The University of Alabama’s Capstone College of Nursing is partnering with Bishop State Community College to offer bachelor’s and master’s degrees online.

Registered nurses living in Mobile will be able to pursue and complete degrees in three semesters without ever having to go into a classroom. “The fact is they can do it online, can stay here and still earn a degree from the University of Alabama,” Sara Barger, dean of the UA’s Capstone College of Nursing, said in Mobile this week.

The Capstone College of Nursing has similar partnerships with 15 other community colleges in Alabama for its RN Mobility program.

"It's just a great opportunity for our students," said Kim Rawson, Bishop State's director of nursing.

Students would complete a core curriculum at Bishop State before starting the online nursing training, and would still be required to do clinical work.

Tuition for 2009-10 online undergraduate courses in the Capstone College of Nursing is $296 per semester hour; graduate courses cost $312 per semester hour.

Rawson said that the partnership is a "win-win situation" because the students can "stay in our community, do their course work here and then add to the workforce in our community."

Another benefit for Bishop State is a potential boost in enrollment, said President James Lowe. The two-year college has more than 3,760 students at present.

Rashmi Tandukar, who will receive an associate's degree in nursing from Bishop next month, said that the program will enable her to hold a job at the same time that she furthers her career goals.

"This kind of fell in my lap," said Tandukar, an international student from Nepal who eventually hopes to earn a doctorate in nursing.

For information about the new nursing program, contact the University of Alabama Office of Nursing Student Services at 1-800-313-3591 or 205-348-6639, or go to the Capstone College of Nursing Web Site at http://nursing.ua.edu/rn_options_future.htm.