



# Attorney General Doug Peterson

# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 25, 2019

## **Attorney General Files Lawsuit against Bellevue University**

Lincoln— Attorney General Peterson announced that he has filed a Complaint in the District Court of Sarpy County, Nebraska, against Bellevue University. The case relates to Bellevue University's Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program specifically designed to assist current registered nurses in obtaining their baccalaureate or bachelor's degree. Bellevue University referred to this program as its "RN to BSN" program. The Complaint alleges that Bellevue University made false, deceptive, and/or misleading statements to prospective and current students regarding the accreditation status of its RN to BSN program and the value of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from an unaccredited nursing program.

Although it is not a requirement that nursing programs be accredited to confer baccalaureate degrees, an unaccredited BSN is significantly less valuable than a BSN from a college or university with an accredited nursing program. Bellevue University was aware of this prior to enrolling the first class of students in its RN to BSN program. Nonetheless, Bellevue University used deceptive advertising and marketing materials, which, combined with its false and misleading representations and statements to current and prospective students, created a significant likelihood of confusion or misunderstanding as to whether Bellevue's RN to BSN program was accredited, when it would achieve accreditation, and the importance of accreditation.

Students from Nebraska and elsewhere relied on Bellevue University's misleading statements, incurred student debt or lost their hard-earned money as a result, and were left with unaccredited degrees and worthless credit hours as a result. Between 2012 and March 2017, approximately 179 students participated in Bellevue University's RN to BSN program.

Attorney General Peterson stated, "The decision to invest in a college education is one with lifelong financial implications. Consumers are entitled to, and the law demands they be provided, accurate information when making these decisions. With today's filing, we remind

all educational institutions that they will be held accountable for the representations they make to current and prospective students.”

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Please click the link to find court documents: <https://bit.ly/2EfrewP>

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**IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF SARPY COUNTY, NEBRASKA**

<b>STATE OF NEBRASKA, ex rel.</b>	)	
<b>DOUGLAS J. PETERSON, ATTORNEY</b>	)	
<b>GENERAL,</b>	)	CI 19 - _____
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	
<b>v.</b>	)	
	)	
<b>BELLEVUE UNIVERSITY,</b>	)	<b>COMPLAINT</b>
	)	
Defendant.	)	

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**COMES NOW** the State of Nebraska, Douglas J. Peterson, Nebraska Attorney General, by and through the undersigned counsel (hereinafter collectively referred to as, “the State of Nebraska”), and brings this action against Defendant, Bellevue University (hereinafter, “Defendant”) for violating the Consumer Protection Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 59-1601 et seq. (hereinafter, “CPA”) and the Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 87-301 et seq. (hereinafter, “UDTPA”).

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The State of Nebraska brings this action pursuant to the CPA and UDTPA to protect the public and pursuant to its statutory and common law authority, powers, and duties.
2. The State of Nebraska has cause to believe that Defendant has violated the CPA and the UDTPA.
3. The State of Nebraska also has cause to believe that this action is in the public interest because Defendant has deceived, misled, and caused financial harm to dozens of consumers from Nebraska and other states.

4. The Plaintiff in this case is the State of Nebraska, ex rel. Nebraska Attorney General Douglas J. Peterson. The Nebraska Attorney General is responsible for enforcement of Nebraska consumer protection laws, including, the CPA, UDTPA, and other state and federal laws that affect Nebraska consumers. Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 59-1608, the Attorney General may bring an action in the name of the State against any person to restrain and prevent the doing of any act prohibited by the CPA. In addition, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 87-303.05 of the UDTPA, the Attorney General may apply for and obtain, in an action in any district court of Nebraska, a temporary restraining order, or injunction, or both, prohibiting a person from engaging in deceptive trade practices or doing any act in furtherance thereof.
5. Defendant is a nonprofit domestic corporation headquartered in the City of Bellevue, Sarpy County, Nebraska. Defendant includes anyone acting on behalf of Defendant in their representative capacity, including but not limited to, directors, officers, members, employees, agents, faculty, staff, and other persons working for or on behalf of the foregoing.
6. At all relevant times, Defendant did business in Nebraska by marketing, selling, and providing educational programs and services to consumers.

#### **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

7. The District Court of Sarpy County has jurisdiction over Defendant pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 59-1608.01 and Neb. Rev. Stat. § 87-303.05, because Defendant has transacted business within the State of Nebraska at all times relevant to this Complaint.
8. Venue for this action properly lies in the District Court of Sarpy County pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 59-1608.01 and Neb. Rev. Stat. § 87-303.05 because Defendant's corporate headquarters and principal place of business is located in Sarpy County, Nebraska, and Defendant transacts business in Sarpy County, Nebraska, and throughout Nebraska.

### **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

9. Bellevue University is a private, nonprofit, educational institution that offers several undergraduate and graduate degree programs.
10. Defendant is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, and has been since approximately 1977.
11. Defendant's primary campus is located in Bellevue, Nebraska, however, Defendant also offers degree programs that are completed exclusively online.
12. One such program offered by Defendant is a Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program specifically designed to assist current registered nurses in obtaining their baccalaureate degree (hereinafter, "RN to BSN Program" or "the Program").
13. One of the admission requirements of the Program is that the prospective student has to be a registered nurse (hereinafter, "RN"), with an unrestricted license to practice in any U.S. state, and be currently practicing as a licensed registered nurse or have a minimum of one year of practice experience as a registered nurse.
14. For that reason, Defendant specifically solicits and targets registered nurses for its RN to BSN Program. Solicitation of potential students occurs through various means of advertisement and marketing including: written flyers and brochures; use of Defendant's website; phone calls; in-person communications; billboards; and paid email and social media ads, all aimed at selling Defendant's Program to Nebraska citizens and consumers from other states.
15. Defendant's RN to BSN Program was developed from 2011 to 2012, and is located within the College of Arts and Sciences. Enrollment into the Program first began in 2012.
16. Defendant's RN to BSN Program requires students to complete 127 credit hours of courses.
17. The core program consists of nine, six-week courses for a total of 54 weeks. The core curriculum includes the following courses: Fundamentals of Professional Nursing, Professional

Collaborative Strategies for Nurses, Nursing Leadership, Nursing Informatics, Nursing Research and Evidence Based Practice, Population-Based Health Promotion, Healthcare Regulation, Nursing Management and Quality Healthcare, and Strategic Nursing Management.

18. In addition to the core curriculum for the Program, students are also required to complete the Kirkpatrick Signature Series which is three courses that are completed over 12 weeks. The Kirkpatrick Signature Series includes the following courses: American Vision and Values, Tradition and Change, and Freedom and Responsibility.
19. The RN to BSN Program was designed to be taken wholly online, or as a hybrid of traditional face-to-face classes alongside the use of an online classroom.
20. The first cohort of students in the RN to BSN Program began taking classes in April 2013; and approximately 21 students were enrolled at that time.
21. As of March 2017, approximately 179 students had enrolled and participated in the Program.
  - a. 63 students graduated from the Program with a BSN degree.
  - b. 116 students dropped out of the Program and/or transferred to another school/nursing program.
22. Many of these 116 students left Defendant's Program for a single reason: it lacked accreditation.
23. Prior to October 25, 2017, Defendant's RN to BSN Program was not accredited.
24. The two primary nursing accrediting bodies are the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (hereinafter, "CCNE") and the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (hereinafter, "ACEN").
25. It is not a requirement that nursing programs be accredited to confer baccalaureate degrees.
26. However, an unaccredited Bachelor of Science in Nursing ("BSN") is significantly less

- valuable than a BSN degree from a college or university with an accredited nursing program.
27. Students interested in pursuing graduate school or obtaining an advanced degree will have limited options, as most colleges and universities will not recognize a BSN degree conferred by a nursing program that lacks accreditation.
28. Without such accreditation, students who pursued a degree from Defendant's unaccredited RN to BSN Program and who wished to continue their education found that they were unable to do so or their options were severely limited.
29. Similarly, students who graduated from Defendant's unaccredited RN to BSN Program may find their employment options to be limited as well. Employers who require a BSN degree, either as a condition of employment or promotion, often will not recognize a BSN degree conferred by a nursing program that lacks nursing accreditation. For example, the Department of Veteran Affairs only hires RNs with BSN from nursing programs accredited by either the CCNE or the ACEN.
30. Defendant failed to disclose the limitations of an unaccredited BSN to its prospective and then-current students, despite Defendant's specific knowledge that many of those same students intended to pursue advanced degrees.
31. As part of the admission application process to Defendant's RN to BSN Program, approximately 109 prospective students completed and submitted a personal, introductory video recording to Defendant.
32. Of those 109 students who submitted a personal, introductory video recording to Defendant, approximately 30 prospective students mentioned or stated in their video a goal, desire, and/or aspiration to obtain an advanced nursing degree beyond a BSN – many as part of their career goal(s).

33. At all times relevant hereto, while enrolling and educating students in its RN to BSN Program, Defendant knew or should have known that a BSN degree conferred by a nursing program that lacked accreditation would be less valuable to students than a BSN degree conferred by a program with such accreditation.

34. However, from approximately May 2012 through at least March 2016, Defendant deceived and misled prospective and then-current students regarding the accreditation status of the Program through representations made on its website and in written and oral statements made to recruit and enroll prospective students.

#### Deceptive and Misleading Conduct

35. On or about May 2012, on Defendant's website for the RN to BSN Program under the Frequently Asked Questions (hereinafter, "FAQs") section, listed one question which read, "Is the RN to BSN program fully accredited?" The response on the website, provided by Defendant, stated, "Accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) is in process and anticipated prior to graduation of the first cohort." ("Exhibit 1")

36. This was a blatantly false statement due to the fact that as of May 2012, Defendant had not yet even applied its RN to BSN Program for accreditation through the CCNE.

37. Further, without even having submitted an application for accreditation, Defendant in no way could reasonably have anticipated that accreditation through the CCNE would be achieved by the time the first cohort of students graduated.

