

# School of Allied Health Summary of Course Fee Proposal

## Master of Nurse Anesthesia

The Department of Nurse Anesthesia in the School of Allied Health is proposing a FY 2010 course fee of \$200 per credit hour for its Master of Nurse Anesthesia degree program. The total additional cost to a student for the three-year program would be \$14,940, and by charging this as a course fee, the cost can be included in the student's financial aid package.

The MS in Nurse Anesthesia, a 79 credit hour graduate level program, is an entry-to-practice program for baccalaureate nurses who want to become advanced practice nurses in anesthesia. The program admits 22 students per year and currently has 62 students enrolled. Students who graduate from the program are eligible to sit for the qualifying exam to become a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA). The program is currently preparing for transition to a clinical doctorate degree. To support the costs of the academic and clinical work, students currently pay department fees of \$860 for the three-year program. With the implementation of this course fee, these departmental fees would be discontinued.

The cost of educating a nurse anesthetist far exceeds that incurred by a standard graduate program. CRNA's in clinical practice earn high salaries; the median compensation for full-time CRNA's in practice in 2007 was \$148,000.

There is a shortage of anesthesia providers in the U.S. CRNA's are important providers of anesthesia services throughout Kansas, especially in rural areas. Most of rural Kansas only has anesthesia services provided by CRNA's. Nationally, CRNA's administer approximately 65 percent of the more than 26 million anesthetics given annually in the United States. However, in Kansas CRNAs make up 70 percent of the anesthesia providers, and 88 percent of the hospitals in Kansas rely exclusively on CRNAs for anesthesia care.

In a recent informal survey of 31 rural Kansas hospitals conducted by three regional Kansas Area Health Education Centers, 13 (42%) hospitals reported difficulty recruiting CRNA's. The KU Nurse Anesthesia Program has been an important provider of CRNA's to meet this shortage and provide anesthesia services in rural areas.

Students currently in the program understand the need for this increase in course fees. The department chair has met with all current students to discuss the rationale for the increase. Students support the increase because it will allow the program to continue to provide a quality education, to include excellent clinical experiences and to allow the costs to be shared equitably among all the students. Letters of support from student representatives for each level of students in the program are available from the School of Allied Health.