

TEAM REPORT OF FINDINGS

Concerning the Application from Kaplan University in Maine
for
Additional Degree-Granting Authority to Offer the:

Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Bachelor of Science in Information Technology
Associate of Science in Information Technology

September 24, 2012
Augusta, Maine

The Kaplan University Review Team:

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BACKGROUND

A Visiting Team appointed by the Maine State Board of Education visited the Kaplan University in Maine Augusta campus on September 24, 2012 to review that institution's application for additional degree-granting authority for the following degrees:

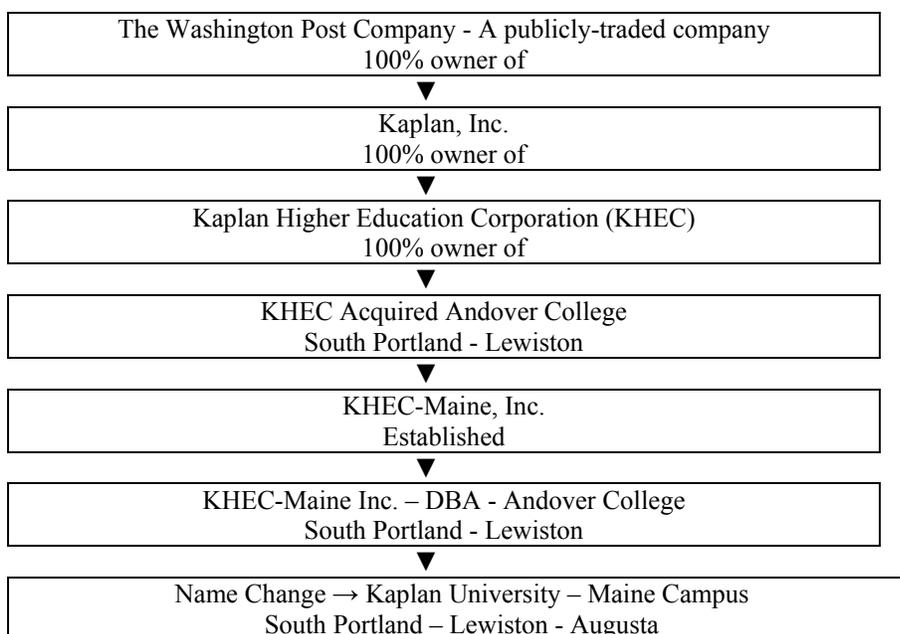
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing
- Bachelor of Science in Information Technology
- Associate of Science in Information Technology

The team reviewed a self-study prepared by Kaplan University, and during its visit met with administrators, faculty, staff and students. In addition, the team toured the facilities at the Augusta site, and reviewed supplemental materials supplied by Kaplan.

The Team was comprised of Dr. Thomas Edwards, Provost, Thomas College (Team Chair); Dr. Patricia Morgan, Professor and Nursing Department Director, University of New England; Paula Hutton, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), (Education Specialist), Maine Department of Education; and Harry Osgood, Higher Education Specialist, Maine Department of Education as a non-voting member. In addition, Nancy Perkins, Vice Chair of the Maine State Board of Education served as the Board Observer.

Standard A - Organization and Governance

Kaplan University in Maine is part of the larger Kaplan University organization which in turn is owned by the Washington Post Company. The Team found and reviewed organizational charts showing lines of authority and text explaining the relationships among and between administration and academic governance. These relationships were also affirmed and clarified in the course of Team interviews. To clarify Kaplan University in Maine's relationship to counterparts within its overall corporate ownership a chart is offered as follows:



The Kaplan University in Maine Organizational Chart outlines the primary roles and functions of an administrative structure that shares some employees and functions across the three Maine campuses in South Portland, Lewiston and Augusta (e.g., president, registrar, financial aid, operations and career services) as well as those individuals and roles that are specific to individual campuses.

The primary academic responsibilities within the Kaplan University organization are described in the *Academic Governance Manual* for the University including the role of the University Board of Trustees, the administration and the faculty. The *Governance Manual* outlines the membership and role of various committees, including Governance and Planning, Faculty Senate, the Academic Administrative Council and the Faculty Curriculum committee.

For Kaplan University in Maine, Associate Academic Deans for each campus report to the Academic Dean, who in turn reports to the President.

This Standard is Met

Standard B - Institutional Objectives

Each of the proposed baccalaureate and associate degree programs are consistent with the Kaplan University mission. The College's mission, purpose and objectives are published on Page 11 of the Kaplan University Catalog as follows:

“Kaplan University is an institution of higher learning dedicated to providing innovative undergraduate, graduate, and continuing professional education. Our programs foster student learning with opportunities to launch, enhance, or change careers in a diverse society. The university is committed to general education, a student-centered service and support approach, and applied scholarship in a practical environment.”

