



**STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY
AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES
FEBRUARY 2025**

**STATEMENT OF NEED
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
NURSING**

SKAGIT VALLEY COLLEGE

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Cover Page — Statement of Need

Program Information

Institution Name: Skagit Valley College

Degree Name: Bachelor of Science in Nursing

CIP Code: 51.3801

Name(s) of existing technical associate degree(s) that will serve as the foundation for this program:

Degree: Associate in Applied Science in Nursing

Nursing Direct Transfer Agreement/MRP

CIP Code: 51.3801

Year Began: 1990

Proposed Start Implementation Date (i.e. Fall 2014): Winter 2027

Projected Enrollment (FTE) in Year One: 24

Projected Enrollment (FTE) by Year: 2027-2028- 36

Funding Source: State FTE

Mode of Delivery

Single Campus Delivery: Skagit Valley College, Mount Vernon Campus & Whidbey Island Campus

Off-site: N/A

Distance Learning: Hybrid- flexible, online, and in-person methods.

Statement of Need

*Please see criteria and standard sheet. **Page Limit: 20 pages***

Contact Information (Academic Department Representative)

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Chief Academic Officer signature

The Statement of Need must be signed. To sign, double click on the signature line below.

X  _____

Chief Academic Officer

Date: 12/10/24

Introduction

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' (2024) employment projections for 2023-2033 show Registered Nursing among the top job growth occupations, with approximately 195,000 openings in the US projected each year. The same report lists the typical entry-level education as a bachelor's degree (BLS, 2024). Additionally, according to an American Association of Colleges of Nursing report, nursing schools turned away over 65,000 qualified nursing program applicants in 2023 due to a lack of faculty and clinical sites (AACN, 2024). Registered Nurses are not only considered in demand but a high-wage career path, and having a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) increases students' earning potential. According to the American Nurses Association, the average salary for an associates-prepared nurse is \$75,000, while a bachelors-prepared nurse has an average annual salary of \$92,000 (ANA, 2024).

Registered Nursing jobs are in high-demand across Washington State, and show a significant supply gap. While several Seattle-area colleges, universities, and private colleges offer nursing degree options, the graduates are not nearly enough to meet the growing demand, nor meet equitable outcomes for nursing students. To that end, Skagit Valley College is proposing a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing completion program for registered nurses (RN-BSN). Skagit Valley College students tend to be place-bound, older, have dependents, work outside of school, and start at below college-level. A local RN-BSN program at the regional community college would provide more equitable access and a more cost-efficient option for students seeking to advance their career in nursing.

The top common skills, or soft skills, listed in a Lightcast Job Posting Analytics report show that communication, leadership, and problem solving are among the top skills employers ask for in nursing applicants (Lightcast, 2024b). These skills align with baccalaureate-level coursework to increase student proficiency in these high-level management skills employers are asking for. The proposed RN-BSN will build from a solid foundation in science, social science, and nursing concepts and focus on critical thinking, leadership, and advanced nursing skills. The proposed program will promote excellence in nursing education, increase nursing responsiveness to the health and healthcare needs of the community, share and promote best practices in nursing, and develop successful graduates who are practice-ready and engaged to transform nursing and improve care in our community.

Criteria 1

Relationship to institutional role, mission, and program priorities.

Skagit Valley College (SVC) has been serving Skagit County, Island County, and San Juan County since 1926. Skagit Valley College's service district covers a large geographical area, more than 2,000 square miles that is primarily rural and agricultural. In addition to remote islands, the district includes semi-urban populations in Mount Vernon and Oak Harbor. Due to its location and geography, there are large numbers of place-bound students living in this region.

The addition of an RN-BSN program that responds to community and industry-identified needs is in direct support of the SVC Mission and Core Themes. SVC's mission is to cultivate student learning and achievement; contribute to the educational, personal, and economic success of students; and promote equitable and thriving communities. Consistent with this mission, one of the College's key strategic enrollment priorities is to increase equitable pathways to high wage, high demand offerings by increasing baccalaureate offerings in the region. Skagit Valley College's Core Themes of Equity in

Access, Equity in Achievement, and Equity in Community are assessed annually and reported to the Board of Trustees. The Core Theme of Equity in Access centers on providing educational programs and services to meet the needs of the local community. The Equity in Achievement Core Theme involves developing pathways for students to achieve their educational and career goals, including offering students the ability to transition from an associate's degree to a bachelor's degree and beyond.

Skagit Valley College has a long history of providing high quality nursing education. As early as the 1940's, a Licensed Practical Nursing program was offered at the Oak Harbor Naval Hospital, located on the current Whidbey Island Campus. In 1972, the SVC Mount Vernon Campus Nursing Program expanded to become a satellite program of the Everett Community College Associate Degree Nursing Program with an optional Practical Nurse exit after the first year. In 1990, SVC began their own Registered Nursing Associate Degree Program. SVC's RN program has maintained Washington State accreditation since 1990 and National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) accreditation since 1993. On average the Registered Nursing program enrolls approximately 145 students per year.

