

Grove City College's gift to BC3 5th largest in BC3 history

\$500K contribution will help fund state-of-the-art building to be used by Grove City nursing students

Dec. 4, 2019



Grove City College President Paul J. McNulty, left, and Butler County Community College President Dr. Nick Neupauer are shown on the campus of Grove City College in Grove City in this June 24, 2019, file photo. McNulty and Neupauer on Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2019, announced Grove City's \$500,000 gift to the BC3 Education Foundation to help fund a high-tech Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health building planned at BC3 and where Grove City students will one day attend technical and clinical courses as part of Grove City's new bachelor's degree program in nursing.

(Butler, PA) Grove City College's \$500,000 gift to Butler County Community College, the fifth-largest to BC3 in its 54-year history, will help to fund a high-tech Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health building planned at BC3 and where Grove City students will one day attend technical and clinical courses as part of Grove City's new bachelor's degree program in nursing.

Dr. Nick Neupauer, BC3 president, and Paul J. McNulty, Grove City College president, announced the gift designated to the BC3 Education Foundation on Wednesday, five months after the colleges forged a partnership during “unique times in higher education,” Neupauer said.



An artist’s rendering illustrates a possible design for the exterior of the proposed Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health building on BC3’s main campus in Butler Township.

“This collaboration and ultimate financial support from Grove City really speaks to our strength as an institution,” Neupauer said. “It shows the forward thinking of President McNulty, and Grove City as a whole, to realize that in these unique times for higher education, partnerships and collaborations are the way to go. This partnership is a win-win in so many ways.”

BC3 was a “natural partner,” McNulty said. “Both institutions are committed to excellence, and the high quality of the BC3 program and our students is an ideal match.”

The \$9 million Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health building – whose realistic features and state-of-the-art technology will mirror that found in hospitals, according to BC3 administrators – will enhance the quality of education Grove City College students receive at BC3, McNulty said.

“Facilities matter,” McNulty said. “The facilities that our graduates will go into are strong and improving. Having first-rate educational facilities will make a big difference. The combination of highly capable students with talented faculty, and first-rate facilities, will put these students at the top of the heap when it comes to educated healthcare professionals in the future.”

BC3 “a long-standing pillar”

Jeff Prokovich, Grove City College’s vice president for advancement, said the college’s contribution to BC3 derives only from gifts to the new Charles Jr. and Betty Johnson School of Nursing, which will begin to offer classes to freshmen in fall 2020.

Jayne Johnson Rathburn’s gift toward Grove City College’s Charles Jr. and Betty Johnson School of Nursing made the college’s investment “in this important partnership” possible, McNulty added.

BC3's 30,000-square-foot, two-floor Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health building may open in fall 2022, said Brian Opitz, BC3's executive director of operations.

Grove City College's gift will be made over a three-year period ending in 2021 and will be used exclusively for the Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health building, the centerpiece of an \$18 million project on the south end of BC3's main campus in Butler Township.

Grove City College nursing students in their sophomore and junior years will pursue 41 credits in nine technical and clinical courses at BC3 while also taking classes at the Mercer County institution.

"Grove City College would only look to partners that have a high academic quality and who have a longstanding commitment to their students and to their alumni," Prokovich said. "So any agreement, any partnership or collaboration is well-vetted and well-reviewed by Grove City College before we would begin that conversation.

"And that was the case with BC3. BC3 is a long-standing pillar in Butler County and in the region. And we believe strongly in their academic program."

BC3 program has 93% success rate in year

Nearly 93 percent of graduates in BC3's associate in applied science degree program in Nursing, R.N., in the past year were successful in taking the post-graduation National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses test for the first time, according to Dr. Patty Annear, dean of BC3's Shaffer School of Nursing and Allied Health.

Grove City College is routinely ranked as one of the country's top colleges by U.S. News & World Report, The Princeton Review and others based on academic quality and superior outcomes. Among its graduates is Robert L. Hunter, who with his daughter, Nancy Hunter Mycka, served as co-chairs of BC3's three-year "Pioneer Proud" campaign that raised more than \$6.8 million for BC3 through June 2016.

"With two schools working together and not against each other, I think it puts them in a much stronger position to offer a good education," said Hunter, a Butler resident and 1963 Grove City College graduate. "It's a great thing that both colleges are working together so that they don't duplicate.



An artist's rendering illustrates a possible design for the reception area of the proposed Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health building on BC3's main campus in Butler Township.

“I think almost every day you will see something in the news about BC3 and what they are doing in the community and how they’re helping people. What BC3 has really done to make it work is that they seem to be able to spot a need and fill it.”

The BC3 Education Foundation has received its five largest gifts within the past 5½ years.

