University of Nebraska Medical Center
College of Nursing, Kearney Division

The Kearney division of the UNMC College of Nursing space is no longer adequate for the learning needs of today’s students and the contemporary teaching strategies employed by faculty. Shortages of registered nurses and nurse practitioners exist in many of the counties served by the UNMC College of Nursing’s Kearney division. Nationally, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that nearly 600,000 new registered nurse positions will be added by 2018, in large part due to aging of the population, increasingly sophisticated health care technologies, and expansions in access to health care resulting from health care reform. The Nebraska Center for Nursing (2010) predicts a shortage of more than 3,800 registered nurses (19 percent) by the year 2020. The center also notes in its 2011 Nebraska RN Survey Report that 80 percent of the nurses who work in Nebraska have been educated in the state. Nebraska’s rural areas are expected to be hardest hit by the shortages. Shortages in primary care are particularly acute and this is at a time when access to primary care and need for health promotion, illness prevention, and chronic care management are growing. A nationwide faculty shortage is a principal reason behind the U.S. nursing shortage. Not only are teachers in short supply, many are also approaching retirement age.

UNMC College of Nursing – Kearney Division
- Initiated in 1991
- 15 faculty, 5 staff
- Admitting undergraduate student GPA – 3.5-3.6
- Up to 48 percent of qualified BSN applicants turned away in FY 11
- Total annual enrollment: approximately 96 BSN, 28 MSN students
- Graduates per year: approximately 40
- Master’s graduates become the future faculty workforce for Kearney area nursing colleges and become nurse practitioners who practice in primary care settings.
- Annual budget: $.3 million, with 97 percent from state general funds and the remainder from faculty practice

Kearney facilities
Current facilities do not have classrooms large enough for the number of students in the college’s newly designed curriculum, nor spaces for the kinds of interactive, team-based learning the faculty are pioneering in the college. Conference spaces and computer labs are not adequate, and the spaces for interactive video transmission are too small to allow for the expanded uses needed for classes shared across campuses and for clinical supervision of students based in rural areas. Clinical simulation laboratory facilities are inadequate for students learning important clinical skills prior to contact with patients. This is a vital need because today’s students need to learn to care for patients with the
complex array of co-morbidities commonly occurring in acute and critical care, and for primary care. There is no space in the current facilities for research teams.

**Potential opportunities in an expanded facility**

- Expanded enrollment in undergraduate and graduate programs
- Interprofessional learning experiences focusing on health needs in rural areas and primary care
- Emphasis on primary care workforce needs
- Excellence afforded by state of the art classrooms, seminar rooms, learning studios and clinical simulation laboratories

An expanded facility would increase space for teaching, research and administration; space would be configured to maximize the functional relationships between and among faculty, students, teaching space and research space. Existing classrooms would be replaced with state-of-the-art class and seminar rooms, and learning studios sized to accommodate varying course enrollments, resulting in better space utilization. Contemporary clinical simulation labs would be added that can be used for interprofessional learning experiences. Also, a collaboration between UNK and the UNMC School of Allied Health Programs would allow for shared space and new approaches to interprofessional education. Nurse practitioner students would be able to learn alongside physician assistant students, with an innovative focus on rural primary care.

Better faculty offices, improved research space and interprofessional collaboration also would aid in national recruitment of new faculty.

**Expanded enrollment**
The emphasis will be on expanded enrollment and adding cutting-edge approaches to interprofessional learning experiences for students preparing for careers in rural primary care, new models for acute and critical care, and community-based care. An expanded facility would make it possible for the College of Nursing to grow total enrollment by 40 students. It will take three years from the time the expansion begins to reach the full enrollment of 40 additional students. The expansion will include a mix of BSN and graduate students in the nurse practitioner options.

**Q: Where will the new facility be located?**
A: The new building will be located to the northeast of the current space on the University of Nebraska at Kearney campus.

**Q: Are adequate clinical sites available in the Kearney area?**
A: We enjoy collegial cooperation with other nursing programs in the area in negotiating use of clinical sites. Additionally, we will work with local hospitals and community-based clinical agencies to develop innovative clinical learning experiences that respond to new trends emerging from health care reform and concerns for health promotion, illness prevention and chronic care management. In addition to acute and critical care learning experiences, community-based clinical learning will provide a focus on rural health, primary care, and interprofessional team-based care delivery. We will supplement clinical training with high-technology clinical simulation labs.