38. On or about October 2012, Defendant's website for the RN to BSN Program under the FAQs section, changed its answer slightly regarding the question of accreditation of the Program, stating, "[Defendant] is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Application for candidacy status for accreditation is currently in progress with the [CCNE]." ("Exhibit 2")



39. Defendant's RN to BSN Program Guide, disseminated to prospective students around 2016, prominently featured the words: "FLEXIBLE. AFFORDABLE. ACCREDITED. NONPROFIT." at the bottom of five pages of the eight page Program Guide. ("Exhibit 3" emphasis original) This type of advertising and promotional material led students to believe that Defendant's Program was accredited.
40. Additionally, some advertising and promotional material, including Defendant's website, for the RN to BSN Program contained statements regarding the degree and its value that would, at minimum, cause a substantial likelihood of confusion as to whether the RN to BSN program was accredited. (See previously marked "Exhibit 1" and "Exhibit 2"; See also "Exhibit 4")
41. The Defendant's webpage for the RN to BSN Program included a tab listing benefits of the degree. At various times between 2013 and 2016, the phrase "Accredited" was listed as one of the benefits of the BSN degree. ("Exhibit 5")
42. Defendant also expressly told certain students that the Program was accredited.
43. Defendant told other students that the Program was in the process of obtaining accreditation and would have accreditation by the time they graduated or by the time the first cohort graduated.
44. Many of the prospective students relied on Defendant's statements regarding accreditation when enrolling in the RN to BSN Program.
45. As a result of the false, confusing, and/or misleading statements and claims, both made orally and/or in writing, by Defendant as to the accreditation of the RN to BSN Program, some students who enrolled in the Program were led to believe that the Program was accredited.
46. Other students were provided false, confusing, and/or misleading information from Defendant regarding where the RN to BSN Program was in the accreditation process, the likelihood of

Defendant obtaining accreditation, and the date by which the Program would achieve accreditation.

The First CCNE Application for Accreditation

47. Upon commencement of the Program, Defendant made an intentional decision not to include a clinical component in its curriculum. Defendant apparently believed it was unnecessary since only individuals with experience as licensed registered nurses would be admitted into the Program.
48. The CCNE, however, required nursing programs to include a clinical/practicum component as part of a degree program's curriculum in order to be eligible for accreditation.
49. On or about March 2013, and just prior to the start of classes for the first cohort, Defendant initiated its application for accreditation of its RN to BSN Program through the CCNE.
50. On or around April 3, 2013, Defendant received a letter from the CCNE, addressed to former Program Director Kristen Wessel, regarding receipt and acceptance of Defendant's accreditation application. ("Exhibit 6", markings by Defendant, redaction by Plaintiff)
51. The letter included information regarding where to find information online about the accreditation process and on-site evaluation. It noted, specifically, that the on-site evaluation, *"[C]an be scheduled no earlier than 12 months in advance and cannot be hosted prior to the program having students enrolled for at least 12 months[.]"* The CCNE also informed Defendant that it was scheduling for spring 2014 through fall 2016. (See previously marked "Exhibit 6", emphasis added)
52. Between February 24 and February 26, 2014, the CCNE conducted an on-site evaluation of Defendant's RN to BSN Program.
53. The CCNE site visit was conducted by the following individuals: Audrey Berman, PhD, RN,

Team Leader; Michelle Edmonds, PhD, ARNP; and Connie Perry-Simon, RN, MSN, BC.

54. In June 2014, the first cohort of approximately 18 students graduated from Defendant's Program with unaccredited BSN degrees.
55. The aforementioned degrees will forever remain unaccredited, because on or about November 6, 2014, the CCNE notified Defendant that it would not be granted accreditation. The denial was made effective October 10, 2014.
56. In a mass email addressed to graduates, students, advisory board members, and certain community members, on or about November 17, 2014, Clif Mason, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, disclosed the accreditation denial by the CCNE.
57. Dean Mason stated, in the same email, that the Program was not granted accreditation by the CCNE due to the lack of a formalized clinical in the curriculum.
58. In a mass email addressed to students on November 18, 2014, former Program Director Wessel addressed the value of the BSN degree. ("Exhibit 7")
59. The Wessel email dated November 18, 2014, contained the statement: "The lack of nursing accreditation in no way detracts from the value of the degree." (See previously marked "Exhibit 7")
60. This same email contained an express acknowledgment by Defendant that a lack of accreditation "[W]ill narrow the possibilities with regard to application to graduate school, should you choose to go on for a [Master of Science in Nursing] or other grad degree..." (See previously marked "Exhibit 7")
61. For the first cohort of students who graduated five (5) months earlier, this disclosure in the November 18, 2014, email was too little too late.

62. Moreover, students continued to receive conflicting information from Defendant regarding the value of accreditation.
63. On November 21, 2014, Dr. Mary B. Hawkins, President of Bellevue University, as well as former Program Director Wessel emailed students, stating in part:
- “The degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing will be awarded to students who successfully complete the RN to BSN degree program. The BSN degree is of great value. Students with BSN degrees have the ability to continue toward higher education, the ability to maintain current positions, secure new positions, and be promoted within the healthcare industry. Additionally, students with BSN degrees have the ability to obtain specialty certifications.” (“Exhibit 8”)
64. The November 21, 2014, email to students contained no information regarding the limitations and implications a degree from a nursing program that is not accredited could cause for obtaining an advanced degree and/or employment opportunities.
65. In November 2014, approximately 82 students were enrolled and actively taking classes in Defendant’s RN to BSN Program.
66. After being notified by Defendant via emails dated November 17, 18, and 21, 2014, that the CCNE had denied Defendant’s application for accreditation, 40 students left the Program.
67. These 40 students were at various stages of degree completion in the Program.
68. On or about November 19, 2014, Dr. Kimberly Meisinger DNP, MS, RN, NE-BC took over as the RN to BSN Program Director.
69. Dr. Meisinger (hereinafter, “Program Director Meisinger”) remains the current Program Director of Defendant’s RN to BSN Program.

### The ACEN Application for Accreditation

70. Shortly after being denied accreditation by the CCNE, Defendant decided to apply the Program for accreditation through a different accrediting body – the ACEN.
71. On or about November 17, 2014, former Program Director Wessel received an email from the ACEN. The email stated, in part, “Look at the website for the current 2013 Standards and Criteria. This will assist the program in determining the readiness to pursue the process.” (“Exhibit 9”)
72. On or about December 19, 2014, Defendant’s application for accreditation of the RN to BSN Program was deemed eligible for the candidacy process through the ACEN.
73. In the summer of 2015, Defendant implemented a clinical/practicum component to the curriculum of its RN to BSN Program.
74. Between October 27 and October 29, 2015, the ACEN conducted an on-site evaluation of the RN to BSN Program.
75. The on-site evaluation was conducted by the following individuals: Jessica Estes, DNP, APRN-NP; Terri McKown, DNP, FNP-BC; Cynthia Swafford, EdD, RN; and Selma Ann Verse, Med, RN, FCN.
76. The ACEN’s Site Visit Report noted that the program would not be recommended for accreditation. Initial accreditation was denied for non-compliance with four of the six major Accreditation Standards.
77. One of the criterion assessed during the visit included, “Public information is accurate, clear, consistent, and accessible, including the program’s accreditation status and the ACEN contact information.”

78. The ACEN Site Visit Report indicates that site visitors found only minimal evidence of compliance with this criterion.
79. On November 20, 2015, Defendant notified students by email that it had withdrawn its application for accreditation through the ACEN.
80. Another nine students left the RN to BSN Program after receiving the aforementioned email from Defendant.
81. Between 2014 and 2015, approximately 44 students graduated from Defendant's Program with unaccredited BSN degrees. Those degrees will forever remain unaccredited.
82. Following the notice of Defendant's intent to withdraw the Program's application for accreditation with the ACEN, certain students began using a Facebook page, created by Defendant in 2013, called "Nurses Connect" to discuss Defendant's RN to BSN accreditation status.
83. Complaints and comments from affected students continued to escalate throughout the remainder of 2015 and into early 2016.
84. On or about February 4, 2016, Defendant assigned additional staff as administrators to the Nurses Connect Facebook page in order to handle student complaints regarding the Program's accreditation status.
85. On the same day, Defendant made the Nurses Connect page inactive and inaccessible to its students.
86. On or about February 4, 2016, Defendant sent a letter to the ACEN officially withdrawing its application for accreditation of the RN to BSN Program.
87. On or about April 27, 2016, Defendant implemented a new policy requiring prospective students enrolling into its RN to BSN Program to review and sign a Pre-Admission Disclosure

and Acknowledgment Form. (“Exhibit 10”) The new policy required all new students entering the Program to acknowledge the accreditation status of Defendant’s RN to BSN Program.

#### The Second CCNE Application for Accreditation

88. On or about July 28, 2016, Defendant submitted yet another application for accreditation of its RN to BSN Program through the CCNE.

89. On or about August 28, 2016, Defendant’s application for accreditation was approved by the CCNE.

90. Between October 25 and October 27, 2017, the CCNE conducted an on-site evaluation of Defendant’s RN to BSN Program.

91. In May 2018, Defendant received notification that it became accredited with the CCNE.

92. The CCNE accreditation was effective retroactive to October 25, 2017.

#### Financial Harm to Students and Defendant’s Profit Thereof

93. Students enrolled in Defendant’s Program and made tuition and fee payments to Defendant based on Defendant’s false and misleading representations.

94. The cost per credit hour for Defendant’s RN to BSN program has ranged from \$385.00 to \$415.00 per hour from 2013 through present day.

95. Students who enrolled in the Program incurred substantial costs, including student loan debt, in order to make tuition and fee payments to Defendant.

96. A number of these students have not advanced in the nursing field due to their experience with Defendant, and are currently or may soon be unable to repay their student loans.

97. For other students, financial aid is no longer available to pursue a baccalaureate degree in the nursing field.

98. Between 2012 and 2016, Defendant received tuition and fee payments from students related to the Program totaling approximately \$1,206,204.60.

99. The annual payment received by Defendant each year were as follows:

- a. \$87,320.00 for the 2012/2013 academic year;
- b. \$644,280.00 for the 2013/2014 academic year;
- c. \$445,525.02 for the 2014/2015 academic year; and
- d. \$29,079.58 for the 2015/2016 academic year.

