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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Heritage University to Begin Offering Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree

Toppenish, WA – Recognizing the growing demand for high quality health care and the evolving needs of its community, Heritage University will offer a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing (BSN) program beginning in the fall of 2015. Christina Nyirati, PhD., chair of the Department of Nursing and director of the Nursing Program at Heritage, said this announcement follows more than a year of strategic planning by the administration and faculty to contribute to the local nursing workforce for the 21st century. “We realize nurses’ roles, responsibilities and education should change significantly to meet the increased demand for high value care, and Heritage University will play a big part in training those health professionals by offering the BSN,” said Dr. Nyirati.

In developing the curriculum for the BSN, Dr. Nyirati examined numerous nursing programs, and concluded that creating one based on the American Association of Colleges of Nursing’s “Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice” (2008) would be the best model for Heritage. Dr. John Bassett, President of Heritage University, said this blueprint will provide a foundation for a 21st century nursing program at Heritage. “The bachelor’s degree is the way Nursing is going in America, and this program will provide very high quality nurses for the Yakima Valley for years to come. The strong liberal arts foundation for the Nursing curriculum will also be an asset for these health care providers,” said Bassett.

Before embarking on the design for the BSN offering at Heritage, Dr. Nyirati surveyed and interviewed chief nursing officers and other health care executives in the Yakima Valley and Washington, and listened to deans of various health disciplines, including nursing, medicine, pharmacy and others. Carlos Olivares, CEO at Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic, is grateful Heritage University has responded to changes brought on by health care reform and population growth. “As the Affordable Care Act expands the affordability, quality and availability of public health insurance, more of our residents will begin making regular visits to a doctor and not just waiting until an emergency. This creates a demand for more nurses, and Heritage University will help fill that demand,” said Olivares.

Heritage University student Glenda Torres is excited over Heritage offering the BSN. “I’ve had such a great experience at Heritage, and I’m thrilled I can now go for my BSN without leaving campus,” said Torres.

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The Nursing Department will admit eight to 12 students into the BSN program this fall. The start of the BSN program will mean changes to the existing nursing programs at Heritage University. The Licensed Practical Nurse-Associate's Degree in Nursing (LPN-ADN) and Practical Nursing (PN) programs will be discontinued; however, students currently enrolled in those programs will be given the opportunity to finish the curriculum.

For more information, contact Dr. Christina Nyirati at (509) 865-8578 or Nyirati_c@heritage.edu.

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Heritage University is a non-profit, independent, regionally accredited institution of higher education offering undergraduate and graduate education across the state of Washington.