

Letter from Michael McNabb to Governor's Task Force on Academic Health

Please submit this additional information to the members of the Task Force.

Recommendation No. 6 of the December 20 draft of the Task Force calls for a strategic plan to, among other goals, increase the number of graduates from the nursing school at the University of Minnesota. The gap between the demand for registered nurses in Minnesota and the supply of students graduating from nursing schools will be approximately 5,000 positions this year. By 2030 the gap is projected to be more than 20,000. See the table in the October 5, 2022 Star Tribune report at <https://www.startribune.com/minnesota-nursing-schools-team-up-to-confront-severe-shortage/600212964/>.

The dean of the U of M nursing school acknowledges that “continuing to do what we’ve been doing won’t address the current nursing shortage or the even greater one our state is facing in the very near future.”

Well, yes. Each year the nursing school at the university has over 1,000 applicants for the 118 spaces in its freshman class. (The school admits a greater number of students, but some decide to enroll at other colleges.) See, “Freshman Nursing Program” at <https://admissions.tc.umn.edu/academics/special-programs/freshman-nursing-program>. How many other qualified young people do not even apply because they know that such a highly selective admissions process denies them access?

There are a number of factors here, such as a shortage of faculty and clinical sites. Then there is the desire of the university administration to maintain its No. 16 ranking of B.S.N. programs by U.S. News & World Report, part of which is based on the academic scores of freshman students. See, “Best B.S.N Programs in Nursing” at <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/rankings/nursing-overall>

The remedy is to provide more resources to the nursing school and to enroll a much higher number of qualified first year students. For fiscal year 2024 the university administration allocated \$6.36 million to the nursing school out of a total of \$676.5 million the university received in general appropriations from the state legislature. See pp. 129, 131 of the June 8, 2023 report of the Finance & Operations Committee of the Board of Regents at <https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/2023-06/docket-fin-june2023.pdf> (attached as Exhibit I). The allocation of funds reflects the priorities of the university administration.

Michael W. McNabb
Attorney at Law
22890 Plateau Drive
Lakeville, Minnesota 55044
(952) 894-9812
<https://minn-law.net>

University of Minnesota B.A. 1971; J.D. 1974
University of Minnesota Alumni Association life member