100. For the 2016/2017 academic year, Defendant received no payments from the students enrolled in its RN to BSN Program; rather, Defendant provided \$147,600.00 worth of scholarships to those students to retain them in the Program.

**CAUSE OF ACTION I**  
**VIOLATIONS OF THE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT**  
**(Neb. Rev. Stat. § 59-601 et seq.)**

101. The State re-alleges and incorporates by reference all of the allegations contained in paragraphs 1-100 as though fully set forth herein.

102. Defendant violated the Consumer Protection Act and engaged in unfair and deceptive acts or practices in violation of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 59-602 by:

- a. Making false and/or misleading representations prospective and then-current students that the RN to BSN Program was accredited;
- b. Assuring prospective and then-current students that the RN to BSN Program would acquire accreditation by the time they graduated or by the time the first cohort graduated; and
- c. Making false and/or misleading representations to prospective and then-current students regarding the value of a BSN degree from an unaccredited nursing Program.



103. Defendant's false and/or misleading representations to consumers, prospective students, and others were material and deceived or had the tendency or capacity to deceive or mislead current or prospective students, inducing those students to enroll in Defendant's Program and to make tuition and fee payments to Defendant.
104. Defendant knew or should have known that the representations made to consumers, prospective students, and others were false and/or misleading.
105. Defendant knew or should have known that its acts or practices were unfair or deceptive acts in violation of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 59-602.
106. Defendant acquired tuition and fee payments from students as a result of its illegal conduct, causing those students to suffer an ascertainable loss and/or incur student loan debts.
107. For each and every false and/or misleading representation made to a consumer, Defendant committed a separate violation of this statute.

**CAUSE OF ACTION II**  
**VIOLATIONS OF THE UNIFORM DECEPTIVE TRADE PRACTICES ACT**  
**(Neb. Rev. Stat. § 87-301)**

108. The State re-alleges and incorporates by reference all of the allegations contained in paragraphs 1-107 as though fully set forth herein.
109. The Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 87-302 prohibits the following business activities as deceptive trade practices:
- a. Causing likelihood of confusion or of misunderstanding as to the approval or certification of goods or services (§ 87-302(2));
  - b. Causing likelihood of confusion or of misunderstanding as to affiliation with or certification by another (§ 87-302(3));

- c. Representing that goods or services have sponsorship, approval, or characteristics that they do not have (§ 87-302(5)); and
- d. Representing that goods or services are of a particular standard, quality, or grade, if they are of another (§ 87-302(8)).

110. Defendant's advertising and marketing materials, combined with its false and misleading representations to current and prospective students, created significant likelihood of confusion or of misunderstanding as to whether Defendant's RN to BSN Program had accreditation, whether the Program would have accreditation by the time students graduated from the Program, and the importance of accreditation to the value of the BSN degree that students were paying for.

111. The aforementioned practices had the tendency or capacity to deceive or mislead current and prospective students, inducing those students to enroll in Defendant's Program and to make tuition and fee payments to Defendant.

112. Defendant knew or should have known that the representations made to consumers, prospective students, and others were false, misleading, and likely to cause confusion or misunderstanding among current and prospective students.

113. Defendant knew or should have known that its acts or practices were deceptive acts in violation of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 87-302.

114. Defendant acquired tuition and fee payments from students as a result of its illegal conduct, causing those students to suffer an ascertainable loss and/or incur student loan debts.

115. For each and every false and/or misleading representation made to a consumer, or instance in which Defendant created confusion or misunderstanding, Defendant committed a separate violation of this statute.

### **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

**WHEREFORE**, the State of Nebraska, respectfully requests that this honorable Court:

- A. Permanently enjoin and restrain Defendant, its agents, employees, and all other persons and entities, corporate or otherwise, in active concert or participation with any of them, from engaging in unfair, deceptive, or misleading conduct, acts, or practices which violate the Consumer Protection Act and Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act in the marketing, and sale of educational programs and services, pursuant to the Consumer Protection Act, Neb. Rev. Stat., § 59-1608, and the Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act, Neb. Rev. Stat., § 87-303.05(1).
- B. Order Defendant to pay civil penalties of up to \$2,000 for each and every violation of the Consumer Protection Act and Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act, pursuant to the Consumer Protection Act and the Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act.
- C. Order Defendant to pay all costs and attorney's fees for the prosecution and investigation of this action, pursuant to the Consumer Protection Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 59-1608 and the Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 87-303(b);
- D. Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 59-1608(2) and 87-303.05(1), order Defendant to pay full and complete restitution to current and former students affected by the deceptive and unfair acts and practices of Defendant, including but not limited to the repayment of all tuition and fee payments acquired by Defendant and the voiding of all contracts between Defendant and any former students of the RN to BSN Program;
- E. Grant Plaintiff such other and further relief as this Court deems equitable and proper.

Respectfully submitted this 25<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2019.

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Attorney General of Nebraska

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<%@ Register TagPrefix="bu" TagName="RelatedMajors" Src="~/global/controls/RelatedMajors.ascx" %> <%@ Register TagPrefix="bu" TagName="Testimonial" Src="~/global/controls/Testimonial.ascx" %> <%@ Register TagPrefix="bu" TagName="MainNav" Src="~/global/controls/MainNav.ascx" %> <%@ Page Language="C#" AutoEventWireup="true" %>

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## Nursing Degree - Bachelor of Science

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### BSN FAQ's

Click a question below to see the answer.

#### General Questions

- [What benefit is a bachelor's degree in nursing \(BSN\)? Is a bachelor's degree right for me?](#)

Professional nurses (RN with BSN is considered entry level into professional nursing)

- Maintain a broadened scope of knowledge used to assess, plan, and intervene to promote health, prevent disease or injury.
- Uphold a unique scope of practice and can practice independently while they may also collaborate with other members of the healthcare team to provide the care needed by individuals as well as entire populations, nationally and globally.
- Continue to focus on direct and indirect patient care and outcomes.

Professional nursing roles range from direct patient care and case management to establishing nursing practice standards, managing clinical units, developing quality assurance procedures, directing complex nursing care systems, conducting clinical research, teaching in nursing programs, as well as practicing in many other fascinating settings.

The Tri-Council organizations, including the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, American Nurses Association, American Organization of Nurse Executives, and National League for Nursing have issued a policy statement identifying the need for more highly educated nursing workforce. According to the AACN position statement (2001), the emerging demands of the workforce and healthcare trends call for nurses to be armed with a broader scope.

In addition to the liberal learning and global perspective gained from a four-year baccalaureate education, the BSN curriculum includes clinical, scientific, decision making, and humanistic skills, including preparation in community health, patient education, and nursing management and leadership. Such skills are essential for today's professional nurse who must make quick, sometimes life-and-death decisions; design and manage a comprehensive plan of nursing care; understand a patient's treatment, symptoms, and danger signs; supervise other nursing personnel and support staff; master advanced technology; guide patients through the maze of health care resources in a community; and educate patients on health care options and how to adopt healthy lifestyles. (AACN, 2001)

Furthermore, research has shown that patient outcomes are greatly improved when care is provided/managed by a nurse with a bachelor's level education.

AACN Position Statement available at [www.aacn.nche.edu/Publications/positions/baccmin.htm](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Publications/positions/baccmin.htm).

Tri-Council Policy Statement available at [www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/ThePracticeofProfessionalNursing/PatientSafetyQuality/Education/TriCouncil-for-Nursing-Issues-Policy-Statement.aspx](http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/ThePracticeofProfessionalNursing/PatientSafetyQuality/Education/TriCouncil-for-Nursing-Issues-Policy-Statement.aspx).

Additionally, a BSN education prepares a nurse for entry into graduate programs:

- Masters of Science in Nursing (MSN)
  - Advanced Practice Registered Nursing (APRN)
  - Nurse Practitioner
  - Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)
  - Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA)
  - Nurse Midwifery
  - Nurse Educator
  - Masters in Healthcare Management
  - Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
  - PhD in Nursing, Leadership, Management, or Education (and more!)
- [What does Bellevue's program have to offer me?](#)
- Not all RN to BSN programs are created equal. Bellevue's motto, Real learning for Real life, rings true in this program. Your time is valuable. You want an education you can use. In this program you not only read and discuss topics, you get the opportunity to apply your knowledge to real life situations faced by nurses and nurse managers every day.

## Admission Requirements Questions

- [Do I need to have an RN license or work experience as a licensed RN?](#)
- You must have a current, unrestricted RN license to practice in the state in which you live/work. International applicants must validate credentials with the Commission of Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools before applying for RN licensure. Additionally, you must have one year of practice experience or currently be practicing as a licensed RN.
- [Do I get credit for prior work experience?](#)
- Work experience is included in the initial 60 credits you are awarded for your RN license and the required nursing education.
- [Are there additional requirements for admission into the program?](#)
- There are program specific admission requirements that must be met in addition to the Bellevue University admission requirements. It is important to note these requirements as admission into Bellevue University does not guarantee admission into the RN to BSN degree completion program. Admission into the RN to BSN degree completion program is contingent upon successfully meeting program specific admission requirements which are to be submitted upon request to your Enrollment Counselor/Academic Advisor. The program specific requirements include:
- A current unrestricted RN license to practice in any US state (International applicants must validate credentials with the Commission of Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools before applying for RN licensure.)
  - Currently practicing as a licensed RN OR a minimum of one year of practice as a licensed RN. (Verification form completed and signed by supervisor or employer.)
  - Copy of all transcripts on file and documenting an earned grade of C or higher in the following prerequisite courses:
    - English Comp I & II (6 semester credits or equivalent)
    - College Chemistry with lab (4 semester credits or equivalent)
    - Intermediate College Algebra or higher (3 semester credits or equivalent)
    - A&P I & II (8 semester credits or equivalent)
    - Social Science Course (Psychology, Sociology, or Anthropology) (3 semester credits or equivalent)
  - Completion of the TEAS V Proctored Assessment within the last two years and a minimum overall score of 78%.
- [What is the TEAS V Proctored Assessment? What is required?](#)
- ATI is the provider of the TEAS V Proctored Assessment. The assessment can be administered in the Bellevue University testing center for those in the area at a cost of \$65 (\$30 administration fee payable to Bellevue University and \$35 to ATI for assessment). Ownership of the TEAS score belongs to the applicant and may be shared with multiple schools, thus the



applicant assumes the cost of the assessment. Applicants must call the Bellevue University Testing Center to schedule an appointment. An applicant will need to create an account with ATI prior to testing via the ATI website:

