SUBJECT: UWF/M.S. Degree/Nursing/Social Work

DATE: March 15, 2007

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Brown</u>	<u>Matthews</u>	<u>HE</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
2.	_____	_____	<u>HP</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	<u>HI</u>	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

This bill authorizes the creation of both a master of science degree program in nursing and a master of science degree program in social work at the University of West Florida.

This bill creates section 1004.386 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners and Certified Master Social Workers

Section 464.012, F.S., requires advanced registered nurse practitioners to hold current licensure to practice professional nursing. Certification is required, as provided by rule of the Board of Nursing, in the following categories:

- Certified registered nurse anesthetists;
- Certified nurse midwives; and
- Nurse practitioners.¹

Section 491.0145, F.S., authorizes the Department of Health (Department) to certify an applicant as a certified master social worker subject to the following:

- Submission of an application to the Department;
- Proof of receipt of a doctoral degree in social work, or a master's degree with a major focus in clinical practice or administration;

¹ s. 464.012(2), F.S.

- At least three years' experience in practice at an advanced level; and
- An acceptable examination score.²

New programs leading to a degree offered as a credential for a specific license granted under law or the State Constitution require specific legislative approval.³

New Masters' Programs at the University of West Florida

Master of Science in Nursing

The School of Allied Health and Life Sciences at the University of West Florida (UWF) convened an advisory committee, staffed by the regional health care community, junior college representatives, and health-related UWF personnel. Over the last year, the committee examined the educational needs of the health care industry, and determined that a Master of Science in Nursing program is greatly needed. Of critical importance, the committee noted, is the need for nurses skilled in geriatric care, due to the significant increase in the senior population in Northwest Florida. Committee members also concluded that an insufficient supply of academic programs is available to accommodate the pool of qualified graduate nursing applicants, due to a lack of faculty. Specific recommendations included an education track, an administration track, and a certificate in Geriatric Nursing. Since its inception in 2001, the Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing program has increased from 24 to 303 students.

Master of Science in Social Work

The University of West Florida (UWF) additionally requests expansion of its current Bachelors in Social Work program, to a Masters in Social Work program. As support for its request, UWF asserts that this discipline provides considerable diversity in specialization. Fields of practice include health care, including mental health care; children and family services; child welfare services; gerontology; criminal justice; rehabilitative services; developmental disabilities services; and military family services. The UWF also indicates the critical need for a greater workforce of social work professionals.

Critical Need Occupations

According to the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI), some areas in Florida report current and projected shortages of registered nurses. Researchers cite an aging registered nurse workforce and an inadequate number of nursing graduates as the basis for the short supply of the profession.⁴

A similar shortage exists regarding social workers in the state.⁵ The demand for social workers, like other social and human service assistants, as categorized by the AWI, is also expected to outpace supply. In fact, AWI indicates that this category ranks among the most rapidly growing occupations.

² s. 491.0145(1) through (4), F.S.

³ s. 1004.03(3), F.S.

⁴ See: <http://www.labormarketinfo.com/library/pubs/profiles/nurse.pdf>

⁵ See: <http://www.labormarketinfo.com/library/pubs/profiles/socialservice.pdf>

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This bill authorizes the University of West Florida to establish separate masters of science level degree programs in the areas of nursing and social work.

If this bill passes, the only school in the State University System that would not have a graduate program in nursing would be the New College.

Graduates of either program will be eligible for certification to practice in Florida.

The Board of Governors indicates that placing an academic program in statute is problematic because it impedes the ability of the university to terminate or make changes to the degree program.

IV. Constitutional Issues:**A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. Other Constitutional Issues:

The Second Judicial Circuit struck down s. 1004.03, F.S., in its entirety, in a Summary Final Judgment, on February 28, 2007.⁶ The State Board of Education filed a Motion for Rehearing and/or Motion to Alter or Amend Judgment on March 7, 2007. Therefore, the case is reopened, and the outcome of the court's decision is uncertain at this time.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

These programs will provide greater access to advanced job opportunities, in the areas of social work and nursing.

⁶ *Floridians for Constitutional Integrity, Inc., v. State Board of Education*, 2nd Judicial Circuit (2004 CA 003040).

C. Government Sector Impact:

For the Masters Degree in Nursing program, UWF projects first year costs at \$280,661, expected to reach \$463,116 in the fifth year of implementation. This reflects a student population starting at an estimated 15 FTE, increasing to 40 by year five. Most of the costs will be absorbed through existing capacity, with remaining costs to be funded through private support or reallocations from low-enrollment programs. Additionally, UWF has received commitments from local and regional hospitals for moneys to support development of the masters program.

For the Masters Degree in Social Work program, UWF projects a cost of \$815,651 in the first year of implementation, to increase to \$904,266 in the fifth year, reflecting an increase in student FTE from 14 to 56 students. All costs would be funded through existing capacity in the current Department of Social Work.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

The Board of Governors indicates that the request for approval of these new programs is on the University Board of Trustees' agenda for the March 20, 2007 meeting.

VIII. Summary of Amendments:

None.

This Senate Professional Staff Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