A local RN-BSN fills a gap in the educational needs of the community, meets the affordability requirement, attracts a more diversified workforce that reflects the diversity of the surrounding population, and removes barriers to admitting diverse nursing students for those seeking to attain a bachelor's degree. Skagit Valley College aims to have a bachelor's degree program for local nurses that is affordable, accredited, and easily available to the populations in our service district. Currently, there are several private and public universities in the Seattle-region and southern Washington that offer RN-BSN or BSN degrees, however none are within the Skagit Valley College service region, and many are not affordable to Skagit, Island, and San Juan county students. Since no bachelor's level program in nursing is offered in the service region, the addition of this proposed program increases access to place-bound working adults. The RN-BSN would be non-duplicative and would not require students to transition to another institution outside the area, thus meeting the needs of SVC's, and other regional community and technical college associate degree holders who want to obtain a bachelor's level nursing credential.

Criteria 2

Support of the statewide strategic plans.

The proposed RN-BSN program is in direct alignment with Washington State, the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, as well as the Washington Student Achievement Council strategic plans.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' (SBCTC) 2020-2030 Strategic Plan includes the following goals relevant to the proposed RN-BSN:

Equitable Student Access: Improve completion and transfer rates for all enrolled students across all types of programs and credentials, workforce degrees, transfer degrees, certificates, apprenticeships, and bachelor's degrees. We aim to improve completion rates across-the-board for all students and to improve completion rates faster for students of color. Students must also receive necessary guidance and support about how to efficiently transfer to continue their educational journeys (SBCTC, 2023).

Agile, Career-Relevant Learning: Provide flexible career-training options that are responsive to the needs of businesses and industries, offer Washingtonians access to well-paying jobs and career mobility, and lead to a more resilient and diverse workforce (SBCTC, 2023).

Specifically, the proposed degree supports SBCTC Strategic Plan Strategy 2.1.1. to “ensure that every career pathway, including those in the health care and STEM fields, reflects the full range of relevant credentials offered at the college, such as certificates, workforce degrees, university-transfer degrees, bachelor’s degrees and apprenticeships. This enables students to see the broad horizon of professional opportunities in the field and how credentials align with certain careers” (SBCTC, 2023). The proposed RN-BSN will increase educational attainment across Skagit, Island, and San Juan counties and attract students from feeder program across the region, contributing to increased educational attainment at the state level. The program will improve student success as it offers new opportunities for current and prospective students and incumbent workers in high-demand, high-wage health occupations. SVC’s RN-BSN program will support state and local economies by closing the supply/demand gap with a well-educated and skilled workforce.

Additionally, the SBCTC 2010 Mission Study states that, “Washington also needs more people with baccalaureate and graduate degrees. Community and technical colleges must expand their contribution to help meet this need” (pg. 4). Recognizing that many community college students are place-bound and balancing school, jobs, and families, SBCTC plans to address this through the production of more baccalaureate degrees. In the Skagit Valley College service area, there are no other colleges or universities offering a RN-BSN degree to place-bound students. Offering the RN-BSN at Skagit Valley College will open opportunities for place-bound students and will help increase the continuation of degree attainment for many of the residents in the northwest region.

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) 2025 Strategic Action Plan, lays out a plan to increase postsecondary educational attainment in Washington State to 70% (WSAC, 2024). Skagit Valley College’s proposed degree program will also support WSAC’s policies and goals for higher education. Specifically, the proposed RN-BSN will address each of the specific strategy focus areas from the WSAC Action Plan:

Equity: Skagit Valley College’s core themes include Equity in Access, Equity in Achievement, and Equity in Community. Annually, the college studies the themes and results from these studies are analyzed and reported to the college community. That data is disaggregated by race, and plans are developed to address any equity gaps that are identified. Skagit Valley College data has shown that the gap between Latinx students and white students is narrowing. The increasing Latinx population in Skagit County has created a need for more variety of college degree levels for first generation college students that are unable to geographically attend other institutions. As more local baccalaureate-level programs are available to these students, it is more likely they will continue their education to the baccalaureate level. Skagit Valley College continues to be committed to closing the gap in educational outcomes for historically underrepresented populations, and the proposed RN-BSN program is another key component of that commitment. Along with the traditional development of the BSN curriculum, Skagit Valley College will leverage its existing work around inclusive pedagogy to inform program outcomes and curricular design to model instructional strategies intended to serve a diverse student population.

Affordability: The RN-BSN will be very affordable to students. Leveraging current state-of-the-art facilities and SIM-lab technology, the program will be high quality. The total cost of the program to the student will be 37% lower than a public four-year university, and significantly lower than at private institutions.

