



FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Board of Trustees

Item: viii.

Monday, September 30, 2024

**SUBJECT: APPROVE FAU'S LINKING INDUSTRY TO NURSING EDUCATION (LINE)
PROPOSAL – Cross Country Healthcare Inc.**

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

Approve a proposal to be submitted to the State University System of Florida Board of Governors for the 2024-2025 Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2022, the Florida Legislature established the LINE Fund in Senate Bill 2524. The Board of Governors is charged with administering the LINE Fund for the State University System, including evaluating and approving proposals to participate in the program. The LINE Fund is intended to incentivize collaboration between nursing education programs and healthcare partners and to meet local, regional, and state workforce demand by recruiting faculty and clinical preceptors, increasing the capacity of high-quality nursing education programs, and increasing the number of nursing education program graduates who are prepared to enter the workforce.

Subject to available funds, for every dollar contributed to an institution by a healthcare partner, the fund shall provide a dollar-for-dollar match to the participating institution for approved proposals. The legislature provided a maximum of \$6 million for State University System institutions for the LINE Fund in the Fiscal Year 2024-25.

Funds may be used for student scholarships, recruitment of additional faculty, equipment, and simulation centers to advance high-quality nursing education programs throughout the state. Funds may not be used for the construction of new buildings.

The \$100,000 in funds provided by Cross Country Healthcare Inc. and the matching LINE funds (\$100,000) will be used in two ways: 1) purchasing an advanced critical care simulator for state-of-the-art healthcare training in our simulation center; and 2) providing salary support for clinical nursing faculty or clinical adjunct faculty in the Christine E Lynn College of Nursing to become expertly prepared and certified to use the critical care simulator and then, teach other faculty (who

will also become simulation- certified) and to conduct case study simulation sessions with Florida Atlantic University (FAU) undergraduate BSN students. Evidence suggests that by engaging in complex patient scenarios during simulation, students will enhance their critical thinking and clinical judgment skills. These skills are crucial for performing well on the NCLEX, which includes scenarios that test critical thinking and clinical judgment abilities.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/DATE

The attached proposal, if approved by FAU BOT, will be submitted to the Board of Governors. Agreements with the healthcare partner have been drafted, contingent on LINE funding of the proposal. Upon approval by the Board, the Provost’s Office will submit to BOG staff with the BOT approval date in support of the request.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The Board of Governors will award one-time funding allocations in FY24 (current fiscal year) based on the merit of each proposal received. Funds are limited and may be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Award amounts may be prorated depending on the number of approved proposals and the dollar amounts requested.

Supporting Documentation:	FAU Proposal for LINE Fund – Cross Country Healthcare Inc.
Presented by:	Ryan Britton, FAU Ex. Director of Government Relations
Phone:	(561) 297- 2583



State University System 2024-2025 Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund Proposal Form

University:	
Healthcare Partner:	Cross Country Healthcare Inc
Date Proposal Approved by University Board of Trustees:	Pending BOT approval 9/30/2024
Amount Requested:	\$ 100,000
University Contact (name, title, phone, & email):	Dr. Joy Longo, Associate Dean for Academic Programs, 561-297-4303; jlongo5@health.fau.edu
Please check the boxes below as appropriate:	<i>All boxes must be checked in order to be eligible to participate.</i>
Healthcare partner making contribution is located in and licensed to operate in Florida?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Healthcare partner making contribution is a healthcare provider as defined in Section 768.38(2), Florida Statutes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Nursing programs met or exceeded a first-time NCLEX passage rate of 75% for the prior year based on the 2024 Accountability Plan?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
The funds will be used for an eligible purpose per section 1009.8962, Florida Statutes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes

Background

The LINE Fund is intended to incentivize collaboration between nursing education programs and healthcare partners and to meet local, regional, and state workforce demand by recruiting faculty and clinical preceptors, increasing the capacity of high-quality nursing education programs, and increasing the number of nursing education program graduates who are prepared to enter the workforce. Subject to available funds, for every dollar contributed to an institution by a healthcare partner, the fund shall provide a dollar-for-dollar match to the participating institution for approved proposals.

