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NEWS RELEASE

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USI BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVES NEW MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM; ACCEPTS GENEROUS GIFT

The University of Southern Indiana Board of Trustees, meeting Monday in New Harmony, approved a master's degree program in nursing which would offer three major areas of study: family nurse practitioner, acute care nurse practitioner, and case manager/nurse administrator.

Dr. Nadine Coudret, dean of the School of Nursing and Health Professions, said, "The current state of the health care system in the United States has prompted a national health care reform effort centered on increased access to high quality, cost-effective health care. Advanced-practice nurses are prepared for a comprehensive role in health care reform and are cost-effective providers.

"The master's degree program at USI can help meet the health-care needs in medically underserved areas of rural Indiana while keeping costs down. Assisted with modern technology, nurse practitioners have an expanded role in patient care, working in collaboration with physicians."

Advanced-practice nurses work in child-health, prenatal, and family planning clinics, hospitals, and doctors' offices, among other sites.

The USI master's program may be the first in Indiana for family nurse practitioners; another is under consideration at Indiana State University, Terre Haute. The USI proposal will be submitted to the state Commission for Higher Education for consideration. Grant applications for funding the program also are being submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services.

In other business, the Board of Trustees agreed to seek architectural proposals in the construction of an estimated \$4.1 million addition to the University Center to provide much needed space for student activities. The center was built in 1974 to accommodate 5,000 students, while enrollment this year reached 7,551 students. Space is needed for conference rooms, lounge, auditorium and ballroom, offices, and meeting rooms for student organizations.

The Trustees also agreed to accept a gift of 31 apartment buildings located adjacent to the University from Southern Indiana Higher Education, Inc. (SIHE, Inc.), a non-profit corporation which supports the needs of higher education in southwestern Indiana. The units, known as Mid-America Student Housing (MASH) and Campus Apartments, can accommodate 1,400 students and have a current replacement value of \$14 million. Further approvals will be sought from the Commission for Higher Education, the State Budget Committee, and the governor.

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