Section I: Request
A new Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree was approved by the Board of Regents on March, 2017. In order to support its objective to provide a top-quality education to students in the nursing program, Dixie State University’s College of Health Science Nursing Department request the upper division courses for this program adopt differential tuition. Rationale for the differential tuition of $75 for each upper division credit hour is twofold. First, the increased resources bring us in line with resources spent per student at other Utah state universities. If we hope to keep our promise of providing a top-tier quality nursing education to our students, we must have the resources to restructure the program and hire a simulation lab manager. Last, our student’s net out of pocket expenses (defined as tuition less scholarship dollars) still make DSU’s nursing program a value among peer institutions.

Section II: Student and Market Demand for the Program
Student demand for the nursing program at Dixie State University has always been strong as evidenced by there are more applicants for the program than the allotted slots. Support for the change from an Associate Degree program to a pre-licensure Baccalaureate of Science in Nursing program is evidenced by a request and support from Dixie Regional Medical Center. The number of applicants and accepted students for the past 5 years is depicted in the following table.

Further evidence of a strong market demand is the Utah Nursing Consortium, of which DSU is a member, reports that more that 1000 qualified applicants are turned away from Utah nursing programs each year. Utah Nursing Consortium members include:
• Dixie State University
• Salt Lake Community College
• Snow College
• Southern Utah University
• University of Utah
• Utah State University
• Utah Valley University
• Weber State University
• Brigham Young University
• Westminster College

Section III: Impact of Differential Tuition Rates on Student Access and Retention
The increase in tuition will cost students an extra $721.25 per semester. Because differential tuition is covered by financial aid this should reduce the out of pocket expenses for the students.

Section IV: Tuition Rates of Comparable Programs at Other Institutions
Currently, DSU’s tuition is the second lowest among University of Utah (UoU), Utah State University (USU), Utah Valley University (UVU), Southern Utah University (SUU), and Weber State University (WSU). With the implementation of differential tuition DSU’s tuition will be the third lowest among the previously listed universities.
Section V: Potential Earnings Capacity of Program Graduates
The earning potential of a Registered Nurse is between $60,000 and $80,000 per year, based upon location and degree.

Section VI: Societal Importance of the Program
Utah’s population is growing, and at the same time, our nursing workforce is aging. Roughly half of the state’s nurses plan to retire within the next 15 years. Healthcare employers report more than 1200 current nursing positions they are unable to fill, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that by 2022 there will be 1.2 million unfilled nursing positions across the nation. More than 50,000 qualified applicants to registered nurse programs are rejected nationwide due to faculty shortages. Utah Nursing Consortium schools turn away more than 1000 qualified applicants each year. Utah’s need for nurses is particularly acute because we have the fastest growing elderly population, the youngest population, and the lowest death rate in the country. These factors place an extra demand on health care, which will only increase further as our population grows.

Every life will be touched by a nurse as they provide health care, health education, health promotion, and disease prevention. Furthermore, counties with higher RN to population ratios are healthier, with a 2.8% lower rate of fair to poor health, 6% higher mammography screening rate, lower rate of teen births being noted. Implementation of differential tuition will allow DSU to continue to build resources. As we strive to provide a top-quality education to our students, we are balancing the financial needs of such a nursing program with the impact on students.