Four \$1 million contributions since July 2014 include those from Janice Phillips Larrick in September 2017, for whom the Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health building will be named; and from former state Sen. Tim Shaffer in February 2018, after whom BC3’s Shaffer School of Nursing and Allied Health was named.



An artist’s rendering illustrates a possible design for a simulated patient room within the proposed Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health building on BC3’s main campus in Butler Township.

“It’s obvious we need a new facility to train our nurses,” said Ruth Purcell, executive director of the BC3 Education Foundation. “We want to expand our program, and our existing (business and health professions) building and facilities are too small. We don’t have the lab space. So in order to expand our enrollment, we need not only more space, but we need a new contemporary space to accommodate the simulation labs and the other labs that are part of the program.

“The benefits of highly skilled, well-trained healthcare workers is recognized by many in our community who have generously stepped up to support this project.”

“Looking forward to the technology”

Expanded enrollment will allow BC3 to address a high-priority occupation that is expected to see a 12 percent increase in positions by 2028, according to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health building will provide BC3 with the potential to “be able to serve more students,” Annear said, “because it will allow an increased capacity. I am looking forward to the technology that is going to be there to help prepare our nurses.”

In addition to BC3’s Nursing, R.N., program, the Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health building may also house portions of associate degree or one-year certificate programs in massage therapy, medical assistant, medical coding and billing specialist, physical therapist assistant, technical trades-massage therapy management option and technical trades-radiologic technology.

Collective enrollment in those programs increased 3.2 percent in fall 2019 compared with fall 2018.

BC3 is seeking \$9 million in capital assistance from the state Department of Education to help to finance the \$18 million project, according to James Hrabosky, BC3's vice president for administration and finance. Following the gifts it has received, BC3 must meet \$6.2 million through loans, cash and fundraising.



The Butler Township board of commissioners Nov. 18 approved the first phase of the project, which includes the construction of a new entrance from Old Plank Road on the south end of BC3's main campus, the razing of two original buildings and their reconstruction elsewhere on campus, Opitz said.

An artist's rendering illustrates a possible design for a simulation lab within the proposed Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health building on BC3's main campus in Butler Township.

“It is going to be extremely realistic”

The deadline for architectural requests for proposals for the Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health building is Dec. 20, Opitz said. Interviews with representatives from firms will follow in January, Opitz said, adding that BC3's board of trustees will consider a recommendation for approval in March.

“This is going to be a high-tech simulation and nursing instruction facility,” Opitz said. “It is going to be extremely realistic as far as a hospital setting, atmosphere and function.”

Simulation labs and skills labs may be located on the second floor, whose space will feel “very hospital-like,” Opitz said. “When these students are there, they are not just in a classroom, they are in an environment that supports the mentality of the entire program.

“Once you go on that floor, it is going to be like you step off an elevator into a state-of-the-art medical training facility.”

The Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health building may also feature a tiered classroom whose 80 seats will nearly encircle the educator's instructional area, Opitz said, adding that “We want this classroom and lab experience to be very up-close and personal.”

Groundbreaking possible in May 2021

Grove City College students in BC3's Nursing 101, 102, 103, 104 and 105 classes, which represent 38 credits, will learn core competencies such as accountability, caring, communication, critical thinking, health promotion, management, nursing informatics and professionalism, Annear said.

"Those are our primary outcomes," Annear said. "So when our nurses graduate from BC3, whether they are a BC3 student or a Grove City student in the future, those eight competencies are what we expect them to have or to have met."

Those courses also include clinical instruction at medical facilities such as Butler Memorial Hospital, Butler; Armstrong Center for Medicine and Health Hospital, Kittanning; Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh; Allegheny General Hospital, Pittsburgh; the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, McCandless; and Allegheny Valley Hospital, Natrona Heights, Annear said.

BC3's associate degree program in nursing, which began in 1973, expanded in 2018 to include BC3 @ Brockway in Brockway, Jefferson County, which will graduate its first class in May.

BC3 offers pre-nursing courses at its main campus, and at BC3 @ Armstrong in Ford City, Armstrong County; BC3 @ Brockway; BC3 @ Cranberry in Cranberry Township, Butler County; BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing in New Castle, Lawrence County; and BC3 @ LindenPointe in Hermitage, Mercer County.

BC3's Nursing, R.N., program is approved by the Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing and accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing in Atlanta.

Groundbreaking for the Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health building could take place in May 2021, Opitz said.

Financial gifts to BC3 from Grove City College, Shaffer and Larrick follow that of Robert R. Heaton in July 2014, who contributed \$1 million to what became the \$6.4 million Heaton Family Learning Commons, which opened in August 2016. They also follow a \$1 million contribution from John L. Wise III and family, whose September 2016 gift helped to fund what became the \$2.3 million Amy Wise Children's Creative Learning Center, which opened in January 2018.