

APPENDIX R

Request to Establish a Doctoral Program in Health Services Research at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Introduction

Following a recommendation from the Graduate Council and from the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs approved on May 14, 2004 the request from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte to plan a doctoral program in Health Services Research. The University of North Carolina at Charlotte now seeks approval to establish a doctoral program in Health Services Research (CIP: 51.2201) effective August 2005.

Program Description

The institution has provided the following description of the program:

UNC Charlotte proposes to establish an interdisciplinary Health Services Research Ph.D. program in the College of Health and Human Services. The focus of the 64-credit-hour post-master's Ph.D. program is the development and dissemination of new knowledge that improves both the practice and delivery of health and human services in individuals and populations. This goal is accomplished through outcomes research that examines access to care, and effectiveness, quality and organization of healthcare delivery systems. The proposed program will prepare graduates to work in academic settings, private research companies and governmental agencies.

This program contributes to Health Care and Health Policy, one of the seven broad areas of focus of the University. The program is also directly linked to the *UNC Charlotte Academic Plan 2002-2007* and the *Report of the Health Commission: A Strategic Plan for 2000-2010*. Recommendations of the Health Commission specifically related to this proposed program included: establishment of the College of Health and Human Services with five departments (two of which are housed in the newly created School of Nursing); and the planning and establishment of a variety of new baccalaureate, masters and doctoral programs. Four of the five departments in the College are involved with this program.

Health Services Research is a field of scientific investigation that studies how financing systems, health technologies, organizational structures and processes, personal behaviors, and social factors affect access to health care, quality and cost of health care, and, ultimately, societal health and well-being. Its research domains are individuals, families, organizations, institutions, communities, and populations. Health Services Research is an interdisciplinary field that draws on a wide range of disciplines that includes biostatistics, epidemiology, sociology, social work, health economics, medicine, nursing, engineering, and management. Its national importance is recognized by providers, administrators, employers, insurers, and state and national policymakers who are seeking solutions to

concerns about the cost of care, the quality of care, and the health status of all Americans (Mirvis, 2000; National Research Council, 1994; Stryer, Tunis, Hubbard, & Clancy, 2000).

The objectives of the proposed Ph.D. program include:

- 1) To prepare graduates with the analytic and critical thinking skills to conduct applied research in multidisciplinary settings on the healthcare costs, health status, health outcomes, and healthcare service utilization in individuals and populations.
- 2) To prepare graduates to design, conduct and analyze interdisciplinary healthcare planning and health outcomes studies using advanced quantitative and qualitative measurement and analytic techniques.
- 3) To prepare independent scientists and scholars with communication and methodological skills to advance and disseminate knowledge of outcomes for improving both the practice and delivery of health and human services.
- 4) To prepare graduates to engage in culturally competent and ethically sound health service research within the global health care arena.

Program Review

The review process is designed to surface strengths and weaknesses in proposed new degree programs. Proposals to establish new doctoral programs are reviewed internally and externally. The concerns from the two review processes were summarized in a letter to the Chancellor prior to the presentation to the Graduate Council. That summary follows:

The reviewers confirm that a good pool of student applicants is available and that there are good job prospects for graduates of the proposed program. One reviewer did express some concern that the academic market may not be as open for graduates of such programs, and if it is not, students should be carefully advised in that regard. On the other hand, there may be some special opportunities in the nursing field. The proposed curriculum for the doctoral program is judged acceptable and in accord with what is expected in the field. A few concerns are raised regarding the curriculum. What is the role of the internship and how is it to be structured? Further explanation is needed for the choice of the Special Emphasis Areas. For example, could a student develop a special emphasis area not on the proposed list, and do nine hours in a specialty area provide enough depth? The competencies graduates are expected to have are not fully identified nor are the role and timing of the doctoral exams. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the program, mentoring and career counseling should be extensive in the view of one reviewer. One reviewer comments that quantitative skills will be a key to the

success of the graduates of the program, and wants a more extensive account of how those skills will be developed in the curriculum.

The reviewers judge that UNCC has an adequate faculty on which to build the program, but that the six new faculty members are essential for launching and developing the program. As one comments, the quality of those hires will likely determine the quality of the program for several years to come. While the research and grant getting success of the current faculty is recognized, the reviewers advise that both the level of publications and the level of funded research will need to be significantly expanded for the doctoral program.

With any new program, reviewers express concern about financial support to compete for good graduate students and these reviewers are no exception.

Graduate Council

The Graduate Council had, as a basis for its consideration, the proposal to plan the program, copies of the outside reviews of the program, the summary letter to the Chancellor, and a presentation to the Council by representatives of the program. The Council discussed some of the issues raised by the reviewers.

Response

Representatives of the program described some of their partners who would provide internship opportunities such as the Carolinas HealthCare System, Presbyterian HealthCare, and NC Area Health Education Centers, as well as centers within the university. The representative also describe the extensive quantitative training the students will receive. In addition to the identified quantitative courses, quantitative methods will be part of other courses. The program due to its interdisciplinary nature will provide flexibility in the developing of student's programs and students will be expected to develop a depth beyond the minimum in a specialty area. Newly hired faculty are bringing a research profile that will assist the program in expanding its external funding support. Six new faculty members will be added and two endowed chairs are available to hire faculty with a health services orientation. Doctoral students will have priority for funding support for funds available, new funds are pledged from the graduate school, and the expansion of extramural support will benefit graduate students as well.

Recommendation by the Graduate Council

After consideration of the issues raised by reviewers and Council members, the Graduate Council voted, without dissent, to recommend approval for UNCC to establish a doctoral program in Health Services Research

Need for the Program

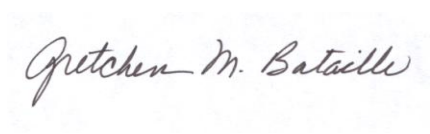
The focus of the program is to do research to improve the practice of health care and health care delivery. Given the nation's annual expenditure on health care, it is imperative that resources be spent on what works. This program trains its graduates to do large scale data studies to determine what works and what does not.

Resources

The resources to support this program will come from internal reallocation, enrollment growth, and growth in extramural funding.

Recommendation

The Office of the President recommends that the Board of Governors approve the request from UNCC to establish a doctoral program in Health Services Research.

Approved to be Recommended for Planning to the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and ProgramsA handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gretchen M. Bataille". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Senior Vice President Gretchen M. Bataille

May 2, 2005