To accomplish this mission, Kaplan University has established the following purposes:

1. Provide academic programs that have been developed and assessed by faculty, staff, and members of educational, professional, and business communities.
2. Provide intensive and comprehensive instruction using both onsite and online modes of delivery that strengthen student academic achievement.
3. Instill in its students the value of lifelong learning by stimulating intellectual curiosity, creative and critical thinking, and awareness of cultural diversity.
4. Plan and provide facilities and resources that respond to the needs of students, faculty, and staff.

5. Assist students in developing professional attitudes, values, skills, and strategies that foster success in their careers and in life.
6. Prepare students to meet the ever-changing needs of their communities now and in the future.

The institution's statement of purpose is identifiable through its blended learning approach with adult students, targeting those students who in the past may have not envisioned themselves as "college material," but who may have cultural and employment experiences on which to build the context for career-based learning. The approach is also student-centered, providing activity-oriented learning experiences and support for the attainment of interim goals in the pursuit of a first-time or advanced college degree.

In addition, the proposed degree programs in Nursing and Information Technology have their own mission statements and the proposed baccalaureate and associate degree offerings are consistent with the College's mission. The proposed degree offerings, designed particularly for Maine residents, are in keeping with the current arena of College program offerings.

This Standard is Met.

Standard C- Degree Requirements

The baccalaureate program designs for Nursing and IT and the associate program in IT meet the minimum standards for credit hours (quarter hours) as prescribed by the standards (90 quarter hours for an associate's degree program and 180 quarter hours for a bachelor's program*). The Nursing curriculum was developed by Kaplan University Nursing faculty and mapped to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Essentials for a BS in Nursing Education as well as the Maine Board of Nursing educational requirements. Students in the BS in Information Technology track have two options available: applied technology and information systems. Both tracks also offer five career focus areas for students.

Degree requirements and standards for course and program completion are clearly documented.

This Standard is Met

*With institutions using the semester system there are two 15-week semesters in an academic year. A semester hour is defined as the credit received for completing 15 contact hours of study in class and 30 clock hours in outside preparation. One semester hour is the equivalent of 1.5 quarter hours.

With institutions using the quarter system there are three 10-week quarters in an academic year. A quarter hour is 2/3 of a semester hour (one quarter hour is the equivalent of .667 semester hours).

Standard D - Admissions Requirements

Kaplan University is a non-residential academic institution serving a student population of mature adults who, in addition to college responsibilities, have work and family commitments.

Kaplan University is one school with multiple locations in eight states. In Maine it already has two campuses; one campus is in South Portland and the other is in Lewiston. They share administration, staff, resources, and can share students if a student chooses that option. Additionally, students may enroll in online courses through Kaplan University. Kaplan University has just opened a third campus in Augusta, which has the laboratory and clinical settings designed to serve students who seek to complete baccalaureate degrees in Nursing and Information Technology.

Kaplan University has rolling admissions and utilizes a system of quarter hours. Therefore very little time elapses between pre-enrollment and enrollment in day one of the first class. To enroll at Kaplan University, one must be a high school graduate, possess a GED or Home Study certificate that is equivalent to high school level, and recognized by the student's home state. Students who attended high school in a foreign country and are unable to produce the required documents may use certification from other official sources.

Additionally, students must produce proof of immunization according to Maine law. All applicants must complete the required admissions documents, pay fees, and complete an informational interview. Applicants are encouraged to bring parents or spouses to the interview and are encouraged to tour the facilities. All courses at Kaplan are taught in English and graduation from a U.S. high school program is considered evidence of English proficiency. International applicants must submit a paper-based minimum TOFEL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score of 153 or successfully complete one of Kaplan's most advanced English language courses, if English is not the student's primary language. Applications for credit for previous education, training, work experience or College Level Examination Program (CLEP) can be completed prior to the first day of the course for which the transfer credit is requested.

Before enrollment can take place, applicants for admission are required to take the Wonderlic Test. After enrollment, all students take the Accuplacer to aid in course placement; a minimum score is required in order to enroll in some programs. The College will consider awarding credit for experiential work experiences (previous work experience) determined by submission of supporting documentation from the workplace. Awarding of credit and determination of equivalency may require a 75% skill proficiency demonstration on the course final exam and cannot exceed 15% of the program nor be used in the cumulative grade point average. All students are then assigned classes, an academic advisor, and academic support which may consist of a tutor, or an academic contract mandating a specific and consistent participation in academic support.

When Kaplan was first approved in Maine, it had a formal policy for refunds and

withdrawals which was 100% prior to the first day of the term and for first time students, in the first six calendar days of the first term. Kaplan's policy has been revised, allowing new students to attend classes for five weeks of the first term before deciding to matriculate. At this time, based on faculty recommendations and student comfort, the student may withdraw and receive a 100% refund for tuition and books. This new policy was verified with students who were interviewed during the school visit.

