



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #757

Nurse Educators (UW System)

[LFB 2019-21 Budget Summary: Page 438, #4]

CURRENT LAW

The UW System has schools or colleges of nursing that offer nursing bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees at UW-Madison, UW-Milwaukee, UW-Eau Claire, and UW-Oshkosh. UW-Green Bay also offers a nursing program through its College of Health, Education, and Social Welfare.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$10 million GPR in 2019-20 in a new continuing appropriation for nurse educators. Require the Board of Regents to establish a program for providing all of the following: (a) fellowships to students who enroll in programs for degrees in doctor of nursing practice or doctor of philosophy in nursing; (b) postdoctoral fellowships to recruit faculty for System nursing programs; and (c) educational loan repayment assistance to recruit and retain faculty for System nursing programs. Require individuals who receive fellowships or loan repayment assistance under the program to make a commitment to teach for three consecutive years in a UW-System nursing program.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. In recent years, concern has been expressed about a growing shortage of qualified nurses in Wisconsin and in the country as a whole. As the population ages, demand for nursing and other health care services increases. At the same time, many nurses are themselves aging and retiring from the profession, and the number of new nurses entering the field may not be sufficient to both replace those who are retiring and meet increased demand. The problem may be especially acute in rural areas

that lack access to quality healthcare.

2. Educational requirements for nurses vary from licensed practical nursing programs, which typically can be completed in about one year, to advanced degrees including doctoral programs, which may be required for nurses who want to work as advanced specialists, conduct research, or hold management positions. Typically, an advanced degree is necessary for faculty at nursing schools; data from the Wisconsin Center for Nursing indicates that approximately 74% of nursing faculty in Wisconsin hold a master's or doctorate degree. Four UW institutions (Green Bay, Eau Claire, Milwaukee, and Oshkosh) offer advanced degree programs for nurses.

3. The current nursing shortage is reflected in nursing educator programs as well. A Fall, 2018, survey conducted by the Administrators of Nursing Education in Wisconsin (ANEW) identified 80 vacant positions for full- and part-time faculty at nursing programs in the state. The population of nursing educators is aging, and many educators are nearing retirement; information published by the Wisconsin Center for Nursing indicates that 46% of registered nurses working in nursing education programs are age 55 or older. Addressing a shortage of nursing faculty requires planning in advance because of the time required to earn an advanced degree. A doctoral program typically takes four to seven years to complete, and nurses often practice for a period of time before pursuing graduate education.

4. Under 2013 Act 20, the Board of Regents was required to allocate \$11.25 million of program revenue in each year of the 2013-15 biennium for incentive grants related to educational programs in high-demand fields. One such incentive grant was awarded to the UW-Eau Claire, UW-Madison, UW-Milwaukee, and UW-Oshkosh nursing programs, to expand the state's nursing education capacity. Grant funding totaled \$3.2 million over three years for three types of fellowship awards: (a) pre-doctoral fellowships to accelerate the completion of a doctoral program; (b) post-doctoral fellowships to attract qualified faculty to UW institutions; and (c) a loan repayment program to attract and retain new faculty. Under the grant, pre- and post-doctoral fellowship awards were granted ranging from \$21,500 to \$90,000, and awards of up to \$50,000 were granted under the loan repayment program. To be eligible for the funds, fellows and faculty had to commit to teach in a UW System nursing program for at least three years. The program awarded funds to 54 participants, including 19 at UW-Eau Claire, 13 at UW-Oshkosh, and 11 at each of UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee. Of those, 31 have either completed their teaching commitment or are expected to complete the commitment soon, 17 have not yet started their commitment due to their education or a professional practice deferment, and five withdrew from the program.

5. The bill would provide one-time funding of \$10 million GPR in 2019-20 in a continuing appropriation for nurse educators. The funding would be used for a program similar to the grants funded by the incentive grant program. Grants would be provided for the following: (a) fellowships to students who enroll in programs for degrees in doctor of nursing practice or doctor of philosophy in nursing; (b) post-doctoral fellowships to recruit faculty for System nursing programs; and (c) educational loan repayment assistance for faculty in System nursing programs. Recipients would be required to make a commitment to teach for three consecutive years in a UW-System nursing program. The Executive Budget Book indicates that the intent of the program is to help UW recruit and retain nursing faculty.

