

**Minnesota State University, Mankato
School of Nursing**

**Proposal for Differential Tuition for Graduate Program Courses
February 16, 2009**

Purpose

Differential tuition (\$100.00/credit) will serve to ensure high quality master's level education in the School of Nursing and enhance student support services to assure student success. Differential tuition would be in effect at the beginning of FY2011 allowing publication of tuition structures for student decision making.

Outcome

Differential tuition will help the nursing master's level programs to become self-sustaining while maintaining academic rigor in high demand programs.

Need for Differential Tuition

Unanticipated Enrollment Strain

The School of Nursing (SON) faculty revised two existing masters programs, the Family Nurse Practitioner Program and the Clinical Nurse Specialist Program, and created a new Nurse Educator Program in October, 2007. These programs were all approved through the usual University curriculum approval process and support the SON in addressing the University wide goal to "increase the quantity and quality of service to the state, region, and global community through collaborations, partnerships, and opportunities for cultural enrichment and continuous learning."

Since the new programs provided more flexibility in sequencing of courses, and to be responsive to student requests, the faculty also approved a rolling admission plan, where students could begin the program in spring or summer in addition to the traditional fall enrollment start date. While the faculty anticipated teaching the additional course credits called for by the revised and new programs, the faculty underrated the extent of the continued growth in student enrollment in the master's programs, which has necessitated offering multiple sections of some courses in order to maintain the high quality of the graduate student experience. Consequently, the expenses associated with faculty teaching the programs were underestimated.

Continued Growth in Student Admissions to SON Master's Level Graduate Programs

A review of student admission statistics over the last three years demonstrates the gradual, positive growth in admissions and enrollment in the SON Graduate Programs:

Fall 2006.....	22 student admissions
Spring, Summer, Fall 2007.....	39 student admissions
Spring, Summer Fall 2008.....	40 student admissions
Spring 2009	49 applicants; 15 admissions

There is an average of 15 students enrolled in each of 13 graduate courses being offered in spring 2009, ranging from 5 - 25 per class (this excludes thesis course enrollment).

Maintaining Quality of Instruction

“The faculty’s responsibility is to challenge and support students by structuring learning activities/situations that require inquiry, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Learning is optimal when faculty and students develop a dynamic professional relationship fostered by mutual respect and when they engage in critical reflection. As a result of this learner-focused approach to education, the student develops cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills that can be used in diverse life situations” (School of Nursing Philosophy Statement, 2008).

The faculty notes that as hybrid online graduate class sizes increase, the amount of participation in discussion sessions increases, but the word count decreases (Hewitt & Brett, 2007). In addition, student satisfaction with online learning is related to instructor/instruction variables (DeBourgh, 1998/2003). DeBourgh defined these variables as the promptness with which the instructor recognizes student’s questions; the instructor’s professional behavior, the extent to which the instructor encourages class participation; the clarity with which class assignments are communicated; the accessibility of the instructor outside of class; instructional techniques that help in understanding the course material; and the timeliness with which written work is graded and returned. These findings suggest that as access to interaction with the instructor decreases, student satisfaction with learning decreases. Thus, the graduate faculty members in the School of Nursing desire to maintain class sizes that support instructor and instructional access so that graduate student challenge and support is realized. Currently courses are capped at 20 students although faculty recognize that 12-16 would be optimal for graduate student learning (Tomei, 2006). See the attached Differential Tuition Survey for student responses regarding needed support services and class size preferences (Appendix A). In addition, see the attached Letter of Proposal Support from Kaye Herth, RN, PhD, Dean of the College of Allied Health and Nursing that states the common nationwide practice of differential tuition to offset the high cost of master’s level education.

Competitive Faculty Salary

In addition to unanticipated student enrollment growth, nursing faculty salaries have increased, further escalating program costs. The increase in faculty salaries (\$65,000-\$70,000 for probationary track faculty in 2007-2008) occurred as a result of successful hiring of faculty to fill six vacancies in fall of 2007 and the market factor necessary to elevate nurse faculty salaries to be competitive with salaries of doctorally prepared nurses working outside of academe. Graduate program planners underestimated the extent of the market factor that elevated the salaries of the faculty in these positions.