Funds may be used for student scholarships, recruitment of additional faculty, equipment, and simulation centers to advance high-quality nursing education programs throughout the state. Funds may not be used for the construction of new buildings. To participate, an institution must submit a timely and complete proposal to the Board of Governors for consideration. For more details, see Board of Governors [Regulation 8.008 - Nursing Education](#).

Proposals must be submitted with a total of no more than three pages of narrative for the following sections. Proposals with more than three pages of narrative will be rejected.

Proposal Details

Provide a detailed narrative for each section below.

I. Use of Funds - *Describe in detail and with specificity how the institution plans to use the funds, including how the funds will be utilized to increase student enrollment and program completion.*

The \$100,000 in funds provided by Cross Country Healthcare Inc. and the matching LINE funds (\$100,000) will be used in two ways: 1) purchasing an advanced critical care simulator for state-of-the-art healthcare training in our simulation center; and 2) providing salary support for clinical nursing faculty or clinical adjunct faculty in the Christine E Lynn College of Nursing to become expertly prepared and certified to use the critical care simulator and then, teach other faculty (who will also become simulation-certified) and to conduct case study simulation sessions with Florida Atlantic University (FAU) undergraduate BSN students.

The simulation center at the FAU, Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing is expected to be ready for use during the Fall, 2024 semester. The simulation sessions that will be conducted at the center are guided by the overall goal of enhancing clinical judgment, with specific objectives of: a) developing clinical skills, b) improving critical thinking, c) increasing confidence for work in the practice setting and d) providing wholistic training for nursing action in healthcare situations ranging from general to complex. Ultimately, achievement of the overall goal will facilitate preparation of students to successfully pass the national nursing licensure examination (NCLEX®) on the first attempt so that they can quickly join the nursing workforce as registered nurses (RNs), and thereby reduce the region's nursing shortage. The cost of the critical care simulator is \$113,000.

The remaining \$87,000 will be used to hire faculty who will be given advanced training in simulation, culminating in simulation-certification for at least three of the faculty members ($\$395 \times 3 = \1185). These faculty members will develop expertise in creating case study scenario simulations that replicate the complexity and unpredictability of hospital nursing practice, thereby allowing students to fine-tune expertise with nursing interventions, develop assessment skills, and learn to prioritize tasks. In addition, evidence suggests that by engaging in complex patient scenarios during simulation, students will enhance their critical thinking and clinical judgment skills. These skills are crucial for performing well on the NCLEX, which includes scenarios that test critical thinking and clinical judgment abilities. Further, cultivating skills that enable thinking/acting through complex and unpredictable situations promises a level of knowledge that is important to all nursing graduates beginning with the the nurse generalist, but having applicability regardless of a nurse's unit of employment.

The overall intent of this investment is to increase the number of students who have excellent clinical judgment abilities garnered through simulation; and to heighten success in timely program completion by enabling clinical experience in the simulation setting. Evidence indicates that we can also expect: 1) significant improvement in our students' readiness for the NCLEX exam; 2) increase in our NCLEX pass rates by providing students with technology-enhanced opportunities to practice and master activities demanding clinical judgment in a safe environment; 3) and better preparation of

graduates who are capable of providing high-quality patient care for the residents of the state of Florida. This readiness translates to job satisfaction when moving into post-NCLEX nursing practice and bodes well for the retention of nurses in their practice roles, thereby addressing the nursing shortage.

Onboarding & Retention of Graduates - *Describe in detail and with specificity how the health care partner will onboard and retain graduates.*

Cross Country Healthcare (CCH) Inc. is a technology-enabled workforce solutions firm with its corporate headquarters in Boca Raton, Florida. CCH has been existence for 37 years, beginning with its nurse registry component of service. Currently, CCH engages with healthcare organizations that employ nurses to systematically match organizational needs with CCH-registered nurses qualifications. In this way, CCH helps organizational clients tackle complex labor-related challenges to achieve high quality outcomes. In the critical care area alone, CCH placed 1,819 RNs in several of its 64 Florida healthcare settings, the very large majority of which were hospitals. Recent survey data collected by CCH indicate that the demand for critical care nurses is among the highest request received from Florida hospitals.

