



# UNH, Granite State College Partner To Offer Bachelor's Degrees, Master's Courses To Nurses Via Distance Learning

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DURHAM, N.H. -- In an ongoing effort to address the statewide and national shortage of nurses, the University of New Hampshire and Granite State College have joined forces to introduce distance learning into RN baccalaureate and master's degree programs for nurses. Beginning fall 2006, registered nurses with associate's degrees or diplomas can take courses online toward completion of the baccalaureate degree, and the availability of master's degree level core courses will be increased with distance learning options.

"The need for more nurses to address growing health care needs – in New Hampshire and around the country – are well documented, and research indicates a strong relationship between higher levels of nursing education and better client outcomes," says Lynette Ament, associate professor and chair of UNH's Department of Nursing. "By offering advanced education and career development in this very accessible education environment, UNH and Granite State College hope to address the shortage of baccalaureate-prepared nurses and improve the quality of care for our state's residents."

UNH is currently the only public university in the state that awards baccalaureate and master's degrees in nursing. New Hampshire, Ament notes, lags behind national trends in the percentage of its registered nurses who have completed bachelor's degrees: while the national ratio is six associate's degree RNs to four bachelor's degree-prepared RNs, the state ratio is 8.5 to 1.5.

"This new initiative combines UNH's expertise in providing advanced training for nurses with Granite State College's innovative, affordable, flexible online degree programs," says Karol LaCroix, president of Granite State College.

Founded in 1972 and headquartered in Concord, Granite State College is designed for adult learners who seek alternatives to traditional campus-based programs. Because Granite State College is an institution that serves learners where they live and work, it operates a network of nine statewide learning centers, and courses are offered at more than 40 additional community sites, as well as online. Students can access courses either from their home or a local GSC learning center.

This partnership between UNH and Granite State College is the first academic example of a University System of New Hampshire system-wide effort called Project Access, through which the University System institutions partner to offer timely and convenient higher education programs based on need and demand. The UNH nursing and Granite State College partnership

was funded in part by a grant from the New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation (NHHEAF) Network.

For more information, go to <http://www.shhs.unh.edu/nursing/index.html> or [www.granite.edu](http://www.granite.edu).