Projected Needs

The growth in student admissions in the master’s level graduate programs in the SON is expected to continue. The current economic climate with high rates of job loss (even for nurses) paradoxically stimulates people to return to school and become better

educated to obtain higher paying jobs. The large influx of BSN completion program students provides a larger pool of potential master's level students. As well, closure of the nurse educator track program and master's programs in nursing at the University of Minnesota and the post nurse practitioner certificate program at Metropolitan State University may mean a larger pool of students for these Minnesota State Mankato programs. The growth of evidence-based practice emphasis in clinical settings has created a new demand for clinical nurse specialists (CNS) and, according to the President of the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists, MSM CNS graduates are desired and our commitment to CNS education is valued (Personal communication, 2009). In addition, the expansion of Extended Learning programs at the new Twin Cities MSM campus site means that the SON can offer graduate courses in the Twin Cities to attract these students. The SON offered one graduate course at the new 7700 France site in fall of 2008 and three courses are being offered there in spring 2009. These efforts by the SON aim to meet the University wide goal to "strengthen its role as a major provider of graduate education, offering intensive, scholarly graduate programs including collaborative efforts with other institutions and professionals, culminating in student expertise at professional levels." In addition, the differential tuition initiative will support the CAHN goal to "provide innovative accessible high quality undergraduate and graduate educational programs and continuing education programs responsive to the needs of students and health service professionals."

Target for Differential Tuition Use

Differential tuition will be needed to offset the expenses of master's level education and ensure continued high quality master's level education in the SON. Seeking use of Differential Tuition to support graduate nursing education addresses the University goal to "establish priorities through planning and assessment processes that define our needs and focus our efforts and resources in support of our mission and

... Faculty values and maintains a thesis requirement for completion of the program. In order to assure continued student success in completing a thesis, the faculty proposes hiring a part-time Professional Writer/Editor to assist students writing course papers and particularly theses. The estimated cost of [\$35,000] for a half-time technical writer will be absorbed by differential tuition. Thus, differential tuition dollars will directly benefit students, who each need to write a thesis, and indirectly benefit faculty, who will be free of the time consuming nature of working with students on writing to focus on other aspects of graduate teaching and scholarship. See Appendix C for documentation of School of Nursing Graduate Faculty approval of this proposal.

Student success will be further enhanced with the designation of a Student Support Facilitator to provide support services for all master's level students in the SON, made possible with differential tuition. Students will benefit directly from a Student Support Facilitator who will provide master's level student guidance in accessing needed resources for success. Examples of these resources may be background checks for clinical placement, clinical placement coordination, nursing-specific grant and loan application resources to support financial assistance, statistical or data analysis assistance for thesis research, and support with application and presentation of materials at the

Graduate Student Research Conference. Graduate faculty members who currently hold the responsibility and time commitment to provide student support in these areas will benefit indirectly as they are free to pursue research agendas in which master's students could partner. Coordination of clinical placement, for instance, has become increasingly complex in order to support the three clinical courses in the family nurse practitioner program (a total of 600 hours for each student over three semesters) This complexity is due to intense competition for sites, the need for travel to multiple clinical facilities to build professional relationships and arrange learning contracts with the administrators, and the multiple unique requirements for each student at each clinical facility that rapidly changes as health care regulations change. These factors are not unique to our programs and have been cited as impediments to responding to the nursing shortage by the Oregon Center for Nursing (<http://www.studentmax.org/>). It is likely that this complexity will increase in the future and that intense commitment to clinical coordination is necessary and that coordinating such activities is not possible within the current faculty workload FTEs.

A third target area for differential tuition dollars is to enhance the SON ability to offer hi-fidelity simulated learning experiences for graduate students. Increasing simulated learning opportunities will enhance the complexity of learning in a safe setting. For instance, hi-fidelity simulated learning could be used for teaching individual health assessment and intervention and family assessment and intervention. Best practices in this approach to learning call for a dedicated simulation laboratory manager to develop, schedule, coordinate, and run hi-fidelity simulation experiences. The estimated salary for a .25 FTE lab manager is predicted to be approximately \$17,500 and this would be paired with a .75 position sponsored by either School of Nursing or external grant funds to equal a 1.0 FTE position.

Differential tuition, in providing dollars for such student support services, increases the ability of the SON to meet University goals to "enhance advising, support services, and learning experiences that aid students in identifying life goals, planning academic careers, and achieving timely graduation" and to "strengthen its role as a major provider of graduate education, offering intensive, scholarly graduate programs including collaborative efforts with other institutions and professionals, culminating in student expertise at professional levels."

Finally, while the SON master's level programs are offered primarily online with each didactic course meeting face-to-face four times a semester, each of the programs requires practicum courses which require a high degree of faculty supervision. For instance, the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (The National Taskforce on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education, 2002) accreditation standards dictate that one faculty be assigned to a group no larger than six students in the practicum course. Supplementing the current School of Nursing budget with Differential Tuition will help us meet accreditation needs and maintain reasonable class sizes that ensure the quality mission of the graduate faculty. Additionally, the graduate faculty is committed to the quality of instruction necessary to support an increasingly diverse student population and maintaining didactic class sizes of 12- 17 will strengthen the ability to use teaching pedagogies that target inclusivity.