<http://atitesting.com>

For applicants at a distance, ATI has a partnership with PSI, an administrator of proctored assessments and exams. PSI locations are widely available across the nation. The cost (\$110) is again assumed by the applicant and includes proctor services as well as delivery of scores to one institution with additional score delivery available. Registration for TEAS V Proctored Assessment at a PSI location is accessible through the ATI website:

[http://atitesting.com/ati\\_store/TEAS-Products.aspx?gclid=CNmN-Pupwa8CFQ0DQAodnVvewg](http://atitesting.com/ati_store/TEAS-Products.aspx?gclid=CNmN-Pupwa8CFQ0DQAodnVvewg)

- [Are there course requirements for admission into the program?](#)

Applicants are required to provide transcripts documenting an earned grade of C or higher in the following prerequisite courses:

- English Comp I & II (6 semester credits or equivalent)
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- Social Science Course (Psychology, Sociology, or Anthropology) (3 semester credits or equivalent)

- [How many credits do you accept from other colleges?](#)

Transcripts from all college, university, and school you attended after high school will be reviewed for transfer of credit to our university; 60 credits are awarded for completion of previous nursing education and experience. Additional college transfer credits will be evaluated to meet the required 22 elective credits needed to reach the 127 credits required for graduation.

- [I am a licensed LPN, how can I get my BSN?](#)

Many community colleges offer programs for the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to advance their career and scope of practice through associate's degree programs. Once you have completed an associate's degree in nursing (ADN), become state licensed as an RN, and secure a nursing practice, you would qualify for application into Bellevue University's RN to BSN program.

## **Program Information Questions**

- [Is the RN to BSN program fully accredited?](#)

Accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) is in process and anticipated prior to graduation of the first cohort.

- [How many classes will I need to take?](#)

The baccalaureate degree is 127 credits. Sixty credits are awarded upon admission for the prior nursing education and work experience and 22 college credits from electives will be evaluated for transfer. The degree completion core program consists of 36 credits and the addition of the Bellevue University Kirkpatrick Signature Series (9 credits) completes the requirements for the degree.

- [Does this program require completion of clinical hours?](#)

This is a non-clinical degree completion program for nurses who are currently practicing as a licensed RN or who have a minimum of one year of experience practicing as a licensed RN. It is expected that you already have the clinical nursing skills and maintain those through your RN practice.

- [Do I ever need to come to campus for class?](#)

The RN to BSN program offers two delivery options.

- You may elect to enroll and complete the program online. The online program will rarely, if ever, require any travel to campus; however we would enjoy celebrating your accomplishment and success at commencement.

- You may elect to enroll in the enhanced residential program. This program is offered once a year and requires completion of traditional face-to-face classes, though is enhanced through the additional use of the online classroom. Again, we would like to celebrate with you at commencement once you have completed the program.
- [How long does it take to complete the RN to BSN program?](#)

The core program consists of nine 6-week courses for a total of 54 weeks of instruction, not including holidays and scheduled breaks. The Kirkpatrick Signature Series (3-course cluster completed in 12 weeks) is then completed once the program core requirements have been met and you may then apply for graduation.

- [What happens if I need to drop out for a semester or two?](#)

Life happens and Bellevue University understands your need for flexibility. Contact your advisor as soon as possible to notify him/her of your plans.

- [Is this program strictly online or hybrid?](#)

The RN to BSN program offers two delivery options.

- You may elect to enroll and complete the program online.
- You may elect to enroll in the enhanced residential program. This option is hybrid in fashion, incorporating traditional face-to-face classes incorporating components of the online classroom.
- [How do I attend class and how are tests administered?](#)

There are two course delivery options:

- All online courses are carried out through the online classroom management system. In the online classroom, you will participate in discussion boards, online presentations, group projects, etc. Exams are also completed via this online classroom. Course faculty will designate specific deadlines and expectations for the course, just as you would have in the face-to-face classroom; however you have the ability to access the online classroom to participate and complete course work as it fits your schedule, day or night.
- In the enhanced residential program, components of the courses will be completed online via the classroom management system, such as virtual simulations, quizzes/exams. The majority of course activities will occur in the face-to-face classroom. Activities in the face-to-face classroom may include topic discussion, debate, presentations, group projects, quizzes and/or exams. Typically, the enhanced residential courses are held one night a week in three hour blocks.
- [Does this program require group work?](#)

This program incorporates both individual and group work. This is in line with the industry expectation for interprofessional collaboration. The Institute of Medicine supports interprofessionalism and provides this statement, "All health professionals should be educated to deliver patient-centered care as members of an interdisciplinary team, emphasizing evidence-based practice, quality improvement approaches, and informatics." Furthermore, patients benefit from interprofessional collaboration through the minimization of error in care delivery as well as financial expense and maximization of safety and patient outcomes. Specific techniques and goals for participating as an effective team member will be incorporated into your education and thus benefit your professional practice.

## General Questions

- [What technical requirements are there for this program?](#)

Essentially, you need a computer with internet connection, webcam, and some basic essential software. The standard [technical requirements](#) for students of Bellevue University are provided; this program also requires the addition of the webcam.



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## Nursing Degree - Bachelor of Science

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- [Current Students](#)
- [Course Information](#)
- [Student Expectations](#)
- [Admissions](#)
- [FAQs](#)

### BSN FAQ's

Click a question below to see the answer.

#### General Questions

- [What benefit is a bachelor's degree in nursing \(BSN\)? Is a bachelor's degree right for me?](#)

Professional nurses (RN with BSN is considered entry level into professional nursing)

- Maintain a broadened scope of knowledge used to assess, plan, and intervene to promote health, prevent disease or injury.
- Uphold a unique scope of practice and can practice independently while they may also collaborate with other members of the healthcare team to provide the care needed by individuals as well as entire populations, nationally and globally.
- Continue to focus on direct and indirect patient care and outcomes.

Professional nursing roles range from direct patient care and case management to establishing nursing practice standards, managing clinical units, developing quality assurance procedures, directing complex nursing care systems, conducting clinical research, teaching in nursing programs, as well as practicing in many other fascinating settings.

The Tri-Council organizations, including the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, American Nurses Association, American Organization of Nurse Executives, and National League for Nursing have issued a policy statement identifying the need for more highly educated nursing workforce. According to the AACN position statement (2001), the emerging demands of the workforce and healthcare trends call for nurses to be armed with a broader scope.

In addition to the liberal learning and global perspective gained from a four-year baccalaureate education, the BSN curriculum includes clinical, scientific, decision making, and humanistic skills, including preparation in community health, patient education, and nursing management and leadership. Such skills are essential for today's professional nurse who must make quick, sometimes life-and-death decisions; design and manage a comprehensive plan of nursing care; understand a patient's treatment, symptoms, and danger signs; supervise other nursing personnel and support staff; master advanced technology; guide patients through the maze of health care resources in a community; and educate patients on health care options and how to adopt healthy lifestyles. (AACN, 2001)

Furthermore, research has shown that patient outcomes are greatly improved when care is provided/managed by a nurse with a bachelor's level education.

AACN Position Statement available at [www.aacn.nche.edu/Publications/positions/baccmin.htm](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Publications/positions/baccmin.htm).

Tri-Council Policy Statement available at [www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/ThePracticeofProfessionalNursing/PatientSafetyQuality/Education/TriCouncil-for-Nursing-Issues-Policy-Statement.aspx](http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/ThePracticeofProfessionalNursing/PatientSafetyQuality/Education/TriCouncil-for-Nursing-Issues-Policy-Statement.aspx).

Additionally, a BSN education prepares a nurse for entry into graduate programs:

- Masters of Science in Nursing (MSN)
  - Advanced Practice Registered Nursing (APRN)
  - Nurse Practitioner
  - Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)
  - Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA)
  - Nurse Midwifery
  - Nurse Educator
  - Masters in Healthcare Management
  - Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
  - PhD in Nursing, Leadership, Management, or Education (and more!)
- [What does Bellevue's program have to offer me?](#)
- Not all RN to BSN programs are created equal. Bellevue's motto, Real learning for Real life, rings true in this program. Your time is valuable. You want an education you can use. In this program you not only read and discuss topics, you get the opportunity to apply your knowledge to real life situations faced by nurses and nurse managers every day. This is accomplished through dynamic, highly interactive course delivery including virtual simulations, case studies, and presentations, just to name a few.

## Admission Requirements Questions

- [Do I need to have an RN license or work experience as a licensed RN?](#)
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## Program Information Questions

- [Is the RN to BSN program fully accredited?](#)  
 Bellevue University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Application for candidacy status for accreditation is currently in progress with the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).
- [How many classes will I need to take?](#)  
 The baccalaureate degree is 127 credits. Sixty credits are awarded upon admission for the prior nursing education and work experience and 22 college credits from electives will be evaluated for transfer. The degree completion core program consists of 36 credits and the addition of the Bellevue University Kirkpatrick Signature Series (9 credits) completes the requirements for the degree.
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Enroll Now!

Caring by  
Nature.

Distinguished by  
Experience.

Qualified by  
Degree.

Bellevue University RN to BSN Guide



**BELLEVUE**  
UNIVERSITY



## Complete Your Credentials With a **Professional Degree**

Your attention to detail is precise. Your actions are confident. And you can start even the toughest IVs with ease. You're an accomplished RN. Years of experience have distinguished you as an expert nurse. You know how to provide outstanding care to your patients and offer guidance to people on your team. Take your care to a higher level and expand your opportunities as a leader with your bachelor's degree in nursing from Bellevue University.

## Learn for **Real Life**

The Bellevue University Bachelor of Science in Nursing will prepare you for a broadened role in healthcare and provide you with the critical performance skills needed for decision-making, leadership, management, and health promotion.

In this online program, you will develop your skills as a professional nurse, learn the fundamentals of effective leadership, and gain a better understanding of the cultural, political, economic, and social issues that influence the delivery of healthcare and patient outcomes.