Enrollment: Consistent with WSAC strategies, the proposed RN-BSN program will enable associate degree holders to continue their education and training by providing a locally accessible option. This will offer clear and viable pathways for existing nursing to gain a bachelors degree and open the possibility to Master’s degree programs and beyond.

Student Supports: Students will enter the program and work through all classes and projects with a dedicated cohort. The cohort model is a proven retention strategy as students create natural support networks. Support will be available through faculty advisors and through peer-to-peer support cohort networking.

Completion: The proposed program will offer a seamless path for nursing students into a baccalaureate program. Currently, the SVC nursing program has higher completion rates than the average college-wide rates due to focused support services, contextualized curriculum, and multiple methods of putting curriculum into direct practice. The proposed program will also include options for working adults to accommodate their schedules and still complete in a timely manner.

Finally, Washington State Senate Bill 5582 signed by Governor Inslee in 2023 calls for prioritizing the expansion or creation of programs that increase bachelor-level nurse training particularly for rural and underserved students. SVC's service district is made up of rural students and current enrollment in the associates in nursing program include 42% students of color which would help to diversify the industry in the region.

Criteria 3

Employer/community demand for graduates with baccalaureate level of education proposed in the program.

Both employer and community demand for qualified workers with bachelor degrees exceed the current supply of graduates with relevant degrees in the region. Over two-thirds of residents in the Skagit Valley College district lack a bachelor degree. The current lack of higher education attainment in Skagit, Island, and San Juan counties affects employers and the quality of life for community residents. Currently, 36.7 percent of the population in Washington State has a bachelor's degree or higher, however the numbers are less for the population in the service district. Only 27.4 percent of residents in Skagit County and 34.1 percent of those in Island county hold a bachelor's degree or higher. For those students that are place-bound, there are few options, and Skagit Valley College would like to expand equitable access to higher education in order to improve living family wages. There are currently no Universities in the service region and the nearest one is 45 minutes to two hours, away depending on where in the region the student resides. This program would offer local access to a bachelor's degree in nursing.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2024) report that there is a current nursing shortage that is expected to grow as a portion of the workforce reaches retirement and the baby boomers age causing a strain on the healthcare system. They report that Washington will have the highest projected nursing shortage of any other state over the next ten years (AACN, 2024). Additionally, the COVID-19 Pandemic has caused massive burnout, and resignations of experienced nurses. According to an article from the Washington State Nurses Association, nurses are overworked and overwhelmed which led to burnout and resignations (WSNA, 2021). The nursing shortage, coupled with the high patient capacity is a public health crisis (WSNA, 2021).

According to Washington's A Skilled and Educated Workforce: 2021-22 report there is demand for skilled healthcare workers at the baccalaureate level. It is projected that from 2024-2029 in Washington State, over 29% of jobs will require a bachelor's degree or higher, and projections show that supply will fall about 3,800 short of the demand in the healthcare sector alone (A Skilled and Educated Workforce, 2022). This demand is growing for bachelor's prepared nurses as clinics and hospitals increasingly prefer to hire nurses with a wider range of specialized skills (A Skilled and Educated Workforce, 2022). This proposed program will provide training for local students to access

a high-wage, high-demand career in the service district including Skagit, San Juan, and Island counties.

Table 1: Population with a Bachelor’s Degree in Skagit Valley College District Compared to State

	Island	San Juan	Skagit	District Total	WA State
Total Population	87,100	17,850	130,000	234,950	7,766,975
Total Population- Bachelor's degree or higher	29,701	9,228	35,620	74,549	2,850,480
Percent of Population- Bachelor's degree or higher	34.1%	51.7%	27.4%	31.7%	36.7%
Source: Employment Security Department 2022 Data					

Demand

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, jobs for Registered Nurses will increase by 13% annually over the next ten years (BLS, 2024). A 2024 Lightcast report shows 13,372 unique job postings for bachelor’s prepared Registered Nurses in Washington State (Lightcast, 2024a). Currently there are 1,538 job postings for Registered Nurses in the Skagit Valley College three-county service region, and neighboring counties (Lightcast, 2024a).

Based on a Western Washington University economic report, three of the top 13 largest employers in Skagit County are healthcare facilities. The largest employer is Skagit Regional Health, employing twice the number of people than the number two employer. Healthcare is a leading industry in the region, and having baccalaureate-prepared nurses is a priority for employers. The federal government, the military, nurse executives, healthcare foundations, nursing organizations, and practice settings acknowledge the unique value of baccalaureate-prepared nurses and advocate for an increase in the number of BSN nurses across clinical settings. A local RN-BSN fills a gap in the educational needs of the community, meets the affordability requirement for those seeking to attain a bachelor’s degree, and develops a local trained workforce for the healthcare community.

