

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Assessment and Accountability **NO.:** AAC 08-14

COMMITTEE DATE: April 17, 2008

BOARD DATE: April 25, 2008

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the expedited application of the **University of Massachusetts Lowell** to award the **Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)** with program implementation effective fall 2009.

Prior to admitting students the University shall provide to the Commissioner of Higher Education a report concerning its follow-through on the recommendations referenced in the attached staff report.

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

April 2008

University of Massachusetts Lowell

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

INTENT

The University of Massachusetts Lowell's Department of Nursing intends to offer the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP). The proposed DNP will replace the master's degree as the terminal degree credential for advanced practice in nursing. Specialization within the degree program will allow students to select from UMLowell specializations in the areas of gerontological nursing/Gerontological Nurse Practitioner preparation, family health nursing/Family Nurse Practitioner preparation, and adult psychiatric mental health nursing/Adult Psychiatric Mental Health CNS/NP preparation.

The purpose of the DNP program is to educate nurse practitioners who not only provide quality primary care to patients but who assume leadership roles in the health care system and have the knowledge and skills necessary to propose solutions to improve patient care and health care outcomes.

The Department of Nursing voted unanimously at the faculty meeting on October 24, 2006, to develop a proposal for a post-Master of Science (MS) Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP) program for nurse practitioners with the addition of a post-Baccalaureate DNP option before the year 2015. A DNP Task Force was formed in the Nursing Department to lead the development of the program. A preliminary application was submitted to the University's President's Office in May 2007, and authorization for development of a final proposal was received in June 2007. The proposal has received the approval of all campus governance bodies and has the support of the Provost and Chancellor. It was approved by the University's Board of Trustees on March 19, 2008.

MISSION

The proposed post-MS DNP program will assist the Nursing Department to continue meeting the missions of the University, School of Health and Environment, and Department by further educating nurse practitioners to assume leadership roles in the health care system. The University of Massachusetts Lowell has been educating MS-prepared nurse practitioners for 30 years. Understanding that the AACN member institutions voted to increase the level of preparation necessary for advanced practice nurses to the doctoral level by 2015, the UML Nursing Faculty wish to continue to educate nurse practitioners and to further prepare graduates with systems-level leadership knowledge that will enhance their ability to have a positive impact on the sustainability of the health care system.

Graduates of the UML Master's Program in Nursing have assumed leadership roles in health care and have provided primary care to diverse populations in the community. The DNP curriculum will enhance graduates' abilities to become more actively involved in policymaking, organizational leadership, and research in health care settings. Offering a post-MS DNP program will provide the best option by allowing us to continue educating MS- level nurse

practitioners for as long as possible before implementation of the new requirements for entry level of advanced practice, as well as offering the opportunity for MS-prepared nurse practitioners to pursue additional education as a DNP for those who desire this option.

NEED AND DEMAND

There has been great interest in the development of DNP programs by nurse practitioners, both nationally and locally. Thirty-four requests for information about a DNP program have been received by the Director of the Master's program alone. An alumni survey of the graduates of the MS program of the past ten years was completed in January-March 2007 as part of the Department's on-going evaluation of the MS program. One hundred seventy-five surveys were mailed to alumni with 60 surveys returned. Of those who returned the survey, 15 reported that they were interested in attending a DNP program, and 20 were uncertain at the time, which indicated that 58 percent of the returns were contemplating applying to a DNP program. Eighteen respondents were considering attending within five years, two within ten years and five were uncertain when they would apply.

Given the requirement that all advanced practice nurses be educated at the DNP level by the year 2015, a steady flow of applicants is anticipated. Additionally, the current employment of graduates from the MS advanced practice nurse practitioner program at UML is strong. Graduates find positions for which they are prepared, and numerous requests for graduates of the program are received through the Chair, Director, and faculty offices and distributed via email to alumni when received.

ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

Admission

Students admitted to the proposed DNP program will hold an MS degree in nursing with preparation as a nurse practitioner. Certification as a nurse practitioner will also be required. Specific application requirements include:

- Prior official transcripts from undergraduate and graduate programs
- Current Massachusetts RN and NP license
- National certification as a nurse practitioner
- Three letters of recommendation
- Interview with nursing faculty
- Cumulative GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale in a master's degree program in nursing
- Written narrative of professional goals
- TOEFL (if appropriate)

Enrollment

The Nursing Department will limit first- and second-year enrollments to the equivalent of five full-time DNP students. After year two, annual admissions will increase to the equivalent of ten full-time DNP students. It is anticipated that the proposed DNP program will attract a diverse student population that closely reflects the student population currently enrolled in UML's nursing programs and the nurse practitioners employed in the surrounding community.

