

COURSE OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

We are delighted that you are interested in the Rural Nursing Program. This folder is designed to give you an overview of the program and provide you with the necessary application materials. For students participating during **winter or summer break**, it is essential that the COMPLETED application be submitted to the RCNP office by the deadline indicated.

◆ Winter - November 1

◆ Summer - April 1

◆ *The above deadlines do not apply to licensed RNs, not currently enrolled in a school of nursing.*

Placements will be made according to the order in which applications are received.

DESCRIPTION

The Rural California Nursing Preceptorship Program (RCNP) is supported by the State of California and is administered through California State University, Chico. The program, which was initiated in 1975, provides a unique opportunity for senior level nursing students and graduate nurses to gain clinical experience while exploring career options in rural and semi-rural areas of Northern California. The program is available year-round and is designed to last 4 to 8-weeks. Placements are available in a number of different health care facilities. The program provides a valuable opportunity to explore career options in rural areas while granting a first-hand look at the quality of life that Northern California offers.

As a participant, you will be encouraged to take an active role in designing an experience that will best meet your particular needs. You will begin by outlining a set of goals and objectives that describe your area of clinical interest. After completing your goals and objectives, the coordinator will work with you to select a placement site and preceptor. Housing arrangements may be facilitated by RCNP when needed.

Students have found that they have benefited from the program in a number of ways. For most students, a focus on self-directed, independent learning makes the experience an important transitional step as they move from student nurse to graduate nurse. In addition, prior to making career commitments, a large number of students have found the exploration of career options in rural nursing to be an extremely beneficial experience. By eliminating the need for a complete move to a new community, RCNP encourages students to explore the rural experience at a critical time in their education. Still, other students have used this opportunity as a means of spending concentrated clinical time in a specialty area.

Rural Nursing

There are a variety of settings available to the student or graduate nurse who wishes to explore career options in a rural area. While educational requirements are the same for urban and rural nurses, there are distinct differences in style of practice. The rural nurse is more of a “generalist” and must be flexible in his/her role. Rural nursing emphasizes autonomy and independence. Medical personnel, particularly specialists, are less available, emergency services may be scarce, and transportation problems may become insurmountable. The rural nurse must be able to incorporate into his or her professional practice, knowledge of community and social organizations.

In rural areas, social interaction is extremely important and the rural nurse must be willing to become involved with the community. The majority of patients seen by the nurse in a rural area are known personally as well as professionally. This allows for a more enriching nurse-patient relationship. A high level of community involvement and awareness promotes an integrated social system providing emotional and physical support to the members of a rural community.

For the nurse who is looking for the opportunity to utilize a variety of clinical skills, experience close personal contact with patients, families, and co-workers, and live in a beautiful scenic part of the country, rural nursing may be the right career choice.

OPERATION OF THE PROGRAM

Application Process

Students enrolled in a school of nursing, which offers the rural nursing option, may receive academic credit from their home campus for a 4 or 8-week placement. The application process for student nurses who *do not* have the option of participating through their own nursing school is slightly different. These students will enroll in Nursing 185A or 185C, through CSU, Chico extension. (*See Program Fee Schedule*)

As a registered nurse, you will enroll in Nursing 185 A or C and will be granted 30 BRN-approved contact hours. All placements are made for a minimum of 4 weeks.

All students are required to submit a \$100 application fee in the form of a check or money order, made out to CSU, Chico with their application. Although the application process is not competitive, it is *selective*. Accepted applicants are those who: 1) work well with minimal supervision, 2) communicate effectively with patients and the patient care team, and 3) receive high recommendations from faculty. All application materials must be completed by the student and returned to the RCNP office by the deadline specified above.

Within two weeks after the application deadline date, you will be contacted by the Rural Nursing office regarding your acceptance to the program. At this time, you will be advised of: 1) your orientation date, 2) course fees, and 3) program guidelines. In addition, the Program Coordinator may contact you directly to discuss your placement options.

Working With Your Preceptor

You will be working closely with your preceptor during your placement. The preceptor will help you determine the kinds of activities that will best fulfill your learning objectives, assist you with new procedures, and help acquaint you with the role and responsibilities of the working RN.

Preceptors are chosen by mutual agreement between the placement facility and the Rural Nursing Program. Preceptors are not financially reimbursed for their services -- they usually participate because they are enthusiastic about their job, enjoy teaching and sharing ideas, and are committed to the nursing profession. Most preceptors are RNs, although nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, physicians, and physician assistants may also be selected as preceptors.

