WEST virginia legislature

2021 regular session

Originating

House Bill 2030

By Delegates Ellington, Smith, Graves, J. Pack, Toney, Mazzocchi, Higginbotham and tully

[Originating in the Committee on Education; Reported on March 18, 2021]

A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new article, designated §18B-16A-1, §18B-16A-2, §18B-16A-3, and §18B-16A-4, all relating to a establishing a nursing program at Concord University; providing for funding; and setting forth accountability and reporting requirements.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

Article 16A. CONCORD NURSING PROGRAM.

§18B-16A-1. Establishment of the Concord nursing program.

The Legislature recognizes the growing shortage of qualified nurses in the state and that currently the state has a shortage of more than 2,000 trained and qualified nurses and recognizes that number is expected increase in the coming years. Due to accreditation requirements, limited capacity for field experience and clinical placements, and needed facility requirements, existing nursing programs in the state are currently at or near enrollment capacity and it is therefore clear that new nursing programs must be added to address this growing shortage. Accordingly, the Legislature authorizes Concord University to establish a nursing program that ultimately can accommodate a minimum of 30 new nursing students each year to help address the growing needs of the state. By October 1, 2021, under the direction and administration of the Vice Chancellor for health services, the commission’s division of health sciences shall develop and assist Concord University in developing a nursing program that may begin in the fall semester of 2022, but shall begin to accept students no later than the fall of 2023. Prior to implementation of this program, Concord University shall submit an application to establish a new pre-licenser nursing education program for the preparation of practitioners of registered professional nursing to the West Virginia Board of Examiners for Registered Professional Nurses and shall comply with §30-7-5 and §30-7-5a of the Code until such time as they achieve national board certification.

§18B-16A-2. Implementation of the program.

(a) The commission’s division of health sciences shall create criteria for funding of the program that shall be based on the following:

(1) Attainment by the nursing program of accreditation by a national nursing accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education;

(2) Ability to scale the nursing program for cohort to be entered into as early as the fall of 2022, but no later than the fall of 2023, including hiring of faculty, establishment of clinical sites, and procurement of appropriate resources;

(3) Presentation of a plan for success with an expanded class including, but not limited to, retention, graduation, and licensure examination success; and

(4) Plan for assistance with career placement in the state upon graduation.

§18B-16A-3. Funding.

(a) The Concord University nursing program established in this article shall be supported financially in part by a line item appropriation to the Concord University account that shall be a part of the request by Concord University and the Higher Education Policy Commission in their budget requests. In fiscal year 2023, the Higher Education Policy Commission shall include in their budget requests, and the Governor shall include in each budget bill submitted to the legislature, an appropriation for the Concord University nursing program in an amount not less than $1,5000,000 for fiscal year 2023, to cover initial costs and operating costs, and in the following 4 years, a minimum of $1,000,000.00, for continuing operating and start-up costs and expenses, with the expectation that the Concord University nursing program will become self-funding thereafter. Appropriations to the Concord University nursing program shall be by line item.

(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this code, any funds appropriated to support the Concord University nursing program that remain unallocated or unexpended at the end of any fiscal year shall not expire, shall remain in the line item to which they were originally appropriated, and shall be available in the next fiscal year to the Vice Chancellor for health services and the commission’s division of health services for allocation or expenditure for the purposes of this article.

(2) Additional financial support shall come from fees generated by services, from grants and contracts, and from community resources. Any fees so generated shall be paid to and expended by the Concord University nursing program unless an alternative fee arrangement is mutually agreed upon by the chief administrator of the Program and the Vice Chancellor for health sciences.

(b) Consistent with the Legislative declaration, in §18B-2-6 of this code, that adequate funding will be pursued to maintain the accreditation, integrity, and quality of nursing or medical education and other health sciences programs, the commission’s division of health sciences shall prepare a budget for the Concord University nursing program established in this article with funding included for, but not limited to, the following:

(1) Salary and benefits for the nursing program faculty and staff;

(2) Student financial support or assistance in exchange for a commitment to render one year of nursing services in West Virginia for each year of financial support.

§18B-16A-4. Accountability, reports required.

(a) The West Virginia Board of Examiners for Registered Professional Nurses shall report annually by September 30, of each year on the progress of the Concord University nursing program’s progress towards national accreditation to the Joint Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability created under §29A-3A-11 of this code..

(b) The Legislative Auditor, at the direction of the Joint Committee on Government and Finance, shall perform on an ongoing basis a fiscal audit of the Concord University nursing program for periodic review by the Legislature.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish a nursing program at Concord University. The bill provides for funding, and sets forth accountability and reporting requirements.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.