

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

NO.: BHE 06-15

BOARD DATE: May 31, 2006

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the expedited application of the **University of Massachusetts Amherst** to award the **Doctor of Nursing Practice**.

One year after graduating the program's first class, the University shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application and in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, faculty, resources, and program effectiveness.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b)
Contact: Aundrea Kelley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Policy

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

May 2006

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Doctor of Nursing Practice

INTENT, MISSION and NEED

The University of Massachusetts has submitted an expedited proposal to offer a Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP). The proposed program has been developed to meet new national standards and will replace the existing master's degree advanced nursing practice programs currently offered. The DNP degree has been endorsed by The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), the professional organization for higher education in nursing. The proposed program received University of Massachusetts Board of Trustees approval on May 24, 2006.

The Doctorate of Nursing Practice is supported nationally. The DNP is the professional clinical nursing doctoral degree and considered to be the terminal clinical practice degree in nursing. It is intended to replace the master's degree as the credential for advanced clinical practice in nursing reflecting change in the educational preparation of professional nurses toward a program of study that will provide scientific knowledge and related skills essential for the highest level of nursing practice.

The proposed DNP will be a four-year post-baccalaureate program providing scientific knowledge and related skills essential for the highest level of nursing practice and accountability. Graduates will be prepared as clinicians and as leaders capable of evaluating and translating research into practice to improve outcomes of care. Graduates will be eligible to sit for national certification examinations in their specialties offered through national accrediting bodies such as the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) and the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP).

The mission of the University is to provide an affordable education of high quality and conduct programs of research and public service that advance knowledge and improve the lives of the people of the Commonwealth. Students of the proposed program will serve the people of the Commonwealth through clinical placements and residencies across the state, both as students and as graduates since most of alumni reside in Massachusetts.

Demand

The majority of advanced practice nursing programs currently at the master's level will be transitioning to the new DNP degree. Nationally, 10 universities in the United States, including Columbia University, have established the DNP and over 60 programs are in various stages of development. As the DNP is a national initiative, most schools of nursing in Massachusetts are considering this educational model; however, University of Massachusetts Amherst SON hopes to be the leader in innovation by being the first in Massachusetts and in New England to receive program approval.

If approved, the proposed DNP at University of Massachusetts Amherst will be the first in the region, and thus the school anticipates a substantial applicant pool of students from across the region wishing to prepare for advanced practice nursing roles at the doctoral level. Also, since there are so few DNP programs currently in operation throughout the country, University of Massachusetts Amherst expects to receive an ample number of national applicants as well.

University of Massachusetts Amherst's School of Nursing currently offers a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree. However, the Ph.D. has not been the graduate degree of choice for most graduate nursing students who are interested in continuing their professional career in clinical practice. According to University of Massachusetts, experience has shown that when the DNP and Ph.D. programs are available, student enrollments and faculty productivity grow in both programs.

CURRICULUM (Attachment A)

Students will be educated through course work, seminars, practica, and residency experiences. Post-baccalaureate students will complete 79-81 credit hours in the proposed DNP program (the total number of credit hours varies with specialty concentration) while post-master's degree students will complete a minimum of 36 credit hours according to an individualized portfolio review. A written and oral comprehensive examination will be required prior to beginning the residency portion of the curriculum. All students will complete the capstone residency and research translation project. Associated with this project will be the generation of scholarly products of sufficient quality to be presented at regional/national conferences and/or publishable in peer-reviewed journals. The final result will be the dissemination of findings.

As compared to the requirements of the current master's advanced practice specialty nursing concentration, the proposed DNP curriculum includes an additional 9 credits in capstone and clinical residency courses as well as additional coursework.

The curriculum of the proposed program is consistent with the national recommendations for the terminal clinical degree within the profession of nursing. The faculty's areas of expertise in clinical practice and research support three specialties:

family nurse practitioner; psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner; and public health nursing leadership specialist.

