

VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Establishment of the Doctor of Nursing Practice in the School of Nursing

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is the recommendation of the administration and the Academic and Student Affairs Committee that the Board of Regents grant authority to the School of Nursing to offer the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree program, effective immediately. The DNP degree program will have provisional status with a review to be scheduled in the 2010-2011 academic year. At such time that the Board of Regents grants continuing status, a ten-year review cycle would begin.

BACKGROUND

In May, 2005, the Graduate School received a letter of intent from the administration in the School of Nursing, followed by a proposal in September, 2005 from Graduate Faculty in the School of Nursing, requesting authority to offer the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree program, with implementation to occur in Autumn Quarter 2007. The mission of the School of Nursing focuses on research, practice, and teaching. In past years, the practice component of the mission has occurred at the undergraduate and master's level programs, and will now be advanced through the practice-oriented DNP program.

Nursing as a practice and academic discipline has constantly evolved in response to societal needs. Advanced practice nurses are effective and indispensable providers of health care at all levels. Transformation of advanced practice nursing is critical to meet the future challenges of increasingly complex care, changing patient demographics, faculty shortages, and shifting health care delivery systems.

The overall goal of the DNP is to prepare advanced practice nurses as clinicians and faculty members with expanded leadership, research, and clinical skills who can teach, treat, shape treatment plans, and lead policy development for patients, families, populations, and communities in health and in illness. The DNP will enhance nursing's ability to provide leadership in meeting the evolving needs of society and will support the career trajectory for those pursuing expert clinical practice and leadership. Program graduates will be prepared to address widening inequities in access to care and in the overall health of the diverse populations of our state, nation, and world.

Finally, the DNP program will provide the School of Nursing the opportunity to respond to critical local, state, and national health care challenges, including meeting the 2004 American Association of Colleges of Nursing resolution recommending that by 2015, a practice doctorate be required for entry level

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advanced practice for nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, nurse midwives, and nurse anesthetists. This change is reflected in the trend for practice-oriented doctoral degrees in many health sciences professions at the University of Washington such as degree programs in the School of Pharmacy and the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine.

On October 5, 2005, the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School appointed a review committee to evaluate the DNP proposal. The composition of the six member review committee included three faculty members who are deans or chairs of highly respected schools of nursing, and who confirmed unequivocally that the UW School of Nursing is the top academic school of nursing nationally. The review committee recommended that the proposed Doctor of Nursing Practice degree program be approved and implemented, and that it be given provisional status with a review to occur in five years.

The Graduate School Council on April 6, 2006 recommended unanimously that the proposal be forwarded to the Higher Education Coordinating Board for review and approval. The Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School concurred with this recommendation.

On May 25, 2006, the Higher Education Coordinating Board approved the request by the School of Nursing at the University of Washington to offer the Doctor of Nursing Practice.

The Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, the Dean of the School of Nursing, and the Provost have reviewed and approved the recommendation. The Higher Education Coordinating Board will be informed of the Board of Regents' action on the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree program.