## Program Outcomes

Upon completion of this program you will be able to:

- Demonstrate skills associated with a strong liberal arts education to problem solve, make judgements and decisions, communicate, and demonstrate self-awareness.
- Demonstrate a strong awareness of individuals within societal, cultural, and global perspectives to develop, recommend, and implement nursing best practices.
- Demonstrate attributes of professionalism and accountability to apply professional standards through evidence-based practice.
- Research, judge, and select the appropriate patient care technology to manage information for the delivery of quality patient care.
- Analyze best practices to formulate a plan for quality improvement in safety and healthcare systems, incorporating ethical, legal, and professional standards in nursing leadership and management.
- Live and practice with professionalism and know your values, and values of others, that lead to consistency and engender respectful relationships.
- Apply effective problem solving that positively impacts the health of individuals in populations using nursing standards to promote health, wellness, and disease prevention.
- Integrate interpersonal and intrapersonal messages to create a climate of diversity, respect, and sensitivity among healthcare professionals.
- Know yourself, how you impact others, and how others impact you to effectively provide care for patients, including individuals, families, groups, and communities.

## Prove What You Can Do

In the final terms of your program you will complete a real-life project for a healthcare institution of your choice. In this hands-on practicum you will assess a situation, recommend an idea, plan and execute an implementation strategy, and reflect on the outcomes. You will graduate with a proven skillset of assessing, planning, and executing a strategic vision - a great asset to any organization.

## Opportunities Come Quickly. Be Ready for Them.

Your BSN will keep you up to date with the rising level of education requirements for nurses. And with a growing national demand for nurses, you'll have more job mobility and may be eligible for higher paying positions.

## Start Now, Save Money

Bellevue University is offering a Professional Nursing Education Scholarship to all students who enroll in the Fall 2018 cohort.

This limited time scholarship will bring the cost of your education to \$260 per credit hour -- well below the average national cost of RN to BSN programs.

Classes start September 6th.  
Talk to an admissions counselor to see how you can earn your scholarship.

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## Today's Skills for Tomorrow's Jobs

The Bellevue University BSN is designed to prepare you to take on today's healthcare challenges. You will build on the strong foundation of your RN degree. You'll then expand your knowledge, learning from professors who have walked the halls of hospitals and clinics and know firsthand the ins and outs of the healthcare industry. These professors will prepare you with both industry knowledge and performance skills that will help you enhance the quality of your care at the bedside, and advance your career in your organization.



### Major Requirements

#### LA 300: Foundations for Professional Success

This course prepares students for success in their academic and professional careers. The foundation for learning is established for professional skill development through practical experience with the University's four essential learning outcomes: communication, problem solving, collaboration, and citizenship. Learner strengths are assessed and analytical, relational, and resilience skills are developed.

#### BSNU 360: Fundamentals of Professional Nursing

This course serves as the foundation for the transition to professional nursing, introducing concepts useful for advancement into a leadership and/or management role in healthcare. Principles of the professional nurse's role, effective leadership and followership, and promotion of the profession are highlighted in this course. Prerequisite: Admission to program.

#### BSNU 380: Professional Collaborative Strategies for Nurses

This course is essential for the nurse leader/manager, as a member of the healthcare team, identifying the process for group collaboration for the purpose of decision-making. The focus of the course is aimed at development of effective leadership skills and strategies for collaboration and conflict management. Prerequisite: BSNU 360.

#### BSNU 400: Nursing Leadership

This course will explore concepts and strategies that influence decision making, including negotiation strategies and considerations for the implication of professional values, motivation, education, and cultural competence. Prerequisite: BSNU 380.

#### BSNU 410: Nursing Informatics

This course introduces the nurse's role in sending and receiving healthcare information. Emphasis includes methods, tools, resources, and technology systems used in healthcare information exchange and decision-making. Prerequisite: BSNU 400.

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**BSNU 420: Nursing Research and Evidence-Based Practice** (4 credit hours)

The focus of this course is consumer-ship of healthcare research and the application to evidence-based nursing practice. This course introduces types of research, data collection, analysis of data, and interpretation of data for implementation into practice.

Prerequisite: BSNU 410.

**BSNU 430: Population-Based Health Promotion** (4 credit hours)

This course will provide the professional nurse with a broadened, population approach to wellness and health promotion as well as disease and injury prevention. The course includes examination of evidence-based strategies for health promotion/disease prevention for populations defined by criteria of healthcare disparity.

Prerequisite: BSNU 420.

**BSNU 440: Healthcare Regulation** (4 credit hours)

This course will examine regulation of healthcare through ethics, law, and policy. Emphasis is placed on the implications for healthcare delivery as well as nursing leadership and management. Prerequisite: BSNU 430.

**BSNU 470: Quality Healthcare for Professional Nursing** (4 credit hours)

The focus of this course is to provide an introductory perspective of the role of a nurse leader or nurse manager in complex healthcare delivery systems and to provide a greater understanding of the role of the professional nurse as a contributor to the transformation of healthcare organizations. This includes a 36 hour practicum experience. Prerequisite: BSNU 440 and meet all practicum requirements.

**BSNU 490: Strategic Nursing Leadership** (4 credit hours)

This course provides a strategic view of nursing leadership and management issues encountered by professional nurses in roles across the healthcare continuum. Emphasis

will include nursing employment trends; recruitment and retention; staffing and delegation; finance/budgeting, and strategic planning. This course requires a 36 hour practicum experience. Prerequisite: BSNU 470 and meet all practicum requirements.

**Kirkpatrick Signature Series**  
(9 credit hours, required for all Bellevue)

**LA 400 American Vision and Values**

This course focuses on the political and philosophical traditions of the Western world, especially as they are found in the American vision and are embedded in the values, traditions, documents, and institutions of the United States. Prerequisite: 60 credit hours.

**LA 410 Tradition and Change** (3 credit hours)

This course focuses on the creative tensions that can exist between the forces of tradition and change as the country grows and changes socially, culturally, and politically. It considers the manner in which change can renew the political and social vitality of American democracy. Prerequisite: 60 credit hours.

**LA 420 Freedom and Responsibility** (3 credit hours)

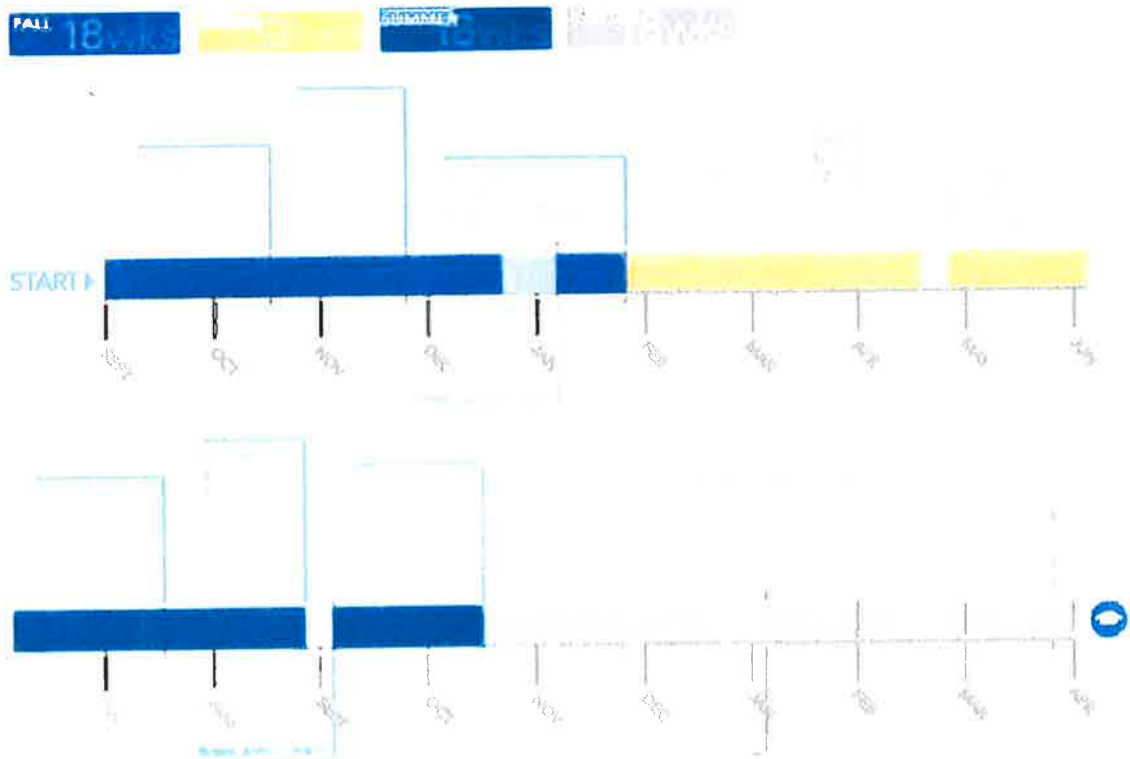
This course examines the theories of moral absolutism and moral relativism, in light of their relationship to citizen freedoms and responsibilities. The course compares several modern economic systems, assessing their impact on citizen freedom and responsibility. It also examines the importance of fulfilling citizens' responsibilities for the wellbeing of society and for the freedoms they enjoy. Prerequisite: 60 credit hours.



## Job. Family. School. All in a Day's Work.

From bedside care to bedside instruction, your day is planned out. To fit earning your degree into it, you need a school that understands the demands of a nurse's busy schedule, both at the bedside or clinic and at home.

With Bellevue University's online program, you can complete your studies on your time. Our professors know firsthand the challenges and the opportunities that nurses face, and will be there to guide and encourage you every step of the way.



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## Learn from the Experts

Throughout your program you will learn from respected, experienced professionals in the healthcare field including the program director, Dr. Kimberley Melinger.

Dr. Melinger has over 15 years of experience as a professional registered nurse in the acute care setting. She has more than eleven years of experience in nursing education and clinical administration in the areas of quality management, nursing management and corporate education.