This Standard is Met

Standard E - Academic Programs

Bachelor of Science in Nursing

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing program is designed to provide Maine residents with an opportunity to earn entry-level baccalaureate nursing education to meet the complex demands of health care and to pursue employment in numerous nursing and management specialties. The University's degree program emphasizes professional growth and continuous learning. The program features a capstone course and a professional development plan that includes career planning. Additionally, the program is designed as a foundation from which students could pursue graduate nursing studies.

Associate of Applied Science in Information Technology

The Associate of Applied Science in Information Technology program is designed to prepare students with the general education, applied knowledge, technical skills, and communication skills to pursue a wide range of entry-level positions in the information technology field including the areas of network administration, software programming, and Web development. Students are taught the foundational skills to install and maintain computer networks, troubleshoot hardware and software problems, manage databases, and develop Web pages.

Bachelor of Science in Information Technology

The objective of the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology program is to prepare students to pursue career advancement in information technology by providing the technical knowledge, communication, critical thinking, and creative skills relevant to the modern workplace. The degree program is designed to help students develop a working knowledge of information technology (IT) concepts tools and methods as well as the leading-edge technologies needed to design information systems. In addition, students are taught to apply technical competencies to solve business problems. This degree program accommodates both the student whose immediate educational goals are satisfied by the completion of a bachelor's degree and the student who is planning to pursue study in the information technology field beyond the baccalaureate level.

Standards:

The educational program and curriculum reflects the philosophy, purposes and objectives of the institution.

The proposed new programs are consistent with the mission of Kaplan University as it is defined in the report:

Kaplan University is an institution of higher learning dedicated to providing innovative undergraduate, graduate, and continuing professional education. Our programs foster student learning with opportunities to launch, enhance, or change careers in a diverse global society. The University is committed to general education, a student-centered service and support approach, and applied scholarship in a practical environment. (p.4)

The philosophy, mission and objectives for the Nursing Program were provided and are consistent with above.

The IT Programs did not specifically provide its own philosophy, mission or objectives, but within the description of the two tracks there are consistencies and connections to KU mission related to launching careers, providing student-centered options and skills relevant to applied scholarship.

The proposed new programs reflect the purposes and objectives of Kaplan University to provide academic programs that have been developed and assessed by faculty, staff and members of educational, professional, and business communities. The Nursing Curriculum was developed by nursing faculty at the Kaplan University School of Nursing and is mapped to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Essentials for Bachelor of Science in Nursing Education, the Maine Board of Nursing education requirements, and the QSEN competencies. The IT curricula were developed by faculty with feedback from employers and business community.

All three programs will offer online courses with onsite experiential learning

The institution has a written policy describing its system for evaluating student performance, the minimum performance considered satisfactory, the criteria for academic probation and conditions for dismissal for unsatisfactory performance. The Kaplan Report outlines the Advanced Start Degree Option, as well as the University grading system and core requirements for the program. Procedures for the evaluation of the quality of programs of instruction and specific courses are clearly stated in writing, as are the policies for end of term student evaluations of faculty and courses. Faculty are evaluated based on five core criteria.

The institution's programs of study consist of planned educational experiences to meet the stated objectives and include attention to the necessary prerequisites, required courses, and appropriate progression.

The Kaplan University Nursing Program may wish to consider joining with the other 13 Programs of Nursing in the State of Maine to adopt the 11 Maine Nurse Core Competencies as a framework for KU's outcome-based curriculum.

This Standard is Met

Standard F- Faculty

While the programs are not fully staffed at this juncture, the Nursing Program has an on-site director of Nursing who has Doctorate in Nursing Practice. The proposed Simulation/Clinical Coordinator will have minimally a Master's in Nursing.

There are currently more than 100 faculty available through KU who are prepared at the Master's or Doctoral level.

All faculty are credentialed according to the faculty course credentialing standards of Kaplan University. Faculty who will be teaching in the IT and Nursing programs will all be subject to these same standards. Nursing faculty will meet all the specific criteria identified by the Maine Board of Nursing, including licensure for clinical faculty in the state of Maine.

IT and Nursing faculty have been involved in the development of the curricula, and the Report contained information on the process for evaluating courses and use of data.

The faculty participates in the governance of the institution and the academic programs as well as in short-term institutional planning activities through voluntary involvement in the Faculty Senate, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and committees for curriculum, the Library, as well as the IRB and Policy & Procedure.

This Standard is Met

Standard G - Student Services

Kaplan University-Maine has a student-centered service model. This was evident in interviews with current students. The intent is to give each student the tools he or she needs to be successful. Each student has an advising support team aligned with the student's major. Each support team consists of an Academic Advisor specific to the department, the Department Chair of the program, and an assigned Financial Aid Officer. This three-legged support team model works with students from enrollment through graduation.