You and your preceptor will work together to develop a plan that will assure the quality of your experience. During your placement period, the Program Coordinator will arrange a "visit." In many cases, the Coordinator will meet on-site with students, but in some cases the Coordinator will "meet" with the student via a telephone conference. The purpose of this visit is to discuss your progress and learn more about your unique experience. The preceptor and the coordinator will complete a written evaluation of you at the end of the placement. The preceptor will review his/her evaluation with you prior to the completion of your preceptorship.

CLINICAL OPTIONS

RCNP offers placements in the areas of acute care, home health, public health, hospice, and community health clinics. While not every clinical option will be available in every geographic location, we will do our best to place you where you can best meet your clinical objectives and in the geographical setting you have requested.

Acute Care

The majority of our student placements are made in acute care. Most acute care placements are made in hospitals ranging in size from 25 beds to 100 beds. In the more rural facilities you will find that they do not have the resources or the patient census to support highly specialized nurses. The nurses in these facilities are often cross-trained in various areas and must be "generalists." In the words of one of our preceptors, "The student needs to experience the ability to be a very flexible nurse . . . within an hour's time she may be called on to help with a delivery in OB, help with an arrest in ER, interpret an arrhythmia in CCU, console a family, or assist with the care of an auto accident victim. She may also have to spread salt on icy walks or mop up the delivery room. There is no real preparation for this type of hospital work except to tolerate the slow days and then to be able to think and work hard when everything seems to be happening at the same time."

Most students who are considering participation in our program have had hospital nursing experience in large, urban hospitals. While it is true that there are basic similarities to be found in hospital nursing in any setting, the rural hospital has many unique and special qualities, which differentiate it from a large hospital. In general, you can expect increased contact with patients and families, a high degree of professional independence and self-direction, and a staff that works as a cooperative and cohesive unit.

Public Health, Home Health, Hospice, Community Health Clinics

Nurses who wish to function in a community health role find that they are expected to be flexible, innovative, and must possess knowledge and skills in a wide variety of clinical areas. For a certain portion of the rural population, the community health nurse is the primary health care provider. A nurse in this setting is expected to travel to remote areas and perform nursing care without the benefit of readily available medical backup. After assessing the home situation, the nurse may be without the appropriate supplies or equipment for some forms of treatment. The nurse must be ready to improvise and report urgent problems to the appropriate community resources.

The problems of access in rural communities include geographic barriers, lack of telephone service, limited physician access, and lack of reliable transportation. Understanding the social and economic structure of the rural community served is critical in providing quality health care and assuring patient compliance. However, outweighing these factors is the tremendous sense of fulfillment and personal accomplishment that rural field nursing offers. Many community health nurses thrive on the challenges inherent in their job, make close and lasting friendships with their patients, and love the satisfaction of knowing that they, as individuals, truly make a difference in the quality of life experienced by a client and their family.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

During their placements, all students will write a Rural Health Topic Paper (2-4 pages). The purpose of this assignment is to better acquaint students with some of the challenges and rewards in rural health. Much of the information that the student will convey in their paper will be gathered by interfacing with and interviewing other health practitioners and/or community members at the placement site.

In addition, students opting for the 185C course will prepare portfolios. Here, creativity is encouraged. Some examples of portfolio contents are:

journal entries	meeting agendas	correspondence
brochures	survey results	photographs
resume- <i>updated</i>	research data	poetry
drawings	diagrams	prose
relevant newspaper articles	maps	

GEOGRAPHIC AREAS AVAILABLE

Our placement areas offer a wide variety of clinical experiences, extending as far north as the Oregon border and as far south as Bishop near Mammoth Lakes. We encourage the student to specify geographic areas of interest on their application.

Please refer to our web page: www.csuchico.edu/rcnp for more specific information or talk to the program coordinator at the RCNP office. We try to accommodate our students whenever possible.

HOUSING

RCNP housing providers are available to students in need of housing. RCNP screens all potential housing providers and relies heavily on evaluations from past students for housing referrals.

The cost of housing is \$300 per month which includes use of a kitchen or in some cases a private kitchenette. Students are responsible for their own meals; however the student and provider may make arrangements to include the student in family meals. In this case, the student should discuss reimbursement for their portion of the food. Communication is important to a successful housing placement. Agreements for accommodations should be reached between the student and housing provider prior to the placement start date.