Table 2: State Demand for Relevant Occupations

Occupation	SOC Code	Demand	Required Education	Est. employment 2022	Avg. annual employment growth rate 2022-2032	Median Wage
Registered Nurses	29-1141	In demand	Bachelors	61,030	13%	\$107,720
Data Source: CareerOneStop, 2024						

Registered nurses are considered in demand in Island, San Juan, and Skagit counties (ESD, 2024a). According to Employment Security Department (2024b), registered nursing is among the top 20 job postings for the three counties in SVC’s service district. In Island County, registered nurses are ranked second and first in Skagit county, with nurse job postings double that of the next highest occupation (ESD, 2024b).

Current and projected demand data for selected, relevant bachelors-prepared nurses just in Skagit Valley College’s service region and surrounding counties demonstrate a need of over 1,538 bachelor’s prepared nurses (Lightcast, 2024b) (refer to Table 3). In recent discussions with regional

employers, as well as a search of open positions by our top healthcare facilities, indicate that demand is high. They also noted that a bachelor's degree is either a preferred qualification or a condition of employment. The main employer in the service district currently has 66 unfilled positions for registered nurses, this is significant for a small to medium sized hospital.

Table 3: Regional Open Jobs - Skagit, Island, San Juan, Whatcom, Snohomish Counties

City	Unique Postings (Oct 2023-Sept 2024)
Everett	569
Bellingham	193
Marysville	115
Mount Vernon	94
Lynnwood	85
Edmonds	84
Arlington	59
Bothell	55
Sedro-Woolley	44
Coupeville	30
Anacortes	26
Oak Harbor	18
Burlington	17
Friday Harbor	17

Supply

Washington State Health Workforce Sentinel Network reported that registered nurses were one of the top occupations with extended vacancies in healthcare facilities (2024). Reasons for these vacancy times included difficulty finding qualified applicants in rural areas, as well as in areas where no schools with degree programs were locally available (Sentinal Network, 2024).

In Washington there are 20 baccalaureate-level nursing programs that graduated a total of approximately 1,400 students in 2023, leaving significant room for growth of new programs (Lightcast, 2024c) (refer to Tables 4-5). The closest programs are Western Washington University (30-60 minutes away) or UW-Bothell (1-2 hours away). Additionally, half of the BSN programs are at private universities with high tuition levels that may not be accessible to interested students in the SVC service region. Of the 20 programs in Washington that have Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs, only seven universities and four community colleges offer RN-BSN completion programs. Several require an extensive in-person, day time presence. Only two are offered through distance education- one is fully online and competency based with no in person interactions, the other requires students to be in person monthly with an approximate five-hour travel time for local students. This limits the options for associates-prepared registered nurses residing in Skagit, Island, and San Juan counties to continue their education.

Table 4: Regional Supply of Graduates with Related Degrees

Related Bachelor Degree Program	Completions 2023
University of Washington-Bothell Campus BSN**	116
Western Washington University RN- BSN**	21
Bellevue College RN-BSN*	25
Lake Washington Institution of Technology RN-BSN*	0
Total	162
Source: *SBCTC Completion Report 2022-23	
**Lightcast Program Development Report 2024	

Table 5: Statewide Supply of Graduates with Related Degrees

Related Bachelor Degree Program	Completions 2023
Washington State University BSN**	351
Seattle University BSN**	238
University of Washington-Seattle Campus BSN**	143
Pacific Lutheran University BSN**	132
University of Washington-Bothell Campus BSN**	116
University of Washington-Tacoma Campus BSN**	101
Seattle Pacific University BSN**	87
Gonzaga University BSN**	70
Saint Martins University BSN**	61
Walla Walla University BSN**	61
Western Washington University RN- BSN**	21
Bellevue College RN-BSN*	25
Columbia Basin College RN-BSN*	13
Olympic College RN-BSN*	15
Wenatchee Valley College RN-BSN*	15
Total	1,449
Source: *SBCTC Completion Report 2022-23	
**Lightcast Program Development Report 2024	

Gap

The number of graduates and residents with requisite education levels is insufficient to meet the current and projected demand. Annual openings for in-demand occupations requiring a bachelor's degree far exceed the number of projected program graduates (refer to Tables 6-7).

