



**BILINGUAL NURSING FELLOWS PROGRAM**  
South Mountain Community College  
Phoenix, Arizona

***Addressing a National Need***

Accepting bilingual students of varied academic ability levels and helping them through a challenging program to meet the goal of becoming a nurse, South Mountain Community College (SMCC), in partnership with Gateway Community College (GWCC) and Banner Health, Arizona's largest health services provider, created BNFP in 2002 in response to the nationwide need for bilingual nurses.

The BNFP uses an innovative nursing curriculum and a system of support services that allows students to stay in cohorts throughout their tenure in the program. By taking pre-requisite nursing courses and required Registered Nurse (RN) courses simultaneously, students can earn a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certificate, become eligible as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), and then earn licensure as an RN within a three-year period.

***Student Support Services***

BNFP utilizes a learning community and cohort model in which the students take the same classes at the same hours for the duration of program. In addition, BNFP students and their instructors are linked by a formal tracking system that monitors the student's academic progress on a monthly basis and issues recommendations for improvement. A monthly report on each student is prepared and submitted to the program director and advisory committee. This model was deliberately developed to be intrusive, structured, and comprehensive. Any student who receives a final grade of "D" or lower in any BNFP class is not allowed to continue in the program and is encouraged to seek other academic options.

South Mountain Community College coordinates BNFP, leverages its presence in the minority community for participant recruitment and support, and provides instructional expertise by offering all nursing pre-requisites. Gateway Community College contributes its fully developed Nursing Program and a state-of-the-art Center for Health Careers, which has classrooms and labs modeled after a fully functioning hospital. Banner Health offers ready access to the workplace, nursing supervision, clinical sites, tuition and book reimbursement, industry expertise, and ultimately, an employment track for program graduates. Banner Health offers scholarship assistance in exchange for a commitment to work for one of its hospitals upon graduation. Since 2003, the program has awarded \$699,200 in tuition, books, and stipends to students.

***Evidence of Effectiveness***

The Maricopa Student Information System registered a 95% persistence rate from the start to the end of the semester and an 89% rate from the end of the semester to the next semester. When compared to the general student population taking the same classes, the BNFP course

completion rate of 95% was considerably higher than the 61% rate for non-BNFP students in English, Math, Biology, and Chemistry classes.

The first cohort or “pilot” of 27 students started classes in spring 2003 and finished in fall 2006. From this cohort, the program graduated 19 RNs, four LPNs, and three CNAs. To date, 66 students earned their RN degree, 133 completed the LPN requirements, and 155 finished their CNA program.

By December 2008, 49 RNs and 23 LPNs are expected to graduate. By 2010, BNFP projects a total of 185 Spanish-speaking Registered Nurses and 263 Licensed Practical Nurses. Ninety percent (90%) of BNFP graduates, including the 35% of nurses who work for Banner Health in inner city hospitals, work for hospitals that serve a large number of Latino patients.

**Contact:**

Tony Bracamonte, Director  
South Mountain Community College  
7050 S. 24<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85042  
602-243-8120  
[tony.bracamonte@smcmail.maricopa.edu](mailto:tony.bracamonte@smcmail.maricopa.edu)