In addition, Career Resources is a student-focused service that provides comprehensive career planning to Kaplan University students at all levels of study and to Kaplan

University alumni. The Career Resources Team strives to help students develop assessment skills, occupational exploration, decision making, goal setting, self-marketing as well as job searching and networking skills. It also offers a collaborative instructional link between students, faculty, prospective employers and community members. However, according to the prospective, the career services offered by the university are not an obligation or guarantee of employment. Students requiring other types of professional assistance will be referred by Student Services to third-party counselors or local agencies.

Kaplan University has a clearly written list of Student Academic Freedoms and Student Responsibilities for all students accepted into an academic program of study. As well, it has a clearly defined Code of Conduct that is representative of model behavior in a workplace setting. There is an additional list of conduct for campus activities which includes clinical or externship property. Kaplan University also has a written policy for use of University Technology.

Kaplan University has a clear Honor Code which spells out expectations, prohibited activities, steps for disciplinary actions, suspensions and dismissals. It also has a written procedures for resolving disagreements through face to face discussion or online.

In keeping with the requirements of the Jeanne Cleary Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, Kaplan University makes available to all current and prospective students and employees, upon request, the University's policies and procedures for maintaining campus security.

In compliance with the Drug-Free-Workplace Act of 1988 (Public Law 101-690) and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments (Public Law 101-266), Kaplan provides a Drug Free Schools and Workplaces Information package to each onsite student during the matriculation process.

Kaplan also has written policy regarding the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Career Services, and expectations regarding part time employment on campus and personal appearance dress code while on campus. Students are responsible for their own personal property and there are no health services available on campus.

This Standard is Met

Standard H - Library and Learning Resources

Students at Kaplan University have access to a unified library collection system that includes approximately 17,000 volumes and 51,000 E-Books. KU is a member of the Minerva Consortium and participates in MaineCat, which has holdings of up to 4 million items. Journal access is provided through Marvel databases.

Online resources are readily available for class and student support, and for faculty to integrate and line to their online course materials. Specialized databases with titles focused on healthcare include CINAHL and OVID. New acquisitions and collection development are under the direction of the Director of Library Services who consults with the Academic Dean and Department chairs.

Students have access to Interlibrary Loan resources, as well as reserve materials that are course-specific.

Specialized labs in the Augusta site have been created to support the Nursing and IT programs.

This Standard is Met

Standard I - Facilities

Kaplan University has three sites in Maine, including South Portland, Lewiston, and the newest facility in Augusta.

The Augusta site contains administrative offices, general classrooms, library space, student space, and specialized lab classrooms in support of its programs in technology, criminal justice and nursing. This learning space is renovated from a former retail space, and offers parking and easy access for a commuter population. Online courses are supported by the Kaplan University technology resources Kaplan University Advanced Classroom Environment (KU ACE).

The Kaplan University Report indicates that all three Kaplan sites in Maine are leased, and supporting material for the leases for their sites in South Portland and Lewiston were included in the Report. However, no lease for the Augusta site was in the materials supplied to the Team. Given the significant investments in renovations in the Augusta site to create a learning environment from a retail site, one can safely assume that similar lease agreements also cover the Kaplan University Augusta site. However, Kaplan should be encouraged to document this portion of the standard.

This Standard is Met

Standard J - Financial Resources

As part of its supporting materials, Kaplan University provided financial proformas related to enrollment, revenue and expense projections for the proposed programs for a five year period. The proformas include projections for retention and attrition, and include costs related to capital expenses, annual operating expenses as enrollment and needs for faculty grow The current facility is projected to be adequate to accommodate enrollment growth during this period for both online and face to face instruction.

Kaplan University-Maine is a division of Kaplan, Inc., which in turn is a division of the Washington Post Company. The supporting documentation for this standard included the 2011 Annual Report from the Washington Post Company, including audited financial statements completed by PriceWaterhouse.

Financial plans for the Augusta programs were reviewed and approved by Kaplan University as part of the company's long-range strategic plan. Financial planning documents point to significant initial investment in facilities with the anticipation that a growth in enrollment and positive annual revenue gains from operations will offset that investment over time. Both financial and academic planning for Kaplan University Maine are integrated with Kaplan University strategic plan.

Kaplan University has demonstrated that its program offerings are based on a reasonable estimate of enrollment, revenue and expenses, and its operations in Maine function as part of a larger corporate entity with the financial resources to sustain the academic offerings within this application.

This Standard is Met

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Team found that Kaplan University Maine has the organizational, academic and financial resources needed to carry out the proposed degree programs at both the associate and baccalaureate degree levels.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE MAINE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Review Team recommends that the State Board of Education approve the request from Kaplan University in Maine to award the following additional degrees: Bachelor of Science in Nursing; Bachelor of Science in Information Technology; and Associate of Science in Information Technology.