Table 6: Regional Demand/Supply/Gap

Regional Demand: Average annual total openings	1,538
Regional Supply: Annual total degree completions	162
See Appendix A for SBCTC Applied Baccalaureate Degree Supply/Demand Gap Rubric for Colleges	

Table 7: Washington State Demand/Supply/Gap

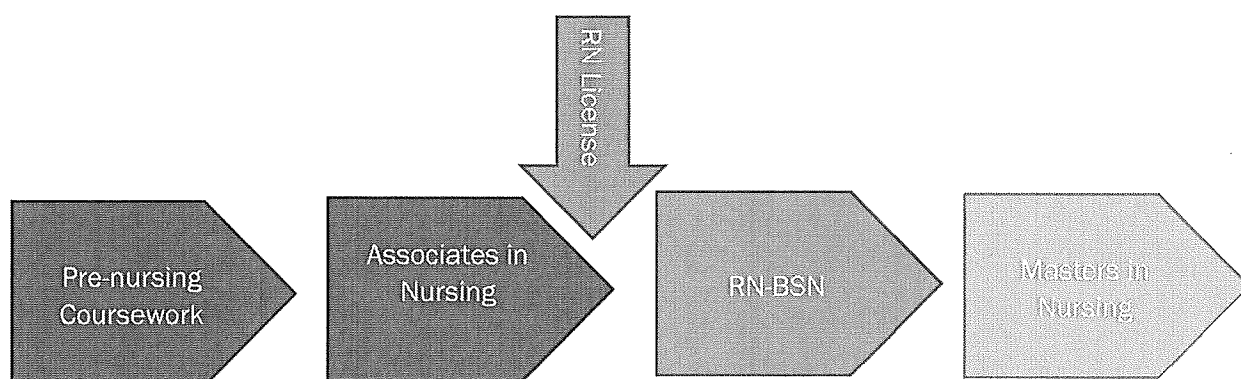
State Demand: Average annual total openings	13,372
State Supply: Annual total degree completions	1,499
See Appendix A for SBCTC Applied Baccalaureate Degree Supply/Demand Gap Rubric for Colleges	

Criteria 4

Baccalaureate program builds from existing professional and technical degree program offered by the institution.

All degree and certificate programs at Skagit Valley College are clustered into nine Areas of Study (meta majors): Basic Education for Adults, Arts & Communication, Business, Education, Food & Beverage Management, Health Sciences, Industrial Technology & Transportation, Public Service & Social Science, and Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM). The proposed RN-BSN will be housed in the Health Sciences Area of Study with the other health departments: Medical Assisting, Pharmacy Technician, Physical Education, Nutrition, and Dental Therapy. Skagit Valley College also has comprehensive Planning Guides that include career and transfer information for each Area of Study and for each degree. The RN-BSN will be included in those Planning Guides and as part of the degree and career pathways presented in the required First Quarter Experience Guides course. The nursing pathway will be mapped out for students to include pathways behind the initial associate's degree (refer to Figure 1).

Figure 1: Nursing Pathway



The proposed RN-BSN builds on a foundation of Skagit Valley College's associate-level nursing degrees which include an Associates in Applied Science in Nursing and a Nursing Direct Transfer Agreement/Major Related Program. These statewide degrees are common across all institutions. Including foundational coursework in math, English, biology, chemistry, anatomy and physiology, and psychology as well the fundamentals of medical-surgical nursing. The following table (refer to Table 6) shows the annual headcount in the nursing programs from 2019-2023.

Table 5: 5-Year Enrollment History

Skagit Valley College Program	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5 year Average
Headcount	125	131	153	145	142	139
Cohort size	79	67	79	73	73	74
Completions	58	56	64	62	75	63

From an administrative prospective, Skagit Valley College’s success developing and offering BAS degrees in Environmental Conservation, Applied Management, and Computer Science as well as a successful, fully-accredited Associates in Nursing will create a framework that can be adapted to the needs of the RN-BSN program. Changes have taken place college-wide to advance efforts to become a baccalaureate degree granting institution. These changes include investments in additional program management, library, financial aid, enrollment, and advising services. Skagit Valley College has also created a common framework for all bachelor’s degrees to include standard practices and structures. As mentioned above, Skagit Valley College will lean on the existing curricular infrastructure to inform its RN-BSN development, will also utilize the robust advisory committees that have contributed to the success of the associates-level nursing programs.

Criteria 5

Student demand for program within the region.

As demonstrated in Criteria 3, the demand for bachelors prepared nurses is significantly higher than supply. Additionally, Skagit, Island, and San Juan Counties are rural and island-based communities and students have more barriers to accessing educational programs. In a Skagit Valley College Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE, 2017) nearly 70% of students live near campus. Additionally, 54% work at least 10 hours or more while attending college. Skagit Valley College students are place-bound, working adults who need local and flexible program to accommodate the demands on their time while achieving their educational goals. In general, 67% of Skagit Valley College students indicate a bachelor’s degree as their primary goal. Students are also interested in a baccalaureate level program at Skagit Valley College.

The Nursing DTA/MRP is one of the highest enrolled programs at SVC, with an annual average of over 139 students in nursing programs. Additionally, Skagit Valley College will reach out to other regional community and technical colleges for potential direct-articulation opportunities from their nursing programs. Regionally, Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College, and Everett Community College all have associates in nursing, do not have an RN-BSN, and are with 45 minutes of Skagit Valley College (refer to Table 7). Outreach to the other regional colleges as well as the existing students and graduates at SVC, there is a healthy pipeline of students for this proposed RN-BSN program.