Projected Consequences

Possible negative image consequences of charging increased amounts for graduate tuition have been considered by the nursing faculty. While \$100 tuition differential at Minnesota State Mankato would compare negatively with other MNSCU state universities, it still compares slightly positively with the University of Minnesota. The comparative cost advantage of attending Minnesota State Mankato versus the University of Minnesota for master's level education in nursing will be maintained.

Table 1. Comparative Tuition and Fees

State Universities 2008-2009	Resident Graduate Tuition Rate Per 1 Credit	Tuition Plus Fees Amount
Bemidji State University	\$303.00	\$400.98
Metropolitan State University	\$262.00	\$363.43
Minnesota State University Moorhead	\$268.81	\$437.63
Minnesota State University, Mankato	\$283.75	\$316.79
Southwest Minnesota State University	\$287.60	\$323.16
St. Cloud State University	\$275.20	\$304.78
Winona State University	\$293.05	\$310.98
Other Colleges/Universities 2008-2009		
University of Minnesota	\$449.00	\$504.00 (plus \$336/semester student fee if ≥ 6 credits)
College of St. Catherine	\$676.00	\$706.00
Bethel University	\$450.00	\$450.00

Increasing the tuition by \$100.00 per credit (to a total of \$416.79 per credit), while it would leverage additional needed resources, would still maintain the competitiveness of our programs with other comparable programs in the state.

Market Conditions: Student Assistance for Tuition

There are student loan programs available that help students offset the expense of graduate education in nursing. Specifically, the Health Resources and Services Administration's Nurse Faculty Loan Program provides loans to students enrolled in eligible advanced degree programs. In addition, through the SON, graduate level nursing students are eligible annually to apply for nurse traineeship dollars to support tuition and fees. These traineeships have been made available to students on a regular basis since the beginning of the graduate programs and provide between \$700 and \$3000 per eligible student per academic year. Currently, of XX students enrolled in the graduate programs, YY students receive traineeships. In addition to these School of Nursing facilitated grants, health care employers provide tuition reimbursement to the majority of graduate

students. For instance, nurse employees at the Mayo Clinic qualify for up to \$7,200.00 per calendar year for graduate tuition reimbursement; Allina Hospitals nurses who covered by the Minnesota Nurses Association collective bargaining agreement are eligible for \$3,500 per year in tuition reimbursement and nurses at Immanuel-St. Joseph's-Mayo Health System qualify for up to 75% of tuition debt incurred annually up to a lifetime amount of \$6,000 .

Program Costs for Student

Program costs are detailed in Table 2. Please note current number of credits per program, number of credits taken by the average 2 year student (taking enough credits to complete the degree in two full calendar years), tuition and fees for the complete program and the projected additional amount that would be realized by adding the differential tuition income as well as the total program cost with the differential added.

Table 2. Current and Projected Program Costs

Estimated cost (tuition and fees) to take one student through the programs currently: Program	Number of Credits	Average Number of credits taken by a FT student per semester and in summer session	Tuition Plus Fees for Entire Program	Additional Amount of Tuition with \$100/credit Differential per semester and in summer session	Additional Amount of Tuition with \$100/credit Differential for Entire Program	Total Tuition with Differential
Family Nurse Practitioner	53	8	\$16,789.87	\$800	\$5300.00	\$22,089.87
Clinical Nurse Specialist Program	47	8	\$14,889.14	\$800	\$4700.00	\$19,589.14
Nurse Educator Program	48	8	\$15,205.92	\$800	\$4800.00	\$20,005.92

Projected Income Gain

If, on average a student takes 24 credits per year, and tuition increases \$100/credit, then increased cost is \$2,400 per year per student. There are currently 110 graduate students enrolled in all programs. If 50% of those students are full time students, then the increased tuition for 50 graduate students taking 24 credits per year would yield \$120,000 per year. Thus, \$120,000.00 additional income per year would be available to

fund the positions of Professional Writer/Editor and Student Support Facilitator and partial support of a simulation laboratory manager. Table 3 demonstrates the influence of varying amounts of Differential Tuition per credit upon Graduate Programs income.

