



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

The Graduate School

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To: Phyllis Wise, Provost
Ana Mari Cauce, Executive Vice Provost
Office of the Provost, Box 351237

From: Suzanne Ortega, Vice Provost and Dean
Melissa Austin, Associate Dean for Academic Programs
The Graduate School

RE: Review of the School of Nursing Review and
Proposed Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree

At its meeting of April 6, 2006, the Graduate School Council met with the Chair of the committee that reviewed the School of Nursing (Professor Mark Guthrie, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine), Nancy Woods (Dean, School of Nursing), Susan Woods (Associate Dean for Academic Programs, School of Nursing), and additional representatives from the School of Nursing. The review committee was also asked to provide a recommendation about the implementation of the proposed new Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree program.

The last comprehensive review of the School of Nursing was completed in the 1995-96 academic year, and continuing status of the undergraduate and graduate degree programs was reaffirmed at that time. The site visit for this review was conducted on November 28-29, 2005, at which time the review committee met with School faculty, students, and staff.

The review committee emphasized in its report that the School of Nursing is a University of Washington treasure. In particular, the three external members of the Review Committee, all deans or chairs of highly respected schools of nursing, confirmed unequivocally that the UW School of Nursing (SoN) is the top academic school of nursing in the country. The UW SoN leads the nation in many tangible ways, such as NIH funding, and the directions they take help set the tone for the rest of the country. UW SoN faculty are constantly sought for leadership positions at other institutions and, indeed, many of the faculty at other schools of nursing are graduates of the UW.

The committee was impressed with the synergy, excitement, and sense of community among faculty, students and staff. The School of Nursing environment was characterized broadly by every group as being nurturing, as well as being intellectually stimulating, rigorous and demanding. Accolades regarding support were perhaps most impressive from the group of undergraduate students, tenure track assistant professors, and staff who in many places perceive themselves to be the most vulnerable and least supported. There is in the SoN a consistency and clarity of direction, purpose, and expectations in the face of uncertainty. The Undergraduate Program is a major achievement of the School of Nursing. The students are engaged, they remarked about the excellent teaching, accessibility of the faculty and the over-all expertise and talent of the faculty. Much of the credit for this positive environment within the SoN must go to those in positions of leadership, who have consistently shown both limitless energy and vision in advancing the School.

However, the Committee noted that the SoN also faces major challenges, including sustaining its position as the top academic school of nursing in the face of both State and NIH budget cuts. Other challenges are that nine-month faculty contracts impose a significant financial penalty vis-à-vis peers, especially for junior faculty, and that 40% of the faculty will retire in the next 5 years. The committee also noted that students in the undergraduate program need to be better integrated with the rest of campus, and that PhD students need additional guidance and mentoring, including especially with respect to preparation for teaching.

The Review Committee recommendations included:

1. Continuation of existing degree programs with subsequent review in ten years.
2. Approval and implementation of the proposed Doctor of Nursing Practice degree program, according it provisional status with review in five years.

In addition, the Committee recommended:

3. That the SoN be given authority to place faculty into 12 (11) month appointments. Furthermore, that the UW assist the SoN in securing funds to allow such appointments, and at a salary level that is more in line with the (higher) salaries at peer institutions.
4. That the University of Washington work more closely with the SoN to both maximize the School's opportunity to utilize existing space, and to improve development efforts that might be focused on renovation and addition of space.
5. That the SoN engage in a critical appraisal of the guidance and curricular supports available on behalf of students, particularly PhD students, likely to have teaching responsibilities to assure they have the experience and tools needed to have success in that role.
6. That the SoN assign doctoral advisors to research oriented masters' students and that concerted efforts are made to increase their group identities and scholarly community.
7. That the SoN develop a priority list/plan for use and allocation of limited resources.

During the discussion, the Council had several questions about the proposed DNP degree. It was noted that the new DNP program will gradually replace the existing Master of Nursing program, and that overall enrollment will not increase. This type of program is

“cutting edge” and matches the national vision for advanced practice nursing endorsed by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and Nurse Practitioner organizations. Approximately 70 schools around the country are proposing this same kind of degree shift and, at the same time, practice inquiry literature is developing ways to tie research and practice. There is already considerable demand for graduates of such a program, with much of the interest coming from the local community. The SoN plans to prepare many of these students to serve the under-served populations, in rural communities. It was reiterated that the SoN plans to reallocate existing resources for the new DNP program.

For more detailed information on the review of this program, please see the Review Committee’s written report, submitted in January, 2006, and the response from the School of Nursing Dean, submitted on February 6, 2006.

As noted above, the review committee recommended continuation of the School of Nursing degree programs, with the next review to be conducted in the 2015-2016 academic year. The Graduate School concurs with this recommendation. The Graduate School also recommends that the new Doctor of Nursing Practice degree proposal be forwarded to the Higher Education Coordinating Board for review and approval.

- c: Nancy F. Woods, Dean, School of Nursing
- Susan L. Woods, Associate Dean for Academic Programs, School of Nursing
- Julie R. Katz, Assistant Dean, Academic Services, School of Nursing
- Christine Ingebritsen, Acting Dean and Vice Provost, Undergraduate Education
- Janice DeCosmo, Acting Associate Dean, Undergraduate Education
- Adam Grupp, President, Graduate and Professional Student Senate
- Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School
- Members of the School of Nursing Review Committee
- Graduate School Council