

**Request for Authorization to Establish a
Doctor of Nursing Practice
(D.N.P., CIP 51.3818) at
University of North Carolina at Wilmington**

I. Program Highlights

- Designed to prepare advanced practice nurses who will impact patient safety and quality of care through evidence-based culturally competent care
- Launch as post-master's degree (42 credits) and transition in 3-4 years to also include post-baccalaureate option (71 credits)
- Aligns with American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) *Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice*
- Hybrid delivery model attractive to student population
- Optional certificates can be earned along the way in nursing education; cultural differences and global health; nurse executive leadership; and technology and informatics
- 40 students estimated at steady state, mostly part-time
- Resources required to launch the program include five faculty by Year 4 and an instructional designer, as well as funds for assistantships, supplies and software, preceptor stipends, equipment, library resources, and costs of the student residency experience. Costs will be met through combination of reallocation of institutional resources, enrollment growth funding, differential tuition, and fees. Differential tuition will be requested at \$1,340 per year per student, as well as a \$1,500 residency fee to support the on-site portion of the program.

II. BOG Academic Program Planning Criteria (UNC Policy 400.1)

1. **Existing Programs (Number, Location, Mode of Delivery).** In 2013, Doctor of Nursing Practice degree programs were approved at ECU, UNC-CH, UNCC, UNCG, WCU and WSSU. ECU offers the program online, and UNCG offers the program off-site at The Raleigh School of Anesthesia. Duke University and Gardner Webb University also offer the DNP.
2. **Relation to Campus Distinctiveness and Mission.** The proposed program aligns with the strategic plans of UNCW and its units of Academic Affairs, the College of Health and Human Services, and the School of Nursing. These plans, approved by the UNCW faculty in 2004 and 2009, specified the development of the DNP as a strategic goal. UNC Wilmington's current mission statement permits a limited number of doctoral programs and will need to be revised upon approval of this degree program.
3. **Demand (Local, regional, state).** In 2014, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing reported that DNP student enrollments increased nationally from 11,575 to 14,688 (27% increase) from 2012 to 2013. The number of DNP degree programs nationally grew from 20 to 243 between 2006 and 2013. The first DNP students entered UNC institutions in 2013; enrollments in DNP programs at UNC institutions between 2013 and 2014 grew 173%. In spring 2012, UNCW conducted a needs assessment through email to approximately 90 Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) alumni and current students, graduate clinical preceptors, and nurse practitioners in the southeastern region of North Carolina. Out of 73 total respondents, 81% indicated interest in the proposed program at UNCW. Of the 59% of respondents that already

held a master's degree, 98% were likely to attend if the program were offered online. In addition to this question, the interest survey asked potential applicants about full- and part-time attendance, program length, reason for attendance, employment plans while seeking the degree, and program cost. The feedback received was heavily considered by UNCW in the design of the program content and delivery.

4. **Potential for Unnecessary Duplication.** The American Association of Colleges of Nursing recommended in its 2004 report that national standards for entry into advanced practice nursing be shifted from the MSN to the DNP. The recommendation was supported by several other professional nursing specialty organizations, such as American Association of Nurse Practitioners, American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, and American Association of Community Health Nursing Educators. UNCW's proposal is in response to this recommendation and is consistent with the national shift in standard of practice.
5. **Employment Opportunities for Graduates.** The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that nurse practitioner jobs will increase 22% or more between 2012 and 2022. About 100,000 or more job openings are projected in the same period. The median annual wage of nurse practitioners in 2012 was \$89,960. NC Works reported the annual median wage for nurse anesthetists, nurse midwives, and nurse practitioners in North Carolina as \$96,460 in May 2012. As of February 17, 2015, there were 800 job openings for nurse practitioners in North Carolina, 127 of those in the UNCW service region (defined as 19 counties within a 100 mile radius). In addition to opportunities in nursing practice, DNP graduates will also be competitive for academic positions.
6. **Faculty Quality and Number.** Ten doctorally-prepared faculty will serve as the core faculty in the program's initial implementation. Nine of those faculty are active researchers with defined programs of research supported by a sustained publication record. Two hold Distinguished Professorships in the School of Nursing. Five are certified nurse practitioners, and two hold the DNP degree. One has unique strengths in clinical expertise and serves as the Clinical Coordinator for the master's program. In addition to these, there are 17 other faculty in the School of Nursing who are doctorally-prepared, three of whom hold the DNP and five of whom are certified nurse practitioners. Many of these faculty are actively engaged in research and have the ability to serve as chairs for the DNP clinical scholarly projects. All of these faculty will be able to serve as committee members for the DNP clinical scholarly projects.
7. **Availability of Campus Resources (library, space, etc.).** Facilities and information technology support are adequate to launch the program, with exception of the need for an instructional designer. Resources will be applied to add new library reference titles, journal titles, and databases required to support doctoral study.
8. **Relevant Lower-level and Cognate Programs.** As appropriate, faculty from other departments at UNCW may be involved in Clinical Scholarly Project committees. The elective certificate options rely on faculty from the Watson College of Education, College of Arts and Sciences, and Cameron School of Business.
9. **Impact on Access and Affordability.** The proposed program and hybrid delivery model would be especially attractive for practicing nurses in the southeast region of the state.