Table 7: Regional Associates in Nursing completions 2023-23

School	Skagit	Whatcom	Bellingham	Everett	Total
Completions	73	33	56	139	301
Source: SBCTC Credentials Awarded Dashboard 2022-23					

The proposed RN-BSN is projected to start in the 2026-27 academic year. In a 2024 survey given to current students and recent graduates of the Nursing associates programs at Skagit Valley College (over 100 responses), 97% of students intend to obtain a bachelor’s degree in nursing, 95% were interested finishing their RN and moving into an RN-BSN program, and 93% of students reported that they would consider applying to the BSN program if Skagit Valley College offered one. Nursing

programs across the state are consistently full with waiting lists, this program will be able to enroll to capacity each year (refer to Table 8).

Table 8: RN-BSN Annual Enrollment Projections

Year	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
Headcount	24	36	48	70	70

Criteria 6

Efforts to maximize state resources to serve place-bound students.

The attributes of the most recent associate-level nursing graduates at SVC include, 36% students with dependents, 61% first-generation college, 58% are considered low-income, and 12% Veterans. Many of the current nursing students are place-bound within the three-county service region. Skagit Valley College intends to build a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program that is accessible to students, and registered nursing within the service region, and beyond. This means offering a high-quality program to place-bound students and nurses, ensuring that curriculum is inclusive of the diverse population and meeting diverse nursing demands of the many small, medium, and large healthcare employers in the district and neighboring counties. All of this would be part of a seamless educational pathway for Skagit Valley College's and other associate degree completers, as well as local nurses looking to move forward in their career.

The program will offer classes once per week to accommodate working nurses. This will be offered in-person class with the option to login remotely. It will also include digital content as well as on-site lab, simulation, and clinical experiences to benefit students and allow for flexible scheduling. Technologies such as lecture-capture software, streaming classrooms and cloud computing will be utilized to allow instructional delivery to take place on-site and online. These technologies allow place-bound students to access the program. Skagit Valley College's associate-level nursing programs has been successfully operating in a hybrid model since 2020. Offering the proposed RN-BSN program in this manner is a natural extension of the college's mission to serve students throughout the large, remote, and geographically diverse district. The flexibility of the instructional model will also provide access to a baccalaureate education to potential students currently in the workforce or those with family obligations that make enrollment in programs that require full-time residency difficult, if not impossible.

Regional Collaboration

Regionally, Skagit Valley College has communicated with Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College, and Western Washington University regarding an intent to begin the RN-BSN program. Skagit Valley College's nursing program currently participates in a consortium of local colleges and regional healthcare facilities to coordinate nursing clinical placement. This consortium will continue and the proposed RN-BSN students will be placed into clinicals and preceptorships through this consortium. Additionally, students in Whatcom county at Whatcom Community College and Bellingham Technical College will have a more affordable option with choice in modality/attendance to complete their BSN.

Unique Program Aspects

The proposed RN-BSN program will allow working nurses to have a local and flexible option to continue their educational pathway. It will provide the flexibility of hybrid learning with the support network of a local institution as well as local student support services. Nursing students receive technology support, library and information services regardless of location or course delivery method and may access assistance from the Student Writing Center and Math Lab for additional services from either the Mount Vernon or Oak Harbor Campus.

Students will also receive support from their peers through in class and out of class engagement. The Student Nurse Clubs in both Mount Vernon and Oak Harbor offer guest speakers on nursing-related topics and hosting meet and greet online events. Both clubs have donated back to the community with volunteer community projects: clothing/bedding/food donated to Friendship House (Homeless), Oasis Teen Center, and Skagit Domestic Violence & Sexual Services; “pop-up” blood donations. Members of the Student Nurse Club elect officers, and full-time faculty members serve as Student Nurse Club Advisors.

Additionally, SVC faculty have engaged in a curricular and instructional practice review through an inclusive pedagogy learning community. Faculty leaders from SVC have presented this work throughout the state and nation, and it is reshaping culture and practices. This includes reflection and discussion on bias, inclusion, supportive expectations, scaffolding content, backwards design, and outcomes assessment. Practices of inclusivity will purposefully inform each step of RN-BSN program development. In this fundamental sense, the RN-BSN program will not only differ from existing programs in the region, but from those across the state because of the instructional design and prioritization of inclusive approaches to teaching. Skagit Valley College looks forward to the challenging work of critically assessing traditional instructional strategies to attain equitable outcomes. Training students within this framework not only creates a learning environment that promotes a diverse student body, it builds an infrastructure for traditionally marginalized students to succeed and contribute to the education of others.

Criteria 7

Promoting equitable opportunities for students, including historically marginalized students.