Dr. Melinger earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Nebraska Medical Center, a Master of Science in Nursing from Nebraska Wesleyan University, a Master of Science in Alternative Dispute Resolution from Creighton University, and a Doctor of Nursing Practice, Emphasis in Clinical Systems Administration from Creighton University.



## Request More Information Today

The Bellevue College of Health Sciences is currently accepting applications for students to begin their education in the field of Health Sciences. The College offers a variety of programs and features a state-of-the-art simulation center where students can practice their skills.

Visit [bellevue.edu](http://bellevue.edu) or call 800-756-7920 to request more information.



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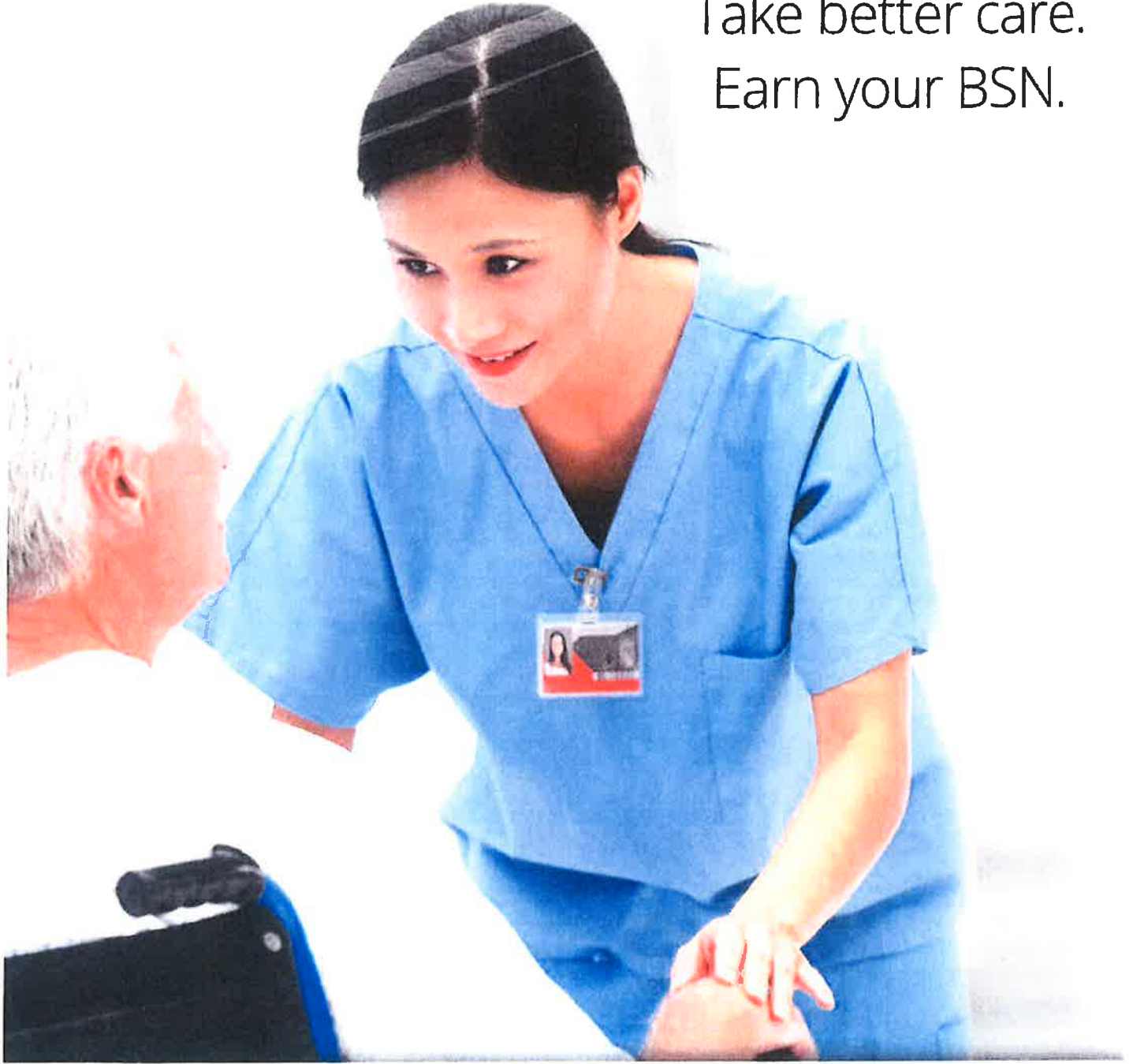


A private, non-profit institution founded in 1966,  
Bellevue University is accredited by The Higher Learning  
Commission through the U.S. Department of Education.

**bellevue.edu**



Take better care.  
Earn your BSN.



*Real* Learning for *Real* Life

Take better care of your **patients**,  
your **community**, and your  
**future** with Bellevue University's RN  
to BSN degree completion program.

You care for many patients everyday. Consider how you can take better care of your patients, your community, and your future by earning a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. Our RN to BSN degree completion program is designed for working professionals who need to juggle family and career obligations.

The program is **100% online** with **NO clinicals**. The curriculum relies heavily on helping you apply what you learn to your day-to-day interactions with patients and co-workers, giving you a broader perspective and the ability to make a more meaningful impact on more people.

**Emphasis is placed on:**

- Professional development
- Management and leadership skills
- A strong understanding of the cultural, political, economic, and social issues influencing the delivery of healthcare and patient outcomes



## Why a BSN?

- The BSN degree is becoming a prerequisite for many management and education positions within the nursing field.
- Many professional organizations are advocating for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing as a requirement for expanded roles in the nursing profession.
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates the nursing industry will see more job growth than any other occupation from now through 2020.
- Magnet and Magnet-seeking organizations encourage the BSN as minimum education for nursing staff.

## Admission Requirements

1. A current unrestricted RN license to practice in the U.S.
2. Currently practicing as a licensed RN OR a minimum of one year of practice as a licensed RN.
3. Copy of all transcripts on file and documenting an earned grade of C or higher in the following prerequisite courses:
  - English Comp I & II (6 semester credits or equivalent)
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  - Intermediate College Algebra or higher math (3 semester credits or equivalent)
  - Anatomy & Physiology I & II (8 semester credits or equivalent)
  - Social Science Course (Psychology, Sociology, or Anthropology) (3 semester hours or equivalent)

## Scholarships Available!

You may qualify for Bellevue University's new **Touching Hearts Nursing Scholarship!** We will be awarding \$75,000 to qualified Registered Nurses who are ready to earn their bachelor's degree through our RN to BSN degree completion program.

**Deadline for application: January 31<sup>st</sup>**

For more information about this scholarship, please visit [Bellevue.edu/nursing](http://Bellevue.edu/nursing).



### **Course Descriptions (all courses 4 credit hours)**

#### **BSNU 360 Fundamentals of Professional Nursing**

This course serves as the foundation for the transition to professional nursing, introducing concepts useful for advancement into a leadership and/or management role in healthcare. Principles of the professional nurses' role, effective leadership and followership, and promotion of the profession are highlighted in this course.

#### **BSNU 380 Professional Collaborative Strategies for Nurses**

This course is essential for the nurse leader/manager as a member of the healthcare team, identifying the process for group collaboration for the purpose of decision-making. The focus of the course is aimed at development of effective leadership skills and strategies for collaboration and conflict management.

#### **BSNU 400 Nursing Leadership**

The course will explore concepts and strategies that influence decision making, including negotiation strategies and considerations for the implication of professional values, motivation, education, and cultural competence.

#### **BSNU 410 Nursing Informatics**

This course introduces the nurse's role in sending and receiving healthcare information. Emphasis includes methods, tools, resources, and technology systems used in healthcare information exchange and decision-making.

#### **BSNU 420 Nursing Research and Evidence Based Practice**

The focus of this course is on consumership of healthcare research and the application to evidence-based nursing practice. The course introduces types of research, data collection, analysis of data, and interpretation of data for implementation into practice.

#### **BSNU 430 Population-Based Health Promotion**

This course will provide the professional nurse with a broadened, population approach to wellness and health promotion as well as disease and injury prevention. The course includes examination of evidence-based strategies for health promotion/disease prevention for populations defined by criteria of healthcare disparity.

#### **BSNU 440 Healthcare Regulation**

This course will examine regulation of healthcare through ethics, law, and policy. Emphasis is placed on the implications for healthcare delivery from the perspective of nursing leadership and management.