- 10. Expected Quality.** The growth of UNCW's MSN and BSN programs in the last four years are indicators of both demand and program quality.
- 11. Feasibility of Collaborative Program.** The UNCW School of Nursing and East Carolina University College of Nursing have had multiple discussions regarding opportunities for collaboration on the DNP program. A letter of mutual understanding was included in the proposal that outlined possible collaborations, such as sharing of clinical practicum sites and preceptors, faculty service on scholarly project committees, and sharing of course delivery with distance technology.
- 12. Other Considerations.** None.

III. Summary of Review Processes

Campus Review Process and Feedback. Before submitting to UNC General Administration, the planning and establishment documents were reviewed and approved by faculty and committees in the UNCW School of Nursing and College of Health and Human Services. Planning and establishment documents were unanimously approved by the UNCW Graduate Council and then forwarded to the Chancellor, Provost, Graduate Dean and College of Health and Human Services Dean for approval.

UNC General Administration Review Process and Feedback. UNCW responded to questions from UNC General Administration staff on the hybrid delivery model, collaborative opportunities, enrollment projections, curriculum, faculty qualifications, budget and differential tuition. The UNC Graduate Council voted unanimously in support of UNCW's request to plan. The Council recommended that UNCW address in greater detail the requirements for post-BSN admissions and that they reexamine their plans for committee membership on the clinical scholarly projects.

Four external reviewers also provided feedback on the proposed degree program. All external reviewers were supportive and agreed on the excellent quality of the faculty already in place to launch the program. Several also commented on the attractiveness of a hybrid delivery model, the creative approach to building the clinical project over several semesters, and the certificate opportunities. External reviewers consistently offered a caution that creative strategies and competitive salaries will be needed to attract new faculty required as the program grows. They also noted the faculty development that will be needed to ensure proper advising and guidance for DNP students, especially in their projects. One reviewer encouraged UNCW to study the August 2015 AACN report on the implementation of the DNP, which offers recommendations specific to the DNP Project and based on the experiences of existing DNP programs launched in recent years. Some external reviewers sought additional insight as to the admission criteria for BSN entry, including how practicum hours will be met. While they agreed the DNP Essentials appear to be met, the external reviewers encouraged proactively creating a crosswalk of the DNP Essentials to program requirements, which will assist applicants and students and will be required for accreditation purposes.

UNCW appreciated the several recommendations regarding clinical projects and crosswalks. They reiterated their success in the clinical training of MSN graduates and support from providers of integrative practice experiences. UNCW also outlined plans to provide appropriate

APPENDIX W

professional development for faculty teaching in the DNP program and noted historical successes in faculty recruitment.

Benefits of program approval include a flexible delivery format that will attract a regional applicant pool and meet national standards of practice for nurse practitioners. For these reasons, we do not recommend any alternatives to implementing the degree program.

IV. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve University of North Carolina at Wilmington's request to establish a Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.) degree program (CIP 51.3818) to enroll students starting Fall 2016.