Skagit Valley College’s student population reflects the community served. Skagit Valley College’s Latinx population just reached 25%, and serving this community is a top strategic priority of the College as we become a federally-designated Hispanic Serving Institution. This engagement with the Latinx community has prompted institution-wide changes that promote inclusivity. This work is in line with SVC’s Strategic Plan, Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, and the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) Plan. The DEI Plan outlines strategies to build diverse and integrated curriculum, develop diverse and culturally competent employees, conduct an equity assessment, increasing student development and support, among other things.

Skagit Valley College is committed to being an antiracist institution and closing equity gaps in all measures of access, achievement, and community. This is demonstrated through the extensive Guided Pathways work beginning in 2014, the hiring of a Cabinet-level diversity, equity, and inclusion officer, and through the development of the Center for Inclusive Excellence. These investments, among many other institutional conversations, trainings, and policy changes show the intention to promote equitable opportunities for all student, especially students of color and low-income

students. The proposed RN-BSN program will build on a strong foundation of student support services available at Skagit Valley College.

College Demographics

The College district serves a growing population, including a young Latinx population experiencing significant growth. Recognizing the increasing diversity in the student body, and even more so the growing Latinx population in the feeder schools, Latinx community engagement continues to be a top strategic priority. Additionally, there are three tribal governments in the district: Swinomish, Samish, and Upper Skagit.

In fall 2023, the College served nearly 7,000 students who generated 3,266 full-time equivalent students (FTES). Forty-one percent (41%) were enrolled in university transfer programs of study, 34% reported working toward Professional/Technical degrees or certificates, and 12% were taking basic skills courses. The remaining students (13%) were enrolled at the College in a non-degree seeking capacity.

Part-time students (enrolled in less than 12 credits) were 56% of the students enrolled in Fall 2023, and 56% of the student body was female. The average age of students was 24. Of the students enrolled in fall 2023, 62 were international students and 676 were enrolled as Running Start students. The majority of the students, 66%, were white, 35% were Hispanic, and 8% identify themselves as Asian/Pacific Islander. Black/African American students accounted for 4% of enrollments and 4% of the students were Native American (SBCTC, 2024b).

Currently the nursing program student demographics are primarily female and majority white (refer to Table 8). Additionally, 36% of nursing students have dependents, 61% are first-generation college, 58% are considered low-income, and 12% are Veterans. RN-BSN program outreach will include more opportunities to recruit male students as well as more students of color to better align the demographics in the program to the demographics of the college and the community.

Table 8: SVC Student Demographics

Skagit Valley College Program	Students of Color	Gender
Skagit Valley College	49%	56% Female
Nursing Program	58%	88% Female

Student Barriers

Students of color and low-income students are underrepresented in baccalaureate level programs. Challenges and barriers to success for Skagit Valley College students, particularly students of color and low-income students, are similar to other open-access institutions across the state. There is often a gap between previous educational experiences of community college students and the expectations that they find in college. For instance, high school was free and mandatory while college requires ongoing financial commitments and voluntary attendance. College requires new skills, including study skills, technology skills, financial management skills, and navigating a new educational environment. Students are constantly faced with choices and may be asked to make personal, family, or work sacrifices in order to attend college. Ongoing personal and financial issues often distract from learning. Unclear or nonexistent academic and career plans undermine students' confidence to persist in and complete college. Students lack support networks, and students and their families may not share the values associated with higher education making it difficult to trust

that the investment of time and money is worthwhile and that they are capable of completing college. Students who begin in pre-college or developmental courses are discouraged because it will take longer to complete a two-year degree, let alone a bachelor's degree, due to additional required courses.

Recruitment Plan

Skagit Valley College currently has a standard and comprehensive recruitment plan for all bachelors-level programs. This includes information sessions, social media presence, collaborations with marketing and outreach, and bilingual program cards and staff. The proposed RN-BSN degree has a strong demand for nursing degrees from both regional employers and students. The college will leverage relationships with K-12, workforce funding programs, and local healthcare employers to recruit traditionally underrepresented students into their first year of the nursing pathway. The cohort, hybrid model will be a key component in recruiting traditionally underrepresented students. The location and cost will also be marketing tools, as Skagit will have a local, high quality baccalaureate program whose cost will be significantly less than four-year universities in the state. While the program will be selective entry, the admissions committee will be required to complete implicit bias training, and the application itself will consider multiple measures beyond GPA and TEAS test score including work experience, multilingualism, and potentially Veteran's status.