6. In a survey conducted by the Wisconsin Center for Nursing, 31.5% of nurses cited the cost of tuition and fees as a barrier to pursuing an advanced degree. Once an advanced degree is obtained, a career in nursing education offers a lower salary compared to other nursing positions requiring a master's or doctoral degree. Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that in Wisconsin, the average salary for a nurse educator was \$86,040 in 2018, while the average salary for a nurse anesthetist totaled \$204,820, for a nurse midwife totaled \$108,690, and for a nurse practitioner totaled \$106,790 in that year. It could be argued that funding for fellowships for nursing graduate students and loan repayment assistance would help mitigate concern about the cost of tuition and fees, as well as provide an incentive for graduates to choose nursing education as a career, rather than a career with a higher average salary.

7. The UW System has also expressed a desire to increase the number of nursing students graduating from its institutions. In its agency budget request, the UW System requested funding for grants to increase capacity in high demand fields, totaling \$25 million GPR in 2020-21. A number of the initiatives that could have received funding under the grants related to nursing, including funds to increase the number of students in the nursing program at UW-Madison from 160 to 200; relocate UW-Milwaukee's nursing bachelor's degree program to UW-Waukesha and increase enrollment by 32 students; create a bachelor's of science nursing program at UW-Barron County; and increase enrollment in the nursing program at UW-Oshkosh by 16 students per year. The UW System agency request document indicates that the funding would have been used to hire additional faculty and staff, and purchase supplies and updated technology and equipment.

8. A proposal that would provide funding to support an increase in the number of nurse educators was developed by a coalition of nursing school deans prior to the start of the 2019-21 biennial budget process. The proposal was substantially similar to the program that would be created under the bill, but would have included more institutions, including private, non-profit colleges and Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) institutions. The coalition estimated that the request of \$10 million could fund approximately 150 fellowships for nursing students pursuing a master's or doctorate degree in nursing, with fellowships accounting for approximately \$5.5 million of the request. Based on a budget document prepared by the coalition, it is estimated that 50% of fellowship award funding could go to students attending UW institutions and 50% could go to students attending private institutions. Another \$3.7 million would be used for loan forgiveness for an estimated 120 new nursing school faculty. Of the remainder, \$0.2 million would be used for educational conferences and \$0.6 million would be used for administrative support, such as marketing the program to potential faculty members.

9. The Committee may wish to consider modifying the Governor's proposal so that it would apply to more institutions, consistent with the request made by nursing school deans as described above. Under this approach, fellowships could be awarded to students pursuing a master's degree in nursing, a doctorate of nursing practice, or a PhD in nursing from a UW institution or one of the seven private, non-profit colleges offering those degrees in Wisconsin. Fellowship recipients could complete their three year teaching commitment at a UW System institution, a private non-profit college in Wisconsin, or a WTCS institution. The loan forgiveness program could also be extended to new faculty hires at any private, non-profit college located in Wisconsin, in addition to UW System institutions. The program would be administered by the UW System, but the Committee could specify

that no more than 50% of the fellowship award funding could be granted to individuals attending a UW institution, and no more than 50% of loan forgiveness funding could be awarded to faculty at UW institutions. Additionally, UW could be required to collaborate with the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU) and an implementation council formed by the coalition of nursing school deans, which contains representatives of public and private institutions offering master's, PhD, and doctorate of nursing practice degrees. [Alternative 2]

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to provide \$10,000,000 in 2019-20 in a new continuing appropriation for nurse educators.

ALT 1	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$10,000,000	\$0

2. Modify the Governor's proposal so that it would apply to students and graduates of private, non-profit colleges located in Wisconsin, in addition to UW System institutions. Also specify that recipients could complete the three-year teaching obligation at a private, non-profit college located in Wisconsin or a WTCS institution, in addition to a UW System institution. Specify that no more than 50% of the fellowship award funding could be granted to individuals attending a UW institution, and no more than 50% of loan forgiveness funding could be awarded to faculty at UW institutions. Require UW to collaborate with WAICU and a coalition of nursing school administrators in awarding the grants.

ALT 2	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$10,000,000	\$0

3. Take no action.

ALT 3	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$0	- \$10,000,000

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