

December 8, 2022

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For immediate release:

SVSU AND ALPENA COMMUNITY COLLEGE FORM NEW PARTNERSHIP TO GROW THE NURSING TALENT PIPELINE

Alpena Community College and Saginaw Valley State University will collaborate to expand nursing education opportunities and grow the talent pool of nurses in Northern Michigan through a partnership supported by a grant from the State of Michigan.

Alpena Community College has selected SVSU as its partner university and ACC will receive a \$2 million grant to administer a program in collaboration with SVSU for nurses to complete their bachelor's degrees. Under the agreement, students who complete an Associate Degree of Nursing (ADN) at ACC can earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) from SVSU's fully accredited program.

“For many years Michigan community colleges serving rural areas, such as ACC, attempted unsuccessfully to win legislative authorization to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree to support easier and more affordable access for local nurses to obtain their BSN,” said ACC President Dr. Don MacMaster. “The historic bi-partisan compromise included in the Fiscal Year 2023 budget goes further to address this challenge than ever before. We’re delighted to partner with Saginaw Valley State University to work together to bring a BSN credential to the Alpena campus. We thank Governor Whitmer, Senator Stamas, and all those who supported this solution to a critical Northeast Michigan health care workforce issue. We expect our first cohort of BSN students to begin in Fall 2023.”

By empowering students in ACC's associate degree program to work concurrently toward a bachelor's degree from SVSU, the partnership will streamline the pathway to a bachelor's degree in nursing. “The ACC/SVSU partnership allows our well-prepared Associates Degree Nursing students the ability to seamlessly transition into a highly recognized BSN program for degree advancement,” said ACC Director of Nursing Kelli Leask. “This collaborative partnership supports the national nursing shortage initiatives and recognizes our commitment to excellence in nursing practice and education.”

According to ACC Vice President of Instruction Steven Fosgard, “The selection of SVSU as our BSN partner came down to three factors: the quality of education and the student support mechanisms that SVSU offers to their BSN students; the flexibility of programming offered for our students and community partners; and the opportunities that an ACC/SVSU partnership provides for our graduates and community.”

“We enter this new partnership with Alpena Community College with great enthusiasm,” said Marcia Ditmyer, dean of SVSU's Crystal M. Lange College of Health and Human Services. “ACC offers an excellent associate degree nursing education and plays a vital role in preparing nurses to serve healthcare providers in northeast Michigan.

“Through this partnership, we can continue to improve safe, high-quality health care services for future generations.”

SVSU and ACC are among many Michigan institutions participating in this program to expand nursing education opportunities throughout the state. Under the \$56 million initiative, which is included in the fiscal year 2023 state budget, community colleges can receive funding to partner with a four-year college or university. This collaboration will include input from local employers and workforce development agencies. The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity will administer the grant.

Stacey Klump, SVSU’s RN to BSN program coordinator, said attainment of the bachelor’s degree offers registered nurses a comprehensive, holistic professional education focusing on best practice, community health, leadership and process improvement as it relates to patient safety and quality care.

“We are committed to serving ACC’s ADN student nurse population to assure they have an opportunity to seek a successful completion of their Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree,” Klump said. “Through this partnership, students will be receiving their BSN from SVSU's fully accredited and community-minded program, while having the ability to maximize transfer credits to SVSU at ACC.”

Healthcare providers such as MyMichigan Health recognize a growing need for highly prepared nurses.

“MyMichigan Alpena shares the excitement of ACC and SVSU as they partner to have a BSN program offered locally,” said Thomas Kane, vice president of nursing for MyMichigan Alpena. “MyMichigan is a staunch supporter of the education of our nurses, and this partnership will offer our nurses the opportunity to pursue their BSN close to home. We at MyMichigan look forward to this opportunity and support this educational opportunity in our community.”

ACC nursing student Crystal Leeseberg is one of the many students who are interested in the new collaborative program. “A partnership with SVSU for an ADN-BSN program will greatly benefit all current and future students in the nursing program who will be wanting to continue beyond an associate degree. This will allow the convenience of a local program as well as a face-to-face instruction that is not readily available locally. This is exciting news, and I can't wait to hear more about this program!”

ACC and SVSU expect to begin enrolling students through the new partnership for next fall, starting classes in August 2023.

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