Table 3. Projected Increased Income based upon Differential Tuition of \$100, \$75 and \$50 per Credit

Credits/Semester (using Spring 2009 as model)	Credits/Academic Year (using Spring 2009 (13 courses), & Projecting Summer 2009 (8 courses), Fall 2009 (15 courses) as model)	Differential Income/Year(# credits x \$100.00)	Differential Income/Year(credits x \$.75.00)	Differential Income/Year (# credits x \$50.00)
546	1,512	\$151,200.00	\$113,400.00	\$75,600

Projected Personnel Costs

Table 4 gives an overview of the personnel costs for the personnel that could be supported by Differential Tuition.

Table 4. Yearly Projected Personnel Cost at end of 4-Year Phase In

Position	Projected Salary	Benefits	Total Cost
Writer/Editor (.5 FTE)	\$35,000	\$10,500	\$45,500
Student Support Facilitator	\$63,000	\$18,900	\$81,900
Simulation Lab Manager (.25 FTE)	\$17,500	\$5,250	\$22,750
			\$150,150

Detailed Budget and Narrative

The projected income and expenditures over a four year phase-in of Differential Tuition in the School of Nursing Graduate Programs is listed in Table 5. The plan will begin with charging Differential Tuition Fees in Year 1 but not implementing the full personnel plan in Year 1. We will begin by funding the positions of Writer/Editor and a .5FTE Student Support Facilitator. The 4-Year progression of adding personnel as Differential Tuition is collected is described. It should be noted that though we anticipate that we will continue to increase the number of generated credits that will contribute to income, an increased number of credits per year is not factored into this predicted

expenditure plan. By maintaining and increasing student satisfaction, we should be able to realize increased generation of credits that would contribute to increased available differential tuition.

Table 5. Detailed 4-Year Budget

Position	Year 1	Year 2 (with .3% cost of living increase)	Year 3	Year 4
Writer/Editor	\$45,000	\$46,350	\$47,740.50	\$49,172.70
Student Support Facilitator	(.5 FTE) \$40,650	(.75 FTE) \$65,110	(.75 FTE) \$67,063.30	(.75 FTE) \$69,075.19
Simulation Lab Manager		(.25 FTE) \$23,175	(.25 FTE) 23,727.25	(.25 FTE) \$24,439.07
Total Personnel Costs	\$85,650	\$134,635	\$138,531.05	\$142,686.96
Income*	\$151,120	\$157,667 (with 10% carryover from Year 1)	\$166,886.70 (with 10% carryover from Year 2)	\$167,808.67 (with 10% carryover from Year 3)
Income - Cost	\$65,470	\$23,032	\$28,355.65	\$25,121.71
Available for Maintaining Class Size and Carryover 10%	\$65,470	\$23,032	\$28,355.65	\$25,121.71

*An increased number of credits per year is not factored into this predicted expenditure plan.

Summary

To summarize, we believe that the high demand for our programs at a time of nursing faculty shortage necessitates creativity in finding ways to meet student needs, creativity in supporting quality, and ingenuity in designing innovative strategies for meeting curriculum goals to prepare the next generation of nursing leaders. We believe that a Differential Tuition plan will aid us in addressing these challenges.

References

- DeBourgh, G. A. (1998). Learner and instructional predictors of student satisfaction in a graduate nursing program taught via interactive video teleconferencing and World Wide/Internet (Doctoral Dissertation, University of San Francisco, 1998).
Dissertation Abstracts International, B 59 (03). (UMI No. AAI9828453)
- DeBourgh, G. A. (2003) Predictors of student satisfaction in distance-delivered graduate nursing courses: What matters most? *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 19 (3), 149-163.

- Hewitt, J. & Brett, C. (2007) . The relationship between class size and online activity patterns in asynchronous computer conferencing environments. *Computers & Education*, 49, 1258-1271.
- The National Taskforce on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education (2002). *Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Education*.
- School of Nursing Philosophy Statement (2005). In Graduate Nursing Student Handbook available on line at http://ahn.mnsu.edu/nursing/graduate/gradstudhdbk_gradprogramsoverview.pdf.
- Tomei, L. A. (2006) . The impact of online teaching on faculty load: Computing the ideal class size for online courses. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 14 (3), 531-541.

Appendix A
Differential Tuition Survey

Minnesota State University, Mankato
College of Allied Health and Nursing
School of Nursing Graduate Programs
Differential Tuition Survey

Data Collected from February 24 – March 6, 2009
Distributed via Survey Monkey to All Graduate Nursing Students

The purpose of this survey is to obtain graduate student input about services that are needed or could be enhanced in the provision of quality graduate education in the SON as well as student input about the idea of increased tuition to pay for such services. The graduate faculty goal is to continue to provide the same high quality education for increased numbers of students.