Based on evidence that nurse turnover decreased by as much as 30% when new graduates were placed in their preferred job, CCH has been successfully placing new graduates in their first-choice work environment, critical care nursing, inclusive of emergency room, intensive care, coronary care and medical/surgical telemetry. Once placed, nurses may remain employed by CCH or may move to a permanent employee position in the healthcare setting where placed. In this way, CCH becomes an extension of the often short-staffed human resources departments in healthcare settings.

Once graduate nurses are placed by CCH, the specific onboarding process of the hospital initiates. However, CCH maintains a relationship with the nurse to facilitate hospital onboarding through providing services like educator/preceptor support to facilitate the transition to the hospital setting. As part of their successful track record for retention, CCH has regularly scheduled weekly opportunities for psychological support when nurses are stressed or overwhelmed as well as opportunities for virtual health promotion engagement for nurses and their family members.

In a survey conducted between January 18 and March 11, 2024, CCH in partnership with FAU Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, collected data from 1127 nurse/student nurse participants. Some of the key survey findings confirmed the workforce challenge that is brewing: 28% of the RN respondents indicated that they are contemplating retirement or seeking new positions outside of nursing in the next few years. The most significant factor affecting stress/mental health, reported by 60% of these nurses, was staff shortages. The findings also highlighted the growing impact of technology, in spite of the fact that only 32% of the employed nurses felt proficiency in technology was important to patient care.

There is no question that the need for nurse's comfort and expertise with technology will persist and escalate in the decades ahead. It is important that graduating nurses enter the

workforce with knowledge, clinical skills, confidence and clinical judgment capabilities that allow for optimal patient care in tech-enabled environments.

Program Expansion - *Describe in detail and with specificity how the funds will expand the institution's nursing education programs to meet local, regional, or state workforce demands. If applicable, include advanced education nursing programs and how the funds will increase the number of faculty and clinical preceptors and planned efforts to utilize the clinical placement process established in Section 14.36, Florida Statutes.*

The Florida Hospital Association (FHA) projects that Florida will face a shortage of more than 59,000 nurses by 2035. The latest Physician and Nursing Workforce study sponsored by FHA and the Safety Net Hospital Alliance of Florida (December, 2021) shows that we need approximately 2,300 additional Registered Nurse (RN) entering the workforce each year in Florida.

FAU's College of Nursing undergraduate program prepares graduates who nurture the wholeness of persons and environment through caring as providers, designers, managers, and coordinators of direct and indirect care of persons across the lifespan, attending to both ordinary and extraordinary patient needs; thereby being able to shift from generalist to specialist tasks, inherent in times of complex health challenges. The BSN program at FAU has three tracks: (1) a 4-year, pre-licensure track (freshmen direct admit; FDA) with direct admissions to the College of Nursing's BSN nursing program after high school graduation, (2) the Accelerated BSN (ABSN) track for second degree students, and the (3) RN-BSN track. The College has over 800 students enrolled in the undergraduate program. Using the most recent data available, the freshmen direct admission track had the highest 4-year, first time in college (FTIC) graduation rate (87%) of all schools/colleges of nursing in the Florida State University System of Higher Education for the period of 2016-2020.

The FAU College of Nursing has been collaborating with Cross Country Healthcare Inc. for nearly 20 years, as each entity has grown and relied on each other at points in time when the expertise of one entity could benefit the other. This is our first opportunity to apply for LINE funding. The values of Cross Country expressed by the Chief Clinical Officer (Dr. H. Drummond) as a "delicate balance between the precision of science and the empathy of art" are consistent with the mission statement of the FAU College of Nursing: "The Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing is dedicated to caring; advancing the science, studying the meaning, practicing the art, and living caring day-to-day".

We believe that this proposal is aligned with Florida's **Reimagining Education and Career Help Act**, intended to "address the evolving needs of Florida's economy by increasing the level of collaboration and cooperation among state businesses and education communities". Therefore, we offer it for your consideration for 2024-2025 LINE funding.