**U A could get $4 million for nursing**

By Andrea Kelly  
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PHOENIX — In an attempt to reduce the statewide nursing shortage, legislators are asking for $4 million annually for the next five years to supplement nursing education programs throughout the state.

A bill based on the recommendations of an Arizona Board of Regents Health Science Input Group would expand nursing programs at universities and community colleges, with the goal of doubling the number of nursing graduates annually by 2010.

The money would be used to fund more faculty positions so more students could complete the programs each year.

In 2003, 765 qualified students who applied to nursing schools throughout the state were turned down because there simply was not enough room for them in the universities and community colleges, said Connie Harmsen, chief executive officer of Banner Estrella Medical Center in Phoenix.

Harmsen said the shortage of nurses is due to the rapidly growing Arizona population and the capacity of the nursing programs.

She said about 1,000 students graduate from nursing programs each year, and Arizona is 48th in the country in per-capita nurses, or the number of nurses compared to the state population.

In 2000, the state health care system needed 17 percent more nurses to meet demands, Harmsen said. If nursing education continues as is, by 2010 the number could escalate to 25 percent short of the number of nurses hospitals need and can afford to hire, she said.

Kristen Bollini, of the Arizona Community Colleges Association, said the board's Health Science Input Group figured out that faculty funding would help double the number of
candidates. Dedicated candidates awoke early Monday morning to post fliers on bulletin boards, some as early as 4 a.m.

Nathan Bell, ASUA senator, said he was on campus stapling posters in the early hours.

Thus far there have been five official complaints and two or three campaign violations. Some of the complaints involved problems with posters, but Falck would not comment on the nature of the other violations.

On the other hand, Falck said that he felt like there wasn’t even an election going on, said Falck, a molecular and cellular biology senior.

Erickson said.

However, campaigning will probably become more visible by next week, Falck said.