



Belmont Abbey
COLLEGE

*That in all things God
may be glorified*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Belmont Abbey College to Launch New Health Degree Programs

Belmont, NC (February 24, 2020)— Belmont Abbey College ventures into a new area of unprecedented value to our community, to our students, and to the future of the college, with the announcement of three new health degree programs a Bachelor's of Nursing (BSN), Bachelor's in Social Work (BSW), and Bachelor's in Health Informatics. With anticipated growth of health care employment in the decades to come, the introduction of these new programs will address the career needs of our students and serve the coming needs in our community. In development since 2018, the new programs will benefit from the contributions and collaboration with CaroMont Health, Gaston College, Gaston County Public Schools, and Holy Angels. A cross-functional team of faculty and staff from Biology, Business, Theology, Student Life, and Academics developed the new programs for the college.

Each of the new degrees requires external accreditation, and will include Belmont Abbey College's core, along with a Catholic Bioethics class. Students will formally enroll into the programs during the spring semester of their sophomore year and must complete and pass a criminal background check, drug screening, and have current immunizations in hand. All students completing the programs will have a clinical or professional practice placement during their senior year.

The first program to enroll students in Fall 2020 will be Nursing. Students enrolling this fall will begin as freshman planning to enter into Nursing in their junior year in the Fall of 2022. Accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education and the State of North Carolina Board of Nursing, graduates will work primarily in acute care, long-term care, and ambulatory care in school, travel, and community settings. Belmont Abbey College has hired a Nursing Program Director, Dr. Carolyn Harmon, who will officially join the college on June 1, 2020, and has worked in the background to design the new nursing degree offering. Dr. Harmon comes to Belmont Abbey from the Carolinas College of Health Sciences in Charlotte, and the University of South Carolina with extensive experience in course development in the Nursing field.

Nursing will have two options, a Pre-Licensure and an RN to BSN. Pre-Licensure is a traditional four-year degree program with a minimum 3.0 GPA in all major courses, no more than two attempts per course, and at least 6 credit hours of work in clinical practical settings. The RN to BSN a program for applicants with an RN degree and will require an acceptable core from another institution plus 6 credit hours of Theology. The four-year program will begin enrollment in Fall 2020.

The Social Work (BSW) will receive accreditation from the Council of Social Work Education with initiation of accreditation candidacy during January 2021. Graduates will work primarily with health care providers like hospitals, schools, mental health centers, managed care facilities, prisons, nursing homes, family services agencies, and courts. Interviews for this program director are underway.

Health Information Analytics or Health Informatics will received accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management (CAHIIM) with accreditation initiation six months prior to first graduates. Graduates will work primarily with electronic information systems to analyze patient data, reimbursement systems, revenue cycles, and compliance parameters within health care legal requirements. The college is interviewing for a director of this program as well.

All three programs fit into the Benedictine and Catholic heritage of Belmont Abbey College and establish a new area for charity by our students to our community. In addition the complementary nature of the three programs provide pathways to graduation for students who change fields. The programs will also reinvigorate the already strong connections with local high schools promoting health fields, Gaston College's RN program, and of course CaroMont Health.

“The introduction of health degrees at Belmont Abbey College, is a prayer answered, and presages a great new level of impact Belmont Abbey will make on our hometown and beyond. To connect the history of our monks who sought to bring education to the south, to now bringing the very hands and feet of care to the people of our community is sublimely satisfying,” said Dr. Bill Thierfelder president of Belmont Abbey College. “The relationship with CaroMont Health, Gaston College, and the Gaston County Public Schools, will bear fruit for many years to come.”

While the Nursing program will begin this fall the other two have a few more steps before students can enroll. In addition to seeking directors for Health Informatics, and Social Work, the college is moving toward the development of Masters’ level programs in Health Informatics. The college will continue to refine its outside health field relationships, ensure that BAC infrastructure meets the needs of the new programs, and will initiate accreditation processes and materials for all three programs.

To stay updated on the progress of the new health programs at Belmont Abbey College visit health.bac.edu.

About Belmont Abbey College: Founded in 1876, Belmont Abbey College is a private, Catholic, baccalaureate and liberal arts institution. Our mission is to educate students in the liberal arts and sciences so that in all things God may be glorified. Guided by the Catholic intellectual tradition and the Benedictine spirit of prayer and learning, we welcome a diverse body of students and provide them with an education that will enable them to lead lives of integrity, to succeed professionally, to become responsible citizens, and to be a blessing to themselves and to others. Our beautiful and historic campus is conveniently located just 10 miles west of Charlotte, N.C., and is currently home to more than 1500 students. For more information, visit www.belmontabbeycollege.edu.