Surveys Returned: n=21

1. As a current or former graduate nursing student, what types of student support services do you believe could be provided for you by the School of Nursing to support graduate education? Themes of the results are as follows:

More library resources (such as the video podcast presentations) and focused information on searching the literature
Technical, phone/email info, library space at Edina location, more offerings in Edina
More assistance with clinical site placement
Career development (e.g. interviewing, resume writing) for advanced practice nursing
Faculty writing of program grants to support students
Faculty supervised research/clinical tutorial
Plan of study coordinator
Class scheduling coordinator
Conduct of a new student orientation before the semester begins; new student orientation module with handout or orientation re: standard bibliography format expected for papers, on-line research databases available to students, and which ones are particularly helpful to nursing students, any people resources dedicated to assisting graduate nursing students with these types of questions, etc
Increased availability of professors
Faculty availability for thesis advising
Live models for health assessment

2. What do you believe to be the ideal size (number of students) for a graduate nursing didactic course? Why?

___ n=2 ___ 10 (number of students)
___ n=1 ___ 10-12
___ n=2 ___ 10-15
___ n=1 ___ 10-20
___ n=1 ___ 15
___ n=1 ___ 15-20
___ n=6 ___ 20-25

- ___ n=1 ___ 20-30
___ n=1 ___ 30 (only if broken into small groups for discussion within the class)
___ n=5 ___ No preference as long as class is broken into small groups for discussion

3. For which of the following service(s) would you be willing to pay (or would have paid) additional tuition?

___ 14 ___ thesis support

___ 13 ___ thesis seminars

___ 10 ___ writing consultation

___ 10 ___ data analysis support

___ 10 ___ survey tool development

___ 5 ___ small class sizes

___ 8 ___ managing clinical requirements

___ 5 ___ hi-fidelity simulations

_____ other (please specify):

- * Aren't all of these normal expectations as part of a graduate course advanced fees?
- * I don't feel additional tuition is necessary these things should be included with the current rates, as it's high enough the way it is to pay for education
- * The services listed above offered in the cities [at 7700 France]

Appendix B
Letter of Proposal Support



DATE: March 10, 2009
RE: Differential Tuition Proposal Support Graduate Program School of Nursing
FROM: Dr. Kaye Herth, Dean *K Herth*
College of Allied Health and Nursing

I fully support the Differential Tuition Proposal for the Graduate Programs in the School of Nursing. Differential tuition is a common practice across the nation in graduate nursing programs and is needed to offset the high cost of master's level education. The proposed uses of the differential tuition dollars, as outlined in the proposal, are critical to providing a high quality educational experience for graduate students and supports needed resources for student success.

Appendix C

Minute Item Indicating Approval of Differential Tuition Proposal by School of Nursing
Graduate Faculty

Minnesota State University, Mankato
School of Nursing
Graduate Faculty Committee Meeting
February 20, 2009

Attendance: OnSite: M. Bliesmer, S. Eggenberger, P. Young, K. Willette-Murphy, S. Meiers, D. Witt, N. McLoone, L. Welch

Via WebEx: N. Krumwiede, S. Bell, D. Hill, P. Camillo. D. Brauer

Unable to Attend: M. Stevens (at AACN Master's Conference, Orlando, FL); R. Rudel (at Promotion and Tenure Workshop)

Convener: S. Meiers

Old Business

A. Approval of minutes from December 12, 2008 and January 9, 2009

a. Approved with corrections unanimously.

B. Differential Tuition Proposal

S. Meiers reviewed the School of Nursing Graduate Differential Tuition proposal as revised based on faculty feedback. Revisions were recommended to strengthen the proposal (attached). P. Young reported that the survey of graduate students regarding differential that the faculty approved has been placed on Survey Monkey and will be sent to all graduate students soon. This data will be helpful as the proposal moves through the steps of approval.

Action: *Approved unanimously. S. Meiers will guide the proposal through the process of approval at the University.*

C. Graduate Admissions Proposal

S. Bell reviewed data regarding GRE and interviews used in comparable nursing graduate programs. There was consensus around the idea that we do not want to use the GRE but favor use of the interview and onsite essay in our Admission process to strengthen our standards of admission and assure validity of written essays. The Admissions subcommittee reviewed the rationale for the proposed admission process and guiding documents.

Actions:

Approved with recommendations. Moved by Mcloone/Seconded by Bliesmer passed unanimously. Recommendations are that GPA and essay comprise Tier 1 of review process. Those students achieving high Tier 1 scores will be invited for an onsite interview, Tier 2. The general idea will be that the interview score will be added to the GPA and essay scores

Graduate Faculty Minutes

2.20.09

SJM