CURRICULUM (Attachment A)

The curriculum was guided by *The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice*, developed by the DNP Essentials Task Force and approved by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and by competencies for the DNP that were developed by the National Panel for NP Practice Doctorate Competencies.

The curriculum in the Post-Masters DNP program will be two academic years, full-time in length, adding 41 credits of post-master's education or a total of 83 post-baccalaureate credits to receive the DNP. In addition to classroom experiences, students will complete 512 hours in clinical agencies as part of practicum experiences where they apply course content in practice settings.

RESOURCES AND BUDGET (Attachment B)

Administration

The resources of the Department of Nursing will be utilized, including a full-time administrative assistant and a half-time clinical coordinator, who will manage the contracts for the clinical agencies. The Director of the MS program will assume the coordinating responsibilities of the proposed DNP program.

Faculty

A strategic faculty hire, who will have responsibility for developing and teaching in the four new proposed DNP courses, has been approved. There are 20 full-time tenure-track faculty, two full-time clinical track faculty, and 12-15 adjunct faculty in the UML Department of Nursing. Sixteen full-time nursing faculty members have expressed an interest in working with students during their capstone project or immersion experiences in the proposed DNP program. Two nursing faculty will continue to teach already existing courses, and four faculty from the Department of Health and Sustainability and the Department of Work Environment will be teaching existing core courses.

Library and Facilities

The library system, including an electronic library, and existing classroom space will meet the needs of the proposed DNP program. Multiple clinical resources are available for the DNP program, as the Department of Nursing presently has contracts with 250 health care facilities.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

The Department of Nursing will seek accreditation of the DNP program by the CCNE. The CCNE is presently developing guidelines for accreditation, and the Department will follow the guidelines when available. The CCNE estimates that the guidelines will be available in 2008 and will begin accrediting programs soon thereafter. CCNE accreditation requires a self-study report as well as on-site visitation by representatives of the accrediting body. Interim reports need to be filed with the CCNE post-accreditation, with re-accreditation every ten years if full accreditation is granted. The Department of Nursing has established the following five-year goals for the proposed DNP program:

1. To successfully gain approval of the final proposal for the DNP program by the Board of Higher Education.

2. To recruit students for the DNP program from present students, alumni, faculty, past inquiries, and by recruitment efforts through Graduate Admissions publications, Department brochures, Nursing Advisory Board, and Web site.
3. To begin screening applicants and accepting students into the program for fall 2008
4. To accept the equivalent of five full-time students each year into the program for the first two years and increase to the equivalent of ten full-time students after year 2.
5. To establish partners in the community who are willing to serve as agency sites for role immersion experiences.
6. To provide for student and faculty evaluation of the program, followed by refining the curriculum as necessary to meet program objectives.
7. To conduct one-year and five-year post graduation surveys with alumni and employers to measure satisfaction with the program and success in employment post graduation.
8. To achieve accreditation of the post-MS DNP program from the CCNE.
9. To maintain a 90 percent retention rate in the post-MS DNP program with graduation within five years.
10. To conduct exit surveys to determine program satisfaction and suggestions for improvement prior to graduation.

Each of the objectives will be directly measurable. A tracking system to record data regarding degree progress, including full-time versus part-time status per semester, will be established. Annual reports, summarizing evaluation data, will be prepared by the Director of the Program, presented to faculty, and maintained for accreditation and re-accreditation review.

EXTERNAL REVIEW AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

Dr. Elizabeth Lenz, Dean, College of Nursing, Ohio State University; and Dr. Donna Hathaway, Dean, College of Nursing University of Tennessee Health Science Center, reviewed the proposal. The reviewers commented on the faculty: "The credentials of the faculty represent a diversity of clinical specialties and include faculty with many years of teaching, clinical, and research experience, as well as some junior faculty who are making remarkable progress launching their careers." They also noted that a critical mass of the faculty are actively engaged in practice and will serve as strong role models for students.

The reviewers also raised questions with respect to the workload of faculty, the strategic direction of the school and balancing the commitment to initiating a second doctoral nursing program. They noted that the University's AQUAD external reviewers raised similar concerns and that "it seems premature to launch a practice doctorate as a second doctoral program offering."