Several agencies have expressed interest in placing DNP students for both their practica and residencies including:

- Association of State and Territorial Directors of Nursing
- Baystate Medical Center and affiliated neighborhood clinics
- Berkshire Medical Center and affiliated neighborhood clinics
- Berkshire Medical Group
- Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Holyoke Health Center
- Huntington Health Center
- Local health departments in Massachusetts
- Mass Public Health Association
- Mass Mutual
- North Quabbin Family Practice, Athol
- Riverbend Health Centers, Springfield, Chicopee, Agawam and Westfield
- University Health Services, Amherst
- VA Medical Centers Leeds, Springfield
- VNA of Western Massachusetts
- Wing Health Centers, Palmer, Wilbraham
- Worthington Health Center

ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

Applicants to the proposed program must meet the entrance requirements of the University of Massachusetts Graduate School and the School of Nursing. Each applicant will:

1. Be a graduate of a nationally accredited school of nursing.
2. Have a.) baccalaureate or master's degree in nursing, or
b.) associate's degree in nursing and a non-nursing baccalaureate degree
3. GPA of 3.0 or higher
4. Submit the following documentation:
 - official transcripts for all undergraduate and graduate programs
 - two letters of recommendation
 - sample of scholarly writing
 - statement of professional goals
 - résumé
 - documentation of professional licensure
 - TOEFL scores if needed
 - undergraduate statistics course
 - undergraduate health assessment course or equivalent if required by the specialty

5. Applicants may choose to submit GRE scores as additional data if they believe their application does not adequately reflect their potential to succeed in the program.

University of Massachusetts Amherst estimates that a total of 18 students will be admitted in the first year. This estimate is based on previous application statistics and the typical enrollment in other doctoral programs across the country. Hence, a total enrollment of about 70 students over the four-year period of full program implementation is expected.

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

Since the proposed program is replacing an existing program, there will be minimal costs associated with its implementation. There will be some additional costs associated with printing new recruitment materials (estimated cost: \$2,000). These costs are relatively minor and will be assumed by the program. The proposed program does not anticipate needing to request additional funds in the future through the University's budget process to support the replacement of the program.

The School of Nursing currently has twenty faculty members with graduate status to teach in this program. In terms of numbers and qualifications, there is no anticipated need for additional faculty or staff at this time. The SON will be able to meet the expanded curricular requirements of the new degree by offering some courses on an alternating year basis. Also, students will take selected courses in other departments/schools which will distribute course and credit hours across disciplines. Governance of the new program will be provided by the faculty within the SON.

The SON will be relocated to Skinner Hall in a \$16.2 million renovation project as part of the capital campaign priority. The approximately 55,000 square foot renovation will provide state-of-the art space for the teaching and research mission of the School. Library resources were examined in 2004-2005, and additional resources were added to enhance student access to journals identified as important to this proposed program.

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goals and of the proposed DNP degree for the next five years include:

1. Secure national ranking in the top 30 schools of nursing.

For 2004, the most recent year for which data is available, University of Massachusetts School of Nursing ranked 66th out of all schools of nursing that received NIH funding in the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) combined annual ranking of nursing schools. A school's ranking within this system is directly related to the research productivity of its nursing faculty. To facilitate increased research productivity, the SON has revised its recruitment strategy for new faculty hiring. Recently hired faculty members have had postdoctoral experiences and are poised for seeking federal funding. In addition, collaborative research groups have been set up, a designated

person has been appointed to mentor faculty in their research efforts, and procedures for the review and refinement of research proposals by both internal and external reviewers prior to submission have been established.

2. Enroll a full complement (20 percent) of diverse students.

Increased faculty research productivity, excellent research programs and higher national rankings will attract students from both within and outside of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the New England region.

3. Maintain high graduation rates.

This goal will be measured by the number of individuals matriculating into the program, the number of students graduating, and the time to graduation. SON intends to target full-time students to graduate in four years. The current master's program has a graduation rate of greater than 85 percent over the past 10 years. SON believes that the support mechanisms leading to this high rate will be equally effective for DNP students.

4. Provide high-quality education that prepares students to enter the complex and rapidly changing field of healthcare.

Specific outcome measures for the DNP program include: 1) graduates' employment in clinical positions that take full advantage of their high level of preparation, 2) reports from alumni and employers regarding the influence of graduates' doctoral education on their efforts to change practice and improve patient outcomes, and 3) graduates' success on national certification examinations.

LETTER OF INTENT

In response to the March 2006 circulation of the letter of intent, the University of Massachusetts Boston expressed its support stating that the proposal is "consistent with the need for a transformational change in the educational preparation of professional nurses, is comprehensive, responsive to the national call for a terminal clinical degree within the profession of nursing, and is a commendable complement to the more research oriented Ph.D. degree in nursing."

EXTERNAL REVIEW

An external evaluation of the proposed Doctorate of Nursing Practice occurred March 27-28, 2006, on the campus of University of Massachusetts Amherst. Dr. Julie Novak, Dean, School of Nursing, Purdue University and Dr. Marcia Stanhope, Associate Dean and Professor, University of Kentucky, reviewed the proposal and participated in discussions with faculty and administrators.