Student Support & Resources

The program design will use a cohort model to support working adults, which is a research-based best practice for completion. Students will also receive wrap around support services include new student orientation, new student advising, ongoing advising sessions (group and individual), faculty and staff referrals to campus resources, career planning resources, community referrals, training and support for use of technology, and academic tutoring. The program is affordable and financial aid resources are available. The total cost of the program to the student will be 20% lower than online competency-based programs, over 30% lower than four-year universities in the region, and significantly lower than at private institutions. Additionally, there is a Retention specialist that tracks student progress and responds to Early Alert Recommendations. Specialized wraparound support for traditionally marginalized students:

- Financial Support- Beyond a strong Financial Aid department, SVC also has a robust workforce grants program which includes access to TANF, Worker Retraining, Workfirst, and other funds like BFET for tuition, training assistance, and resources.
- English Language learners- Bilingual/ Spanish speaking enrollment services, navigators, and financial aid staff are available to work with students.
- Accessibility Resources- a dedicated counselor and a support staff work to provide accommodations so students can participate fully.

Support for students specific to the nursing program include:

- Dedicated cohorts to improve peer networking and support
- Dedicated nursing student orientation
- Utilizing a faculty-advising model to develop appropriate academic and career plans
- The development of student remediation plans for those that do not pass exams with an 80% or higher

Skagit Valley College has also implemented structural changes such as a focus on data and faculty professional development. Program-level and course-level completion data, disaggregated by gender

and ethnicity, is reviewed annually and compared to the system average to make decisions and develop new initiatives. Additionally, all new faculty go through a year-long Inclusive pedagogy faculty learning community to learn about implicit bias, privilege, antiracism, backwards planning and design, among other topics that have been shown to improve equity and inclusion in and out of the classroom.

When appropriate, nursing students are assigned to a counselor with expertise or background in nursing. Counseling services are also available for current or returning SVC students to provide academic/educational counseling, career counseling, confidential crisis intervention and/or short-term personal counseling, as well as referral to community resources to help students adjust to, cope with, and succeed in college.

Conclusion

The proposed Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) closely aligns with Washington State key industry sectors, SBCTC's goals, and the Skagit Valley College mission. It also meets strategic planning goals, student interests and industry demand. The RN-BSN will build off of a solid foundation in science, social science, and nursing concepts and focus on critical thinking, leadership, and advanced nursing knowledge and skills. The program will promote excellence in nursing education, increase nursing responsiveness to the health and healthcare needs of the community, share and promote best practices in nursing, and develop successful, local, graduates who are practice ready and are engaged in lifelong learning to transform nursing to meet the needs in our rural and remote communities. This local and accessible program will be a balance of affordability and flexibility while still providing excellent student supports such as a cohort model, student engagement opportunities, and a campus support network. This program will provide access to training for regional, place-bound students to engage in a high-wage, high-demand career in the service district as well as neighboring communities.

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Attachment A: Applied Baccalaureate Degree Supply/Demand Gap Rubric for Colleges

The goal of this rubric is to help you build a program that will meet the needs of your community. We have given you options about the information you can use to support the need for your new program. Also, the guidelines for estimating the supply/demand gap are similar to the ones we use for other program applications. We hope this makes the rubric more familiar to you. If not, contact the Director of Transfer Education at SBCTC for further information.

The application needs to show the information below for program approval:

- employers demand* the level of technical training proposed within the program, making it cost-effective for students to seek the degree;
- lead to high wage-earning jobs; and
- the proposed program fills a gap in options available for students because it is not offered by a public four-year institution of higher education in the college's geographic area.

College Name: Skagit Valley College	
Program Name: Bachelor of Science in Nursing	
Select one: Existing Occupation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or Emerging Occupation <input type="checkbox"/>	
If local demand/supply information is available for the specified degree program and target occupation(s), **	
For demand: Provide local/regional demand data for the targeted occupation job title(s) from traditional labor market data, industry data, trade association data, or other transactional data.	2024 Openings for Bachelor's-prepared Registered Nurses WA: 13,372 Regional: 1,538
For supply gap: Provide data on the number of programs and the number of annual program graduates for all four-year colleges that supply your region. Is the number of current annual graduates insufficient to meet current and projected demand? (The result of demand minus supply).	WA: Number of BSN programs: 20 Total Graduates: 1,499 Regional: Number of BSN programs: Total Graduates: 162 The supply does not meet the demand.

Attachment B- Survey Results

Student Survey

106 total responses

1. Do you intend to pursue a Bachelor's Degree?
 - a. Yes- 95.3%
 - b. Maybe- 3.8%
 - c. No- 0.9%
2. Do you intend to pursue a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing?
 - a. Yes- 97.2%
 - b. Maybe- 1.9%
 - c. No- 0.9%
3. Which statement best describes you?
 - a. I plan to get my associates degree in nursing then enroll in an RN-BSN completion program- 95.3%
 - b. I am working on nursing pre-requisites and intend to enroll directly into a BSN program- 2.8%
 - c. I plan to get my associates degree in nursing and work as a Registered Nurse (no plans for a BSN in the near future)- 1.9%
4. If Skagit Valley College offered a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing would you consider applying?
 - a. Yes- 92.5%
 - b. Maybe- 5.7%
 - c. No- 1.9%