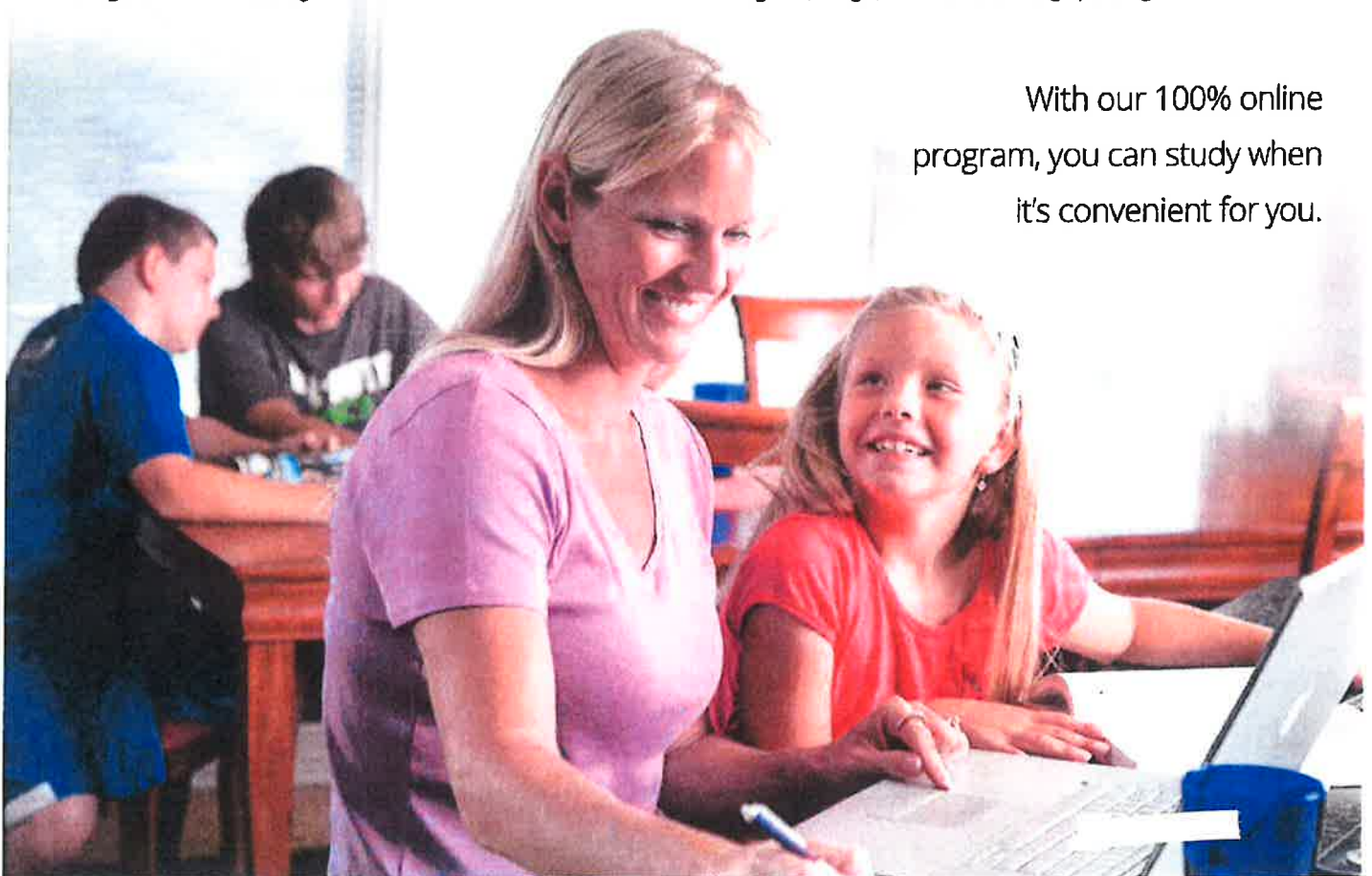
#### **BSNU 460 Nursing Management and Quality Healthcare**

This course will assist in understanding organizational behavior and the nurse leader/manager role in the contribution to the transformation of the organization and quality healthcare delivery.

#### **BSNU 480 Strategic Nursing Management**

This course will provide a realistic view of the day to day management issues that nurse leaders and managers face. Emphases will include nursing employment trends; recruitment & retention; staffing & delegation, budget, financial, and strategic planning.

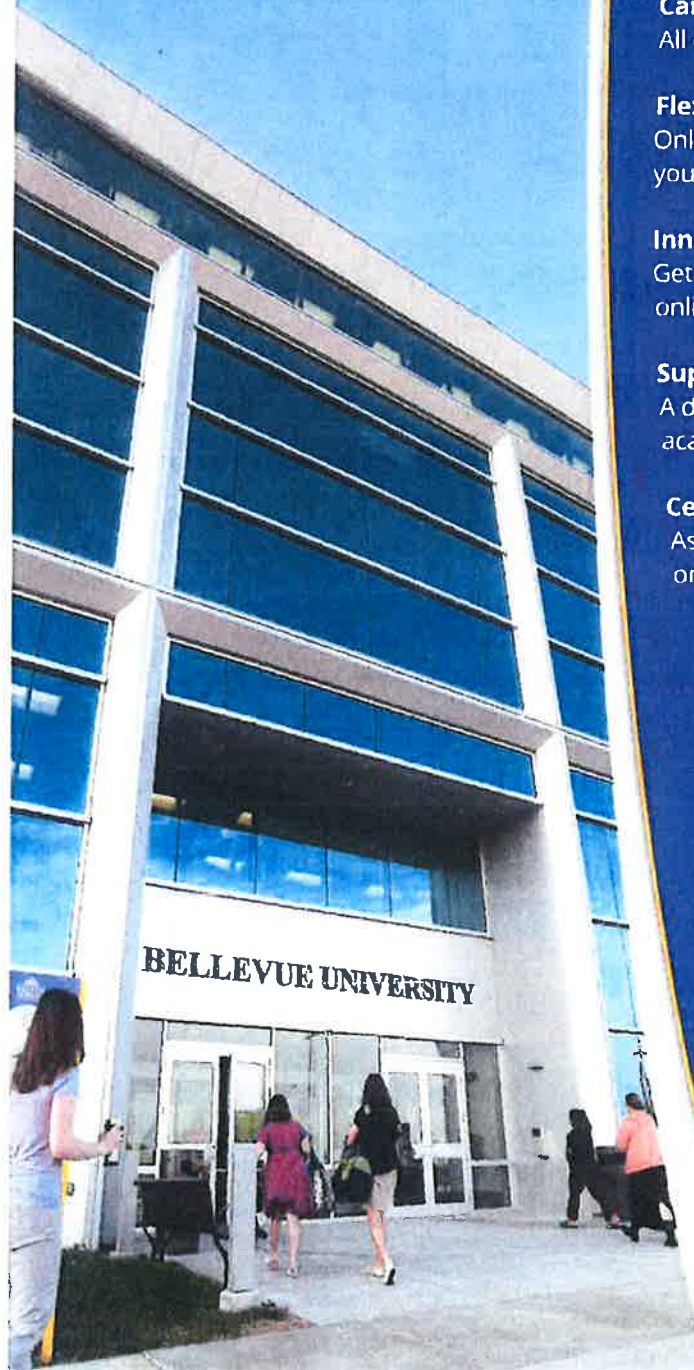
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**The Assurance of Regional Accreditation**

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COMMISSION ON  
COLLEGIATE NURSING  
EDUCATION

ONE UNIVERSITY CIRCLE, SUITE 550  
WASHINGTON, DC 20036-1920

Phone: (202) 462-1100

WWW.AACN.ORG/CCNE/ACCREDITATION

April 3, 2013

Kristen Bryen Wessel, MSN, RN  
Director  
BSNLI  
Bellevue University  
1800 Galvin Road South  
Bellevue, NE 68005

Dear Director Wessel:

The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) has received and accepted the application for the initial accreditation of the baccalaureate program in nursing at Bellevue University.

CCNE requires that an institution submit an acceptable self-study document and host an on-site evaluation within two years of the accepted application date. CCNE conducts on-site evaluations during the spring (January-April) and fall (September-November). To update your institutional profile, and choose and confirm the date of the on-site evaluation please login to the CCNE Online Community at [www.ccnecommunity.org](http://www.ccnecommunity.org), using the following credentials:

User Name: [REDACTED]  
Password: [REDACTED]

*Please Note:* If you experience difficulty logging into the CCNE Online Community or updating the institution's profile or choosing dates, please update your browser and/or use a different browser (e.g. Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome etc.). CCNE recommends using Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome.

Additionally, all activities related to the on-site evaluation, including the electronic submission of documents and the review and approval of the on-site evaluation team will occur in the CCNE Online Community. Please keep the institution's User Name and Password in an easily accessible and secure location. You may update information within the CCNE Online Community at any time.

\* The on-site evaluation can be scheduled no earlier than 12 months in advance and cannot be hosted prior to the program having students enrolled for at least 12 months. CCNE is currently scheduling for Spring 2014-Fall 2016. ask about this

The on-site evaluation generally lasts three days and cannot be scheduled during holidays, on weekends or when classes are not in session. Dates that are currently available for scheduling may be viewed in the "Schedule an On-Site Evaluation Tab" in the CCNE Online Community. If you wish to schedule for Spring 2014 please do so now. If you wish to schedule for a different accreditation term please contact CCNE.

The CCNE Board of Commissioners will make an accreditation decision regarding the program under review during the term following the on-site evaluation. If the CCNE Board of Commissioners votes to award accreditation, the accreditation is retroactive to the first day of the on-site evaluation.

As you prepare for the on-site evaluation, please refer to the following documents in the CCNE Online Community:

1. *Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Degree Nursing Programs* (revised April 2002); and
2. *Procedures for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Degree Nursing Programs* (revised April 2011)

Also provided in the CCNE Online Community are the:

1. Self-study template; and
2. Program information form.

\* < The agenda, self-study document and the program information form will be submitted electronically via the CCNE Online Community. It is not necessary to provide CCNE with paper copies of any of these documents. Additionally, the on-site evaluation team will be able to access the electronic versions of these documents via the CCNE Online Community as soon as they have been uploaded (approximately six weeks prior to the on-site evaluation). CCNE does ask that if any member of the on-site evaluation team requests a paper copy of any of the aforementioned documents that the institution provide those.

Other documents that you may find helpful in the CCNE Online Community include:

1. CCNE fee structure;
2. General Advice for Programs Hosting a CCNE on-site evaluation; and
3. Overview of the CCNE Accreditation Process.

\* CCNE sponsors invitational self-study workshops twice yearly. You will receive information regarding this in a future mailing.

Please note that acceptance of an application is not a status of accreditation, but is the first step in pursuing a status of accreditation.

If I can be of further assistance or if you have any questions, you may contact me by email at [tschroeder@earn.ncha.edu](mailto:tschroeder@earn.ncha.edu) or by phone at (202) 887-6741, extension 253.

Sincerely,



Lori Schroeder, MA  
Associate Director



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## Bellevue University RN to BSN

1 message

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Kristen Wessel <kwessel@bellevue.edu>

Tue, Nov 18, 2014 at 5:55 AM

Dear Students,

In light of the recent and disappointing information from CCNE, I want to take this opportunity to point out that the value of the BSN degree is yet present, regardless of nursing accreditation. The lack of nursing accreditation in no way detracts from the value of the degree. The University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), thus the BSN degree is yet valid. Employers continue to recognize that a BSN sets a nurse apart among nurses.

Implications of the CCNE denial of accreditation will narrow the possibilities with regard to application to graduate school, should you choose to go on for a MSN or other grad degree, however there are graduate schools that require only that the degree be obtained from a college or university that holds regional accreditation (such as HLC accreditation). Examples of schools with graduate nursing programs you may apply to include Western Governor's University and Chamberlain. Additionally, there are numerous professional certifications that you will be eligible to apply for. You can find more information about application requirements on the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) website: <http://www.nursecredentialing.org/certification.aspx>

Furthermore, the University administration is in the process of outlining options for students of the program. Communication of the options is anticipated yet this week. Your patience is appreciated.

