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NEW NURSING PROGRAM PREPARES CAPTAINS WHO CARE

STUDENTS WILL EARN TWO BACHELOR'S DEGREES.

by [Kelli Caplan](#) | September 18, 2024*Read time: about 2 min*

Christopher Newport (CNU) and its nearby neighbor, [Riverside College of Health Sciences \(RCHS\)](#), have partnered to provide students an opportunity to earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN).

The 3+2 partnership entails students attending CNU for three years and then RCHS for two years. Students will complete the program with two bachelor's degrees, one from CNU and a BSN from RCHS. Riverside intends to immediately offer employment to graduates of the program who meet all other qualifications.

The partnership between CNU and RCHS took effect this week as President William G. Kelly and Dr. Robin Nelhuebel, President of RCHS, signed the agreement and made it official.

"Great neighbors make for a great community. CNU is proud to be the hometown university for Newport News. We are proud that we can work with RCHS to educate and prepare the nurses so critical to the health of our community," Kelly said. Nelhuebel is confident that the partnership will produce students who will thrive in the fields of health care.

"The combination of a highly respected CNU liberal arts degree and a BSN from RCHS prepares the graduate not only for a lucrative and rewarding nursing career, but also for expanded opportunities in leadership, education, and nursing research. These graduates will have a jump-start in their health care careers," Nelhuebel said.

The dual-degree program paves the way for students to reach their career goals by melding two different and dynamic college experiences: three years at a liberal arts university and two at a premier hospital-based college of

health sciences on nearby campuses.

“There is a nursing shortage, so programs producing well-educated nurses are needed,” said Dr. Gwynne Brown, Director of [Pre-Health Programs](#) at Christopher Newport. “In addition, nurses with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing gain an education that will prepare them for leadership positions, as well as the opportunity to pursue higher degrees in education, such as nurse practitioner (NP).”

The CNU-RCHS partnership not only enhances the educational opportunities on the Peninsula, but also will help abate a national nursing shortage. It is estimated that there will be nearly 200,000 openings for registered nurses each year through 2032.

The need for nurses is expected to grow as Baby Boomers age and the demand for health care increases.

“Riverside College of Health Sciences is proud to partner with Christopher Newport University to provide students a local pathway to highly sought after degrees and careers in nursing and allied health,” said Nelhuebel.

The majority of students in the dual-degree program would likely earn a bachelor of arts in biology before working toward their BSN. Each student in the program will be assigned a pre-health advisor to help navigate course selection and help ensure they meet curriculum requirements.

Even though students will be at RCHS taking classes, they will still enjoy all of the benefits of being a CNU student.

“This program will be an additional academic avenue for students and we hope it will attract those who are excited about being part of the CNU community and about pursuing a degree in nursing,” said Dr. Nicole Guajardo, Dean of the [College of Natural and Behavioral Sciences](#).

Riverside College of Health Sciences has been a part of the health care community since it opened in 1916. It is affiliated with Riverside Health, which operates Riverside Regional Medical Center in Newport News. It is the only hospital on the Peninsula with a Level II Trauma Center and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.