The University responded to the reviewer concerns. UML emphasized that a national search is currently underway for a Director of the Ph.D. Program (replacement), and there are three additional searches underway for an Associate/Full Professor for the DNP program (strategic hire), an Assistant Professor in Adult Psychiatric Mental Health nursing (replacement), and a full-time Clinical Track Assistant Professor in medical-surgical nursing (new position). Postponing the enrollment of students in the proposed new program until fall 2009, therefore, should enable UML to fully address the following specific team recommendations:

1. Allow faculty the time needed to further flesh-out the curriculum and design the operational components of the program;
2. Finalize allocation of resources among the most mission-essential programs; and
3. Build a foundation for external funding to support both practice and research enterprises.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff agrees with the overall consensus of the team that “many of the elements of a strong DNP program are in place.” Staff also agrees that postponing program implementation would further enhance the likelihood of a high-quality program. Recommendation is for approval of the request of University of Massachusetts Lowell to award the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) with program implementation effective fall 2009.

Prior to admitting students the University shall provide to the Commissioner of Higher Education a report concerning its follow-through on the visiting team recommendations referenced in the preceding section of this staff report.

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.

Graduate Program Curriculum Outline

Major Required (Core) Courses (Total courses required = 8)		
Course Number	Course Title	Credit Hours
32.625	Health Policy	3
33.717	Evaluation Research	3
33.754	Intermediate Statistics for Health and Behavioral Research	3
32.512	Operations Analysis and Quality Improvement	3
32.511	Health Care Finance	3
33.707	Epidemiology of Health Promotion	3
32.513	Health Care Management	3
32.632	Systems Analysis and Design	3
Subtotal # Core Credits Required		24
Concentration Course Choices (Total courses required = 4)		
33.750	DNP Role	2
33.751	DNP Leadership	3
33.752	DNP Capstone Project	3
33.753	DNP Role Immersion	6
Subtotal # Concentration Credits Required		14
Other/Elective Course Choices (Total courses required = 1)		
33.	Elective from Department of Nursing offerings with approval of academic advisor	3
Subtotal # Elective Credits Required		3
Curriculum Summary		
Total number of courses required for the degree		13
Total credit hours required for degree		41
<p>Prerequisite or Other Additional Requirements: MS degree in Nursing, licensure as a RN, and national certification as a family nurse practitioner, gerontological nurse practitioner, or psychiatric nurse practitioner. A course in statistics within five years. A graduate level nursing research course. Course equivalence of Advanced Pathophysiology, Advanced Pharmacology, Advanced Health Assessment, and Social, Cultural, and Policy Issues in Health Care. 500 hours of specialty clinical preparation in a MS-level nurse practitioner program.</p>		

Attachment B: Budget

One Time Costs		Annual Operating Costs		
		Description	Number	Cost
Strategic Hire PhD/DNP faculty for both PhD and proposed DNP (\$90K, fringe, advertising, \$125K); this faculty member will dually meet PhD Program needs as well, suggesting 50% impact of costs for DNP*	Faculty	Salary and fringe	1	\$120,000 annually (start-up costs, advertising, travel will have been incurred upon hire; 3% annual increase in salary anticipated); \$60K toward DNP program of \$120K
Administrative Asst. (1/2 time position, non-benefited)	Staff	Salary	1	\$12-\$15/hr x18-hours/week; HRSA DNP Grant Funding will be sought; \$11,232 to \$14,040
Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) Accreditation visit and evaluation	Instructional Materials (Includes library resources)	CCNE Accreditation (est. costs, based on 2006 CCNE visit, @ \$7,260)	1	\$7,260 (one time, with 5-year accreditation status given to fully accredited new programs)
Inkind	Space			
Inkind (with startup funds available for computer and other purchases to DNP Strategic Hire)	Equipment			
Adjunct Faculty (12 hr/wk @ \$14K) to assist Director of Clinical Resources with selection and oversight of DNP Immersion Experience placements	Field & Clinical Resources	Salary	1	\$14,000/semester = \$28,000/year (HRSA DNP Grant Funding will be sought for this position once DNP proposal approved)
	<i>Total Costs:</i>			\$106,492- \$109,300

Position*	Nursing – PhD and DNP
Rank	Associate/Full Professor
Justification	Strategic Hire approved for Fall 2007 prior to hiring freeze

Advertising	\$3,000 (already incurred FY 06-07, before 5/07 hiring freeze imposed)
Travel, Hotel, Meals	\$1,000
Maximal Salary	\$90,000
Maximal Fringe Benefits (32.62%)	\$29,358
Start-up Package	\$5,000
Start-up Equipment/Lab	\$0
Start-up TA	\$0
Total	\$125,358