Reviewer Findings

The reviewers found that the proposed curriculum is appropriate for a DNP program and that graduates would be competitive with other DNP graduates. They found the

research and teaching credentials of the faculty to be sufficient in quality, breadth, and depth and that there are many national leaders on the faculty. The reviewers were impressed with the level of institutional support of the proposed program and concluded that the proposed program “will be on the cutting edge of tomorrow’s education for the nursing workforce.”

The reviewers made a couple suggestions regarding the curriculum and financial resources. They noted that the curriculum was still under development and suggested changes be made to reflect the eight national essential competencies for DNP programs. They also suggested that more emphasis in evidence-based practice and application would strengthen the curriculum. In the area of financial resources, the reviewers expressed concern over the financial resources necessary to develop student support services and distance education courses.

Response

University of Massachusetts Amherst responded that the eight essential competences for DNP programs will continue to be used to guide the curriculum development and that a faculty member was recently invited to serve on a national panel addressing the curriculum implementation of new PNP programs which would help ensure adherence to national standards. University of Massachusetts Amherst stated that several courses have been revised to clearly identify evidence-based practice in course objectives.

In regard to the reviewers’ fiscal concerns, University of Massachusetts Amherst replied that grant applications have been submitted to support the migration of some courses onto an electronic format and that the Division of Continuing Education has offered support as well. SON has secured previous funding for a loan forgiveness program for students who intend to assume clinical faculty positions upon graduation and has reapplied for this grant as well as for funding for additional teaching and research assistantships.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Board staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted by the Amherst campus, the external reviewers, and the President’s Office of the University. Recommendation is for approval of the Doctor of Nursing Practice at University of Massachusetts Amherst. Upon graduating the first class for this program, the University shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application and in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, faculty resources, and program effectiveness.

TOTAL CREDITS: 79-81 depending on specialty

CORE COURSES:

All students will take 40 credits of core courses which include the following

- N603** Theoretical Components of Nursing Science (3)
- N690L** Leadership (3)
- N690H** Healthcare Quality (2)
- N690F** Care Environment Management (2)
- N630** Research Methodology for Nursing (3)
- N790G** Research Translation in Nursing (3)
- BIOST&EP640** Intermediate Biostatistics (3)
- BIOST&EP 630** Principles of Epidemiology (3)
- SCH-MGMT 855** Organizational and Administrative Theory (3)
- ComHlth524** Health Politics and Policy (3)
- N690M** Informatics (3)
- Capstone Experience:**
 - NXX** Residency (6)
 - NXX** Capstone research project (3)

SPECIALTY COURSES

Family Nurse Practitioner

- N690C** Advanced Health Assessment (3)
- N615** Advanced Pathophysiology (3)
- N690D** Advanced Pharmacology (3)
- N790D** Pharmacotherapeutics (3)
- N610** Primary Health Care of Children, Adolescents & Young Adults (3)
- N620** Primary Health Care of Middle Aged and Older Adults (3),
- N670** Family Systems and Intervention (3)
- N698** Practica and Role Seminar (11)
- N798** Practicum and Role Seminar (6)
- Cognate (3)

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

- N690C** Advanced Health Assessment (3)
- N615** Advanced Pathophysiology (3)
- N690D** Advanced Pharmacology (3)
- N790D** Pharmacotherapeutics (3)
- N660** Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing with Individuals (3)
- N790I** Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing with Individuals II (3)
- N670** Family Systems and Intervention (3)
- N665** Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing with Groups (3)
- N698** Practica & Role Seminar (7)
- N798** Practicum & Role Seminar (6)
- Cognate (3)

Public Health Nurse Leadership Specialist

- Nxx** Health Disparities (in development) (3)
- N640** Advanced Public Health Nursing I (3)
- Nxx** Advanced Public Health Nursing II (in development) (3)
- N798** Practica (6)
- N690N** Current Topics (3)
- ComHlth 620** Principles of Public Health Practice (3)
- Env-Hlth 565** Environmental Health (3)
- ComHlth 601** Application of Social & Behavioral Theories in Public Health Education and Intervention (3)
- ComHlth 525** Ethical Issues in Public Health (3)
- ComHlth 628** Financial Management of Health Institutions (3)
- ComHlth 780** Public Health Law (3)
- ComHlth 704** Health Program Planning and Evaluation (3)