For most students, the close personal involvement with their host families is one of the most meaningful aspects of the placement. These “live-in” situations put the student directly in touch with what it means to live in a rural community. Students learn to appreciate the importance of local traditions, events, gossip, and politics. They also experience the frustration of limited shopping and cultural opportunities; but, the satisfaction achieved in terms of a greater sense of community, combined with a relaxed pace of life, are positive and lasting experiences for the student. Students and housing providers may form close friendships that include letters and visits, long after the clinical placement has ended.

Complete Pages 5 - 6

APPLICATION

Name _____ Preferred Nickname _____ Sex _____

Address during School

_____ street _____ city _____ zip _____ phone

Permanent Address

_____ street _____ city _____ zip _____ phone

Cell Phone (optional) _____ Is your cell phone a good way to reach you? Yes No

e-mail _____ Is e-mail a good way to reach you? Yes No

Social Security No. _____ Date of Birth _____

Do you speak a foreign language? Yes No If yes, which? _____

School/Course Information

Nursing school (for undergraduate applicants only)

_____ Expected date of graduation _____

Term you will participate in RCNP Program: Fall Intersession Spring Summer

*Nursing Course Number (see Program Fee Schedule on page) _____ No. of units _____

Course Instructor's name _____ Phone _____

Are you currently an RN? Yes No Date of Licensure: _____ License Number: _____

Student Interests/Preferences:

I am interested in a placement in:

- Acute Hospital Community Clinic Public Health Home Health
- Hospice Mental Health Other: _____

Clinical areas of special interest _____

Geographical areas of special interest _____

If you have housing available in a specific geographic area(s) of interest, please provide address and phone number:

_____ Street _____ City _____ Zip _____ Area Code/Phone No.

_____ Street _____ City _____ Zip _____ Area Code/Phone No.

Will you be using your own automobile? Yes No If not, explain: _____

I request placement for _____ weeks beginning on the following date: _____

I am willing to work: AM PM NOC shifts. Preference: _____

Student Records:

1. What is your health status? _____ Date of last physical examination _____ Do you have any health problems or physical limitations that we should be aware of? _____

2. Immunization/Skin test records: Please review the *Vaccine Guidelines* form in the application packet to be sure your records are current. Send copies of the following as indicated: 1) all immunizations 2) recent TB skin test or latest CXR if positive skin test result, and 3) relevant titer records. *Be sure your name is on every copy!*

3. Current CPR certification: Please send a copy of your card. Be sure your CPR certification is for the healthcare professional.

4. Malpractice insurance carrier: Please send a copy of your malpractice insurance *policy face sheet* with this application.

5. Emergency Contact: Name: _____

Relationship to you _____ Phone No. _____

Address _____
street city state zip

I understand that the Rural California Nursing Preceptorship Program will send my photo to the placement site, and if housing is needed, one will be sent to the housing provider.

I understand there is no stipend (money for room and board) available from the Rural California Nursing Preceptorship Program, if I should need housing.

I understand that course fees are charged for participation through CSU, Chico courses, Nursing 185A or 185C.

I understand that there is a \$100 non-refundable application fee that should be paid in the form of a check or money order to CSU, Chico and included with my application materials.

I authorize the Rural California Nursing Preceptorship program to create a student file and forward copies of my application materials to any facility under consideration for my preceptorship placement.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this application, \$100 application fee, and requested documents to:

**Rural California Nursing Preceptorship Program
California State University, Chico
Chico, California 95929-0301**



Course Fee Schedule

If you are receiving course credit through a *CSU, Chico Nursing Extension Course*, choose one of the courses from the table below:

Course Number	Units	Hours Required	Course Length	Cost
N185A	2	150	4-5 weeks	\$ 90
N185C	4	250	6-8 weeks	\$180

If you are receiving course credit through your *own nursing school*, please note that you **will not** register with, or pay course fees to RCNP. Schools that offer courses that accept the RCNP clinical option include those listed in the table below:

School	Nursing Course	Faculty	Comments
San Jose State University	N148	Dr. Chia-Ling Mao	Please contact Dr. Mao to notify her of your desire to participate.
CSU, Long Beach	N456L	Dr. Leayn Johnson	Objectives must be reviewed by Dr. Johnson before submitting with application.
Samuel Merritt College	N179 – Offered Intersession only	Ms. Diana Dunn	Students wishing to participate in summer must enroll in a CSU, Chico extension course. (See above.)
De Anza Junior College	N541L - Offered for 6 th quarter students only, with pre-approval by Patty O'Neill	Ms. Patty O'Neill	Application deadline for fall quarter is April 1; winter and spring quarter, Nov. 1. Fourth and fifth-quarter students wishing to participate must enroll in a CSU, Chico extension course. (See above.)

