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Whitney Benefits SC

• \$1M gift to college foundation will create four-year degree program for nursing students

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By Sophie L. Swecker

Staff reporter

Whitney Benefits President Tom Kinnison, along with officials from Sheridan College and the University of Wyoming, this morning announced a \$1 million gift to the Sheridan College Foundation for the creation of the Edward A. Whitney Endowed Nursing Chair.

The creation of the chair will allow Sheridan College to add a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing to the curriculum that can be completed on-site in Sheridan.

"An endowed chair is the pinnacle of achievement for any college," said SC President Kevin Drumm at a news conference.

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Representatives from Sheridan College, Whitney Benefits, and the University of Wyoming celebrate a \$1 million gift from Whitney Benefits for the creation of a bachelor's degree in nursing at SC. Participating in this morning's ceremony are, from left, SC Director of Nursing Judy McDowell, Northern Wyoming Community College District Chairman Mike Nickel, Whitney Benefits President Tom Kinnison, SC President Kevin Drumm, UW Dean of Nursing Pamela Clarke, Whitney Benefits board member Tom Belus, and SC Foundation Board Vice President Sue Fletcher.

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"Until today, Wyoming was slated to have the largest nursing shortage in the nation until 2020," Drumm said.

The hired chairperson will act as a professor and adviser for nursing students at Sheridan College and as a liaison between the UW and SC nursing programs.

"We're going to have a world-class professor here in Sheridan," said Pamela Clark, dean of nursing at the University of Wyoming.

Efforts to learn when the new degree will be offered and when the chairperson will be hired were unsuccessful this morning.

According to Sheridan College, the UW nursing program is completely online.

The \$1 million gift, which will be doubled by the Wyoming Legislature under the Community College Endowment Challenge Program, will add classroom instruction and video-conferencing to the program.

"We want a top-notch (program) and we know we're going to have it," Kinnison said.

SC Director of Nursing Judy McDowell said the addition of the bachelor's degree will allow registered nurses in Sheridan who hold an associate degree in nursing to further their education.

"I thank, from the bottom of my heart, Whitney Benefits for making this collaboration possible," McDowell said.

