



Bellingham Technical College
Press Release

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For Immediate Release

BELLINGHAM TECHNICAL COLLEGE MOVES AWAY FROM LOTTERY IN CHANGE TO NURSING PROGRAM ADMISSION PROCESS



(BTC Nursing Program students in classrooms, labs and simulation lab. Photos: John Meloy)

Bellingham, Washington — November 23, 2016 — Bellingham Technical College is excited to announce a positive change in the enrollment process for the college's Nursing program that will help students better plan for their education.

Beginning Monday, Dec. 5, 2016, BTC is moving from a lottery system to a first-come first-admitted practice for qualified applicants to the Nursing program. The requirements for admission to the program remain the same; however, the process by which students are admitted has been changed.

The application window will open on Dec. 5 for the Spring Quarter Nursing Cohort. We will be offering cohort seats to 20 students to start in April. Completed application packets will be accepted in Admissions beginning at 8 a.m. on Dec. 5, and qualified students will be added onto the Annual Program List for Nursing (APL-N) on a first-come first-served basis. Applicants on the APL-N will be offered cohort seats beginning the second week of January.

“We are excited to be able to respond to the needs of our students and open up this new admissions process to support their career success,” said Julie Samms, BTC Associate Dean of Nursing and Surgery Technology.

For academic year 2017-2018, the application window for all three cohorts (Fall, Winter and Spring) will open the second Monday of July. Completed application packets will be accepted in Admissions beginning at 8 a.m. July 10, and students will be added onto the Annual Program List for Nursing on a first-come first-served basis. Applicants on the APL-N will be offered cohort seats for Fall, Winter and Spring quarter after the first week of August. The APL-N will remain open for complete applications through Fall and Winter and will close at the beginning of Spring quarter. Once the APL-N is closed at the beginning of Spring quarter, it will be cleared and students will need to reapply. Applications will not be retained past the academic year applied for.

BTC decided to make this change after carefully considering feedback from Nursing students and local employers. Previously, students who were applying to BTC’s Nursing program were never sure if they would be admitted each quarter, with many of them applying for the lottery up to 5 times before being selected for the program. We have heard from students that this uncertainty created frustration and was a barrier for their education and career pathway as it made planning for the future very difficult.

Employers were also adversely affected since many of them employ Certified Nursing Assistants, which is a demographic that often aims toward nursing school as a next step. Nursing Assistants who were selected to BTC’s nursing program had a short window between acceptance and the start of the program, giving their employers short notice — and leaving employers in the caregiving industry scrambling to replace staff.

The most common entry process for college nursing programs is to rank students with a competitive entry (giving higher rank for top grades—usually A students), and accepting only the top tier students.

BTC is committed to access and diversity and contends that B students make excellent nurses and that their dedication to their craft is tremendous. BTC’s nursing program requirements are a B grade in most of the prerequisites and a C in some of the prerequisites. BTC finds B students are no less dedicated, and the college knows that there are also life reasons why students may not get As in every class. Some Nursing students are returning to college and the workforce after a break, and many are parents balancing college, full-time jobs and a family.

BTC has the largest and oldest nursing program in the region; in fact, the program predates the college becoming Bellingham Technical College. The school initially collaborated with St. Luke’s and the K-12 system in 1953 and graduated its first cohort in 1954. BTC is proud to serve the community and to announce this change, which will better allow its students to plan their education as they work toward filling a vital role in the health of our community.

Upcoming Info Session:

Those interested in learning more about BTC's Nursing program and the new admissions process can attend one of two Nursing Program Info Sessions on Wednesday, Nov. 30. The lunchtime session will run from noon to 1 p.m. and an evening session will run from 6-7 p.m. in BTC's G Building, Room 102.

To find out more about these and other information sessions click here: www.btc.edu/nursinginfosessions

BTC's Associate Dean of Nursing & Surgery Technology Julie Samms is available for interviews with interested media.

About Bellingham Technical College

Bellingham Technical College is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, and offers seven direct transfer degrees such as pre-engineering, pre-nursing, electronics, mechanical engineering, and technology and business. Completion of these degrees prepares BTC students to transfer with a junior status to participating colleges and universities in Washington State. BTC offers 38 associate degree and 51 certificate options providing professional technical education to support local and regional industry workforce needs. For more information, go to www.btc.edu.

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