All students are required to include a \$100 application fee.



Guidelines for Formulating Goals and Objectives

Composing a brief summary of your goals and objectives is essential in giving your preceptorship focus and direction. Additionally, it will help your preceptor gain more understanding of what you hope to accomplish during your placement.

Format guidelines: Your written goals and objectives should be: 1) typewritten, 2) limited to *one page*, and 3) include your name and the title, “*Preceptorship Goals and Objectives*” at the top of the page.

Begin with your goal(s): Write two or three sentences that summarize your overall goal(s). You may find it helpful to simply answer the question: After coming away from this experience, how do I want to be changed?

Follow with RCNP objectives: Objectives 1-3 are fairly general and will apply to all RCNP preceptorships, while the remainder of your objectives will relate more specifically to your particular placement. Make the following three RCNP objectives first on your list.

1. I will be able to identify some of the similarities and differences between rural and urban models of health care and become familiar with the advantages and disadvantages found in each.
2. I will become familiar with the demographics of the local population served, as well as some of the socio-economic factors relative to this population that act as barriers to optimum health.
3. I will become familiar with the workplace culture, relevant protocols, and staffing patterns at my placement facility.

Last, write your own objectives: When composing your objectives, keep in mind that the more specific you are, the easier it will be for your preceptor to develop a plan that will help you meet them. Following are some ideas:

subjective findings (history-taking)
objective findings (physical assessment)
familiarizing self with referral agencies
practical use of the NCP
medication administration
reporting findings to physicians
participating at staff meetings, conferences

various procedures
documentation
giving report
organizational skills
prioritizing and triage
interpreting lab work
patient teaching



Introductory Letter

Every student will write a letter of introduction to their future preceptor. This letter will help both the Rural Nursing Program Coordinator and your preceptor to get to know you better, both professionally and personally.

The introductory letter is slightly different from a cover letter. A cover letter's main function is to promote oneself to a potential employer. While there will be aspects of your letter that are promotional in nature, the main purpose of the introductory letter is to disclose your attributes and strengths as well as your weaknesses and limitations.

Guidelines:

- ◆ Keep your entire typewritten letter to one page.
- ◆ Use "Dear Preceptor" as the salutation.
- ◆ Explain why you want to participate in this unique and independent rural preceptorship.
- ◆ Describe yourself in terms of the level of independence you are comfortable with, and your communication style.
- ◆ Discuss what you consider to be your strong and weak points relative to this type of experience.
- ◆ Briefly summarize your past work experience, including paid and non-paid positions. (They need not necessarily be in the medical field.)



Skills Proficiency List

Self-Assessment

Student _____ Date _____

Self Assessment Key:

1 = Proficient (Confident in performing procedure. No assistance needed.)

2 = Needs Supervision (Needs review and/or assistance to feel comfortable in performing procedure.)

3 = No Practical Experience

Please check the appropriate box next to each skill below:

	1	2	3		1	2	3
NEURO				MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION			
Neuro Checks				Topical Ointment/Patch			
				Sublingual			
PULMONARY				Rectal Suppository			
Oxygen Set Up - Nasal Prongs				Sub Q Insulin			
Incentive Spirometer				Sub Q Heparin			
Trach Care / Suctioning				IM			
				NGT Meds/Feedings			
CARDIAC				IV ADMINISTRATION AND CARE			
EKG - Telemetry				Set-up IV - Calculate Flow Rate			
Heart Sounds/Arrhythmia Identification				Change IV Tubing			
				DC IV			
G/I				IVPB			
Bowel Sounds				Heplock Med & Flush			
Stool Specimen				Start IV			
Enema				IV Pump Set Up			
Oral Suction				Dressing Change for Central Lines			
NGT Insertion				Hep/Saline Flush for Central Line			
NGT Residual Check							
D/C NGT				DOCUMENTATION			
				Graphic Vital Signs			
G/U				Intake & Output			
Catheter Care				Head-to-toe Assessment			
Urine Specimen from Catheter Port							
D/C Foley Catheter				NURSING PROCESS			
Bladder Irrigation				Nursing Care Plans			
Catheterization - Male				Interpreting Lab Work			
Catheterization - Female				Prioritizing Patient Needs			
INTEGUMENTARY				COMMUNICATION			
Dry Dressing Change				Patient/Family Teaching Skills			
Wet to Dry Dressing change				Working with Patient Care Team			
Wound Packing				Delegating to CNAs/LVNs			
Wound Suction: Hemovac				Giving Report			
Wound Suction: Jackson-Pratt							
Remove Staples				MISCELLANEOUS			
K-pad				BG Finger-Stick			