*Kristen Bryan Wessel*, PhD-candidate, MSN, RN

Assistant Professor/Program Director, RN to BSN Program

College of Arts & Sciences

Bellevue University

1000 Galvin Road South

Bellevue, Nebraska 68005

Office # 402.557.7534 or 800.756.7920 ext. 557.7534

[Kristen.Wessel@bellevue.edu](mailto:Kristen.Wessel@bellevue.edu)

Dear Students,

Bellevue University worked diligently to pursue the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditation for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). As you are aware, CCNE denied nursing accreditation because of the lack of a formal clinical component within the current nursing curriculum. The University had applied for accreditation of its RN to BSN program before the new standards mandated a formal clinical component. Bellevue University realizes that you enrolled in the RN to BSN program with the optimism of the program receiving nursing accreditation, and we are sincerely sorry that this goal has not been achieved at this point. Bellevue University remains deeply committed to assisting each of you to realize your professional academic goals, and we are already taking steps to earn accreditation through another accrediting body.


Bellevue University is pursuing accreditation through the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). ACEN was chosen because of the expedited process for application for accreditation. As part of this effort, a new Program Director has been placed in charge of the RN to BSN program. Kimberley Melsinger DNP, MS, RN, NE-BC will be responsible for the RN to BSN program and the journey to accreditation through ACEN. The goal of the RN to BSN program will be to submit application for eligibility by December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, with a potential site visit to occur in the fall term of 2015. After the site visit, ACEN would review application and site visit documents and the accrediting board would make a formal decision by the Spring of 2016. Accreditation would be retroactive to the Fall 2015 term. September RN to BSN (2014) students will not need to stop or delay course work to assure they are enrolled in the program during the Fall 2015 term. April RN to BSN (2014) students will need to stop out in order to be actively enrolled in courses during the site visit. Please see the options on page 2 for further details.


Each graduating student of the RN to BSN program will receive a degree from an accredited university. Bellevue University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCACS). The ACEN accreditation focuses specifically on accrediting nursing programs. The degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing will be awarded to students who successfully complete the RN to BSN degree program. The BSN degree is of great value. Students with BSN degrees have the ability to continue toward higher education, the ability to maintain current positions, secure new positions, and be promoted within the healthcare industry. Additionally, students with BSN degrees have the ability to obtain specialty certifications.

Please review the options listed on page 2 of this letter and when you have made a determination of the best option for you, please directly call the program director at 402-557-7501 and specify the option you will be taking. The program director will speak with you and direct you to the necessary University personnel that will assist you with your selected option.

If you have specific questions regarding accreditation and the RN to BSN program, please contact the Program Director, Dr. Kimberley Melsinger RN at 402-557-7501 or email [kim.melsinger@bellevue.edu](mailto:kim.melsinger@bellevue.edu). We thank you for pursuing your nursing education at Bellevue University.

Sincerely,

  
Dr. Mary B. Hawkins  
President, Bellevue University

  
Kimberley Melsinger DNP, MS, RN, NE-BC  
Program Director, RN to BSN

**OPTIONS:**

**BSNU Sept 2013 Start Date**

*Option 1:* Student desire Accredited Nursing Program

Withdraw from 11/24/14 KSS course

Retake BSNU 460 and BSNU 480 courses with clinical component beginning in Fall 2015

Resume KSS course following completion of 460 and 480

There will be no cost to you to retake the BSNU courses.

*Option 2:* Students that do NOT require Accredited Nursing Program

Continue with KSS scheduled for 11/24/14

**BSNU April 2014 Start Date**

*Option 1:* Students desire Accredited Nursing program

Withdraw after BSNU 430

Restart BSNU 440 Spring term 2016 after formal notice of accreditation

*Option 2:* Students that do NOT require Accredited Nursing Program

Continue with BSNU 430 and remain in program as it currently stands

**BSNU September 2014 Start Date**

*Option 1:* Students desire Accredited Nursing program

No modifications to course schedule, students will be REQUIRED to have formal clinical component to BSNU460 and 480

*Option 2*

For students to OPT not to have a clinical, please contact Program Director to discuss implications.

## Sarah Jarecki

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**From:** Kristen Wessel  
**Sent:** Monday, November 17, 2014 2:48 PM  
**To:** Clif Mason  
**Subject:** Fwd: Bellevue University Inquiry

Below is follow up information from ACEN.

Kristen

----- Original message -----

**From:** Nell Ard  
**Date:** 11/17/2014 2:43 PM (GMT-06:00)  
**To:** Kristen Wessel  
**Subject:** RE: Bellevue University Inquiry

Good Afternoon! It was a pleasure speaking with you as well. I have provided the information below regarding the Candidacy process.

In order to become accredited, the first step of the process is to provide ACEN with a *Candidacy Information Form (CIF)*. This form can be found on the ACEN website: [www.acenursing.org](http://www.acenursing.org). Look under Resources < For Nursing Programs and scroll down to Candidacy. The *CIF* is basically an application that also provides ACEN with information regarding the governing organization's accreditation; the Board of Nursing approval; the governing organization's organizational chart; and the nursing education unit's organization chart.

Upon receiving the *CIF*, which can be sent via e-mail attachment, I will review the program's eligibility, which takes approximately 1-2 weeks upon receipt. If eligible, you will receive a letter indicating this. Included will be an *Authorization for Candidacy Form* and an Invoice for \$2500 which is the Candidacy Fee.

Once eligible, the second step of the process is to submit a Candidacy Presentation. The presentation is a "mini" self-study covering selected Criteria for Standard 2- Faculty; Standard 4 – Curriculum; Standard 5 – Resources; and Standard 6 – Outcomes. Information about the Candidacy Presentation can be found on the website – *Guidelines for Candidacy Presentation*. Upon receipt, the Candidacy Presentation is reviewed by two (2) professional staff members independently. (I am one of the reviewers.) Each person is reviewing the document for compliance, clarity, and areas needing development. Each person writes a report which is typically 7-8 pages in length. Each professional staff then either recommends Candidacy or Deferral. This step of the process takes a minimum of six (6) weeks upon receipt of the Presentation. The program will receive copies of both reports to use in the process – either deferral or candidacy. [Deferral is for program's who have not provided enough information and/or have not demonstrated the ability to be compliant within two (2) years. If deferred, the program has up to one (1) year to resubmit the Candidacy Presentation for reconsideration without incurring an additional fee.]

If deemed a Candidate, then the program has up to two (2) years to complete the process. Completing the process is scheduling a site visit and submitting the complete Self Study Report addressing all the Standards and Criteria. There is a list of fees available on the website for this component as well as *Guidelines for Writing the Self Study Report*.

I would also suggest two additional things:

1. Look at the website for the current 2013 Standards and Criteria. This will assist the program in determining the readiness to pursue the process.



2. Consider attending an upcoming Self Study Forum. Information about the two (2) being offered is located on the ACEN website.

Please let me know if you have any further questions at this time. I hope to be able to work with you in the process of accreditation.

Have a great day!

Nell Ard, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF  
Associate Director



Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc.  
3343 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 850 | Atlanta, Georgia 30326  
P. (404) 975 5000 | F. (404) 975-5020  
E. [nard@acenursing.org](mailto:nard@acenursing.org)  
[www.acenursing.org](http://www.acenursing.org)

**From:** Kristen Wessel [mailto:[kwessel@bellevue.edu](mailto:kwessel@bellevue.edu)]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 17, 2014 12:19 PM  
**To:** Nell Ard  
**Subject:** Bellevue University Inquiry

Dr. Ard, thank you for taking the time to speak with me this morning. The information that you provided is quite helpful. If you could provide me with the step by step process, it would also be appreciated as I will share the details with my college Dean and the president of the University.

Again, thank you for your time and have a nice day!

*Kristen Bryan Wessel*, PhD-candidate, MSN, RN  
Assistant Professor/Program Director, RN to BSN Program  
College of Arts & Sciences  
Bellevue University  
1000 Galvin Road South  
Bellevue, Nebraska 68005  
Office # 402.557.7534  
[Kristen.Wessel@bellevue.edu](mailto:Kristen.Wessel@bellevue.edu)  
[www.Bellevue.edu/nursing](http://www.Bellevue.edu/nursing)

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**RN TO BSN PROGRAM  
PRE-ADMISSION DISCLOSURE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

**Statement on Accreditation**

There are two different types of accreditation for higher education institutions – “institutional” and “specialized” or “programmatic.”

Bellevue University maintains institutional accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission. Institutional accreditation applies to the entire institution and is important because accreditation by the Commission and by other nationally recognized agencies provides assurance to you and the public, that an organization has met the agency’s clearly stated requirements and criteria, and that there are reasonable grounds for believing that it will continue to meet them.

Specialized or programmatic accreditation normally applies to specific programs or departments within an institution. Bellevue University’s RN to BSN program does not currently have specialized accreditation. Although specialized accreditation is not a requirement for the program to operate and award degrees, it may be important in the nursing field for several reasons including, but not limited to, continuation for some graduate studies programs, employment at certain federal agencies (for example, Veterans Health Administration facilities), and private employer requirements for hiring or promotion.

Bellevue University is pursuing specialized accreditation for the RN to BSN program, so you may hear about this process from time to time as a student in the program. However, it is important to remember that specialized accreditation is not guaranteed and, if granted, may not occur in a timeframe in which to be applicable to your degree.

In conclusion, you are enrolling into an RN to BSN program that does not currently have specialized accreditation. It is your responsibility to fully consider this information prior to application and enrollment.

If you have questions about accreditation or the information in this document, please contact Dr. Kimberley Meisinger, Director of the RN to BSN program, at 402-557-7501.

**Acknowledgement**

By signing this document, I hereby acknowledge that I have been advised of the accreditation status of Bellevue University’s RN to BSN program as outlined above. I am choosing to enroll in the program freely, voluntarily, and with full knowledge of this information.

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Full Name (*Please Print*)

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Signature

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Date