Housing Questionnaire

Name _____

If you have available housing, please indicate the location(s):

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

If you need housing, please complete the following:

If the housing provider is single, will you accept housing with: Male Female Either

Do you smoke? Yes No

Please describe any health needs (including animal allergies) which may require special housing or environmental considerations:

Is there any other information or preference you would like to share with us that would be helpful in locating appropriate housing for you?

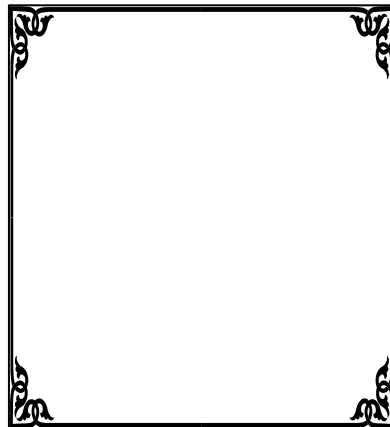
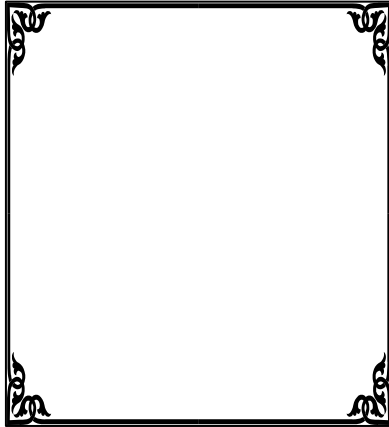
On a separate page, type a *letter of introduction* to your future housing provider. Use the following guidelines to compose your letter:

- Begin your letter with, *Dear Housing Provider*.
- Describe yourself in terms of your hobbies and interests.
- Relay your career goals.
- Refer to past rural or urban living experiences, family size, etc.
- Provide your name and signature in closing.

Attach Photos as Instructed



Photos



Please submit **two** photos of yourself. Each should be approximately 2" x 2". We realize that your pets are cute and your friends are important to you, but in this particular case, we need pictures that are of you alone.

Your photo will be sent to your placement site, where they are frequently posted on a bulletin board to announce your arrival to other staff.

If housing is needed during your placement, the second photo will be sent to your housing provider as a way of introduction.

REMEMBER - "A picture speaks a thousand words."

- Dress modestly and professionally. Avoid tank tops, t-shirts, and low-cut attire.
- Keep in mind the importance of that first impression, and submit quality, smart photos.
- No scanned or photocopied prints, please.
- Presenting yourself neatly groomed and with a smile, will make a favorable impression with staff, even before you've arrived.

Completed by Faculty or Supervisor



Faculty/Supervisor Statement of Recommendation

(Undergraduate students are to use faculty members for Recommendation.)

RCNP Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Compared to other classmates/staff, please rate applicant using a rating scale from 1-5.

1 signifies **Weak**; 5 signifies **Strong**

Skill level	1	2	3	4	5
Level of independence	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to make sound judgments	1	2	3	4	5
Level of confidence	1	2	3	4	5
Verbal skills	1	2	3	4	5
Written skills	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to deal effectively with conflict	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to handle stress	1	2	3	4	5
Level of self-awareness	1	2	3	4	5
Tolerance of other lifestyles, cultures, religions	1	2	3	4	5

Do you recommend this applicant without reservation? Yes No

Length of time you have known applicant _____ Relationship to Applicant _____

Comments:

Name of School/Facility _____

Office Phone Number _____ e-mail _____

Your Name _____ Signature _____

Please Print

Kathleen Kirby, R.N., Program Coordinator
 Rural California Nursing Preceptorship Program
 California State University, Chico
 Chico, CA 95929-0301
 Phone 530-898-5797 ♦ Fax 530-898-6709
 e-mail: rcnp@csuchico.edu ♦ web: www.csuchico.edu/rcnp

Completed by (2nd) Faculty or Supervisor



Faculty/Supervisor Statement of Recommendation

(Undergraduate students are to use faculty members for Recommendation.)

RCNP Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Compared to other classmates/staff, please rate applicant using a rating scale from 1-5.

1 signifies **Weak**; 5 signifies **Strong**

Skill level	1	2	3	4	5
Level of independence	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to make sound judgments	1	2	3	4	5
Level of confidence	1	2	3	4	5
Verbal skills	1	2	3	4	5
Written skills	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to deal effectively with conflict	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to handle stress	1	2	3	4	5
Level of self-awareness	1	2	3	4	5
Tolerance of other lifestyles, cultures, religions	1	2	3	4	5

Do you recommend this applicant without reservation? Yes No

Length of time you have known applicant _____ Relationship to Applicant _____

Comments:

Name of School/Facility _____

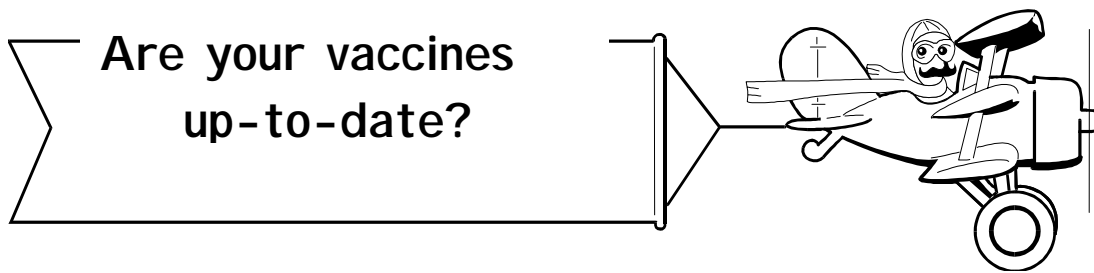
Office Phone Number _____ e-mail _____

Your Name _____ Signature _____

Please Print

Kathleen Kirby, R.N., Program Coordinator
 Rural California Nursing Preceptorship Program
 California State University, Chico
 Chico, CA 95929-0301
 Phone 530-898-5797 ♦ Fax 530-898-6709
 e-mail: rcnp@csuchico.edu ♦ web: www.csuchico.edu/rcnp

Reference Page



Vaccine Guidelines

Please review to make sure your vaccine and TB skin test records are current *before* sending application materials.

Name	No. doses required	Alternate Option
Rubella	1 dose	positive titer
Rubeola	2 doses	positive titer
Hepatitis B	3 doses	positive titer or signed waiver
Tetanus	1 dose q 10 years	---
Varicella	2 doses	positive titer or medical documentation showing disease history
TB Testing	negative skin test result one year prior to preceptorship start date	clear baseline chest x-ray and unremarkable symptom review within past year

The guidelines above are based on the recommendations of the U.S. Public Health Services Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

Reference Page



RCNP Application Check List

Student Name _____

Please confirm with a that you have completed each part of the application process. Your application will not be processed unless it is completed. If you have questions regarding any part of the application, please contact the program coordinator.



- I have:**
- completed *both sides* of the application form and have signed at the bottom.
 - enclosed two "Faculty/Supervisor Statement of Recommendation" forms. (*Faculty may wish to mail directly to RCNP.*)
 - enclosed typed copies of "Introductory Letter" and "Goals and Objectives."
 - enclosed my "Self-Assessment Skills List."
 - enclosed my "Housing Questionnaire." (Please include a typed introductory letter on an attached page if you think you may need housing).
 - enclosed a copy of my liability insurance policy face sheet. (*Dates of the policy must cover the 4 week RCNP participation dates.*)
 - enclosed two photos, approximately 2" x 2". (No scanned photos or photocopies please.)
 - enclosed copies vaccine and skin test records. **Please be sure that your Vaccine and skin test records meet the requirements listed below.**
 - Hep B (3 doses) or positive titer
 - Td (1 dose within last 10 years)
 - MMR – 2 doses **or** positive titer for rubella and rubeola)
 - Varicella (2 doses **or** positive titer **or** legal documentation of chicken pox)
 - TB status (negative PPD test within one year of participation dates **or** negative chest x-ray)
 - enclosed a copy of my current *CPR for Health Care Professionals* card.
 - \$100 application fee (check or money order made payable to CSU, Chico).

Once accepted

You can expect to receive a registration packet in the mail which will include important information about your orientation date, and contracts for signature. If you have not heard from the RCNP office within two weeks after the application deadline, please contact us.