Florida Gulf Coast University Board of Trustees  
April 15, 2014

SUBJECT:  New Degree Program: Doctor of Nursing Practice

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

Approve the Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P) new degree program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

FGCU is requesting permission to offer a D.N.P. as described in the Executive Summary.

Supporting Documentation Included:  Executive Summary for Doctor of Nursing Practice

Prepared by:  Associate Vice President for Academic and Curriculum Support
Cathy Duff

Legal Review by:  General Counsel Vee Leonard (April 1, 2014)

Submitted by:  Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Ron Toll
Executive Summary

Doctor of Nursing Practice Proposal

Florida Gulf Coast University

March 24, 2014

Degree: Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.)
Majors/Concentrations:
- MSN (post-master’s) to DNP
- BSN (post-baccalaureate) to DNP with a concentration in Family Nurse Practitioner or Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner

College: Health Professions and Social Work, School of Nursing
Effective Date: Fall 2015
Proposed Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code: 51.3818

Description

The proposed program will prepare graduates with the advanced nursing knowledge and leadership skills to improve health care outcomes. Graduates will provide expert evidence-based nursing care across diverse health care settings and systems. The program will include both full-time and part-time plans of study to meet the needs of working nurses in the FGCU service area. The program will be offered using a mix of online, on-campus, and clinical practice formats. Approval of this proposal will result in the eventual inactivation of the current Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner major of the FGCU Master of Science in Nursing program.

The program will have two entry points, referred to in this proposal as majors. The MSN to DNP major is for students who have a master’s degree in nursing from a program accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) or the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). The MSN to DNP major builds upon the candidate’s specialty practice area through a core that focuses on utilization of research in the practice setting, quality of care delivery, examination of health care outcomes, leadership in practice, and fundamentals of nurse education. The curriculum includes 39 semester credit hours of required courses in the major.

The BSN to DNP major is for students who have a bachelor’s degree in nursing from a program accredited by CCNE or ACEN. The curriculum includes (a) 72 semester credit hours of required courses in the major that focus on utilization of research in the practice setting, quality of care delivery, examination of health care outcomes, leadership in practice, fundamentals of nurse education, practice hours, and capstone project; and (b) 12 hours of coursework in the Family-Nurse Practitioner Concentration or the Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Concentration.

The program proposal and curriculum were reviewed by an external consultant—Patricia Howard, Ph.D., Professor and Interim Dean of the College of Nursing, University of Kentucky. The curriculum was approved by the College Health Professions and Social Work Curricular Affairs Team on October 21, 2013, and the university-wide Graduate Curriculum Team on
February 11, 2014. The program is consistent with Florida Board of Governors Regulation 8.011 Authorization of New Academic Degree Programs and Other Curricular Offerings.

The School of Nursing will seek CCNE accreditation for the program following the first year of enrollment of the first class. A substantive change report will be submitted to CCNE no later than 90 days after program implementation. A substantive change prospectus will be submitted to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges informing the Commission of FGCU’s plans to add a third doctoral program. This action will not result in a level change.

Need and Demand

Forecasts for employment of graduates from doctoral nursing programs are strong. Employment opportunities include medical practices, hospitals, community health agencies, primary care clinics, and schools of nursing. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics 2011-2012 outlook forecast, advanced practice specialties will be in high demand, particularly in medically underserved areas such as inner cities and rural areas. In a 2012 survey of baccalaureate degree-granting nursing schools by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), two-thirds of respondents reported faculty shortages as a reason for not accepting all qualified applicants into programs.

The proposed program is designed to meet the national recommendations and guidelines for preparation of advanced practice nurses. The Institute of Medicine 2010 report recommended an increase in the number of advanced practice nurses to meet the demand for safe, high quality, and effective services. Nationally, the doctorate in nursing practice is mandated by the AACN for all advanced nurse practitioners entering certification programs by 2015.

There is a great need for advanced practice nurses, and graduates are able to choose from multiple employment opportunities. Positions for advanced practice nurses are projected to increase. At any point in time, considering FGCU’s five-county service area, there are a variety of advanced practice settings including hospitals serving in-patients and out-patients, primary care practices, long term care facilities, private clinics, home health, schools and health departments. Local students who completed FGCU’s current master’s nurse practitioner program have tended to remain in the area following graduation and have begun to meet local workforce needs. However, there continues to be significant unmet need for advanced practice nurses in the communities surrounding FGCU.

The School of Nursing is surrounded by counties designated by the Florida Department of Health as having special populations including large numbers of minority or economically challenged individuals and families. These counties also have acute shortages of primary care providers. The School of Nursing will play a pivotal role in educating and preparing advanced practice nurses to be comprehensive care providers with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide fully accountable health care for patients across clinical sites and over time. The proposed program will position the School of Nursing to continue its commitment to this area in providing competent, knowledgeable, and capable health care providers.

Currently, prospective graduate students are looking for programs that will allow completion of the doctorate after graduation from a master’s program. At present, there are no programs offering the doctorate on-site in the five-county area served by FGCU. Seven universities in the State University System (SUS) of Florida (Florida Atlantic University, Florida International University, Florida State University, University of Central Florida, University of Florida, University
of North Florida, and the University of South Florida) and four private universities (Barry University, Jacksonville University, Nova Southeastern University and University of Miami) in Florida have opened doctorate in nursing practice programs.

The SUS Council of Academic Vice Presidents’ Academic Coordinating Workgroup reviewed the doctorate in nursing practice pre-proposal on December 6, 2012. No concerns were noted. Because of the strong demand for graduates, the addition of this program to the SUS Academic Program Inventory for FGCU will not result in unwarranted duplication.

There has been an increase in inquires about FGCU offering a nursing doctorate as current students, recent graduates, and practicing advanced practice nurses have become increasingly aware of the benefits and opportunities afforded by the program. This trend was confirmed in communications with Dr. Patricia Howard, who served as the associate dean of one of the early doctoral in nursing practice programs. Interestingly, five advanced practice graduates of the FGCU master’s nursing program are currently enrolled in doctoral nursing programs.

Projected Enrollment

A conservative head count of 16 is anticipated in Year 1 (8 in the BSN to DNP major, and 8 in the MSN to DNP major). By Year 5, headcount is projected to have grown to 94. These projections are based on current enrollment patterns in FGCU’s master’s nursing program and enrollment patterns at comparable doctoral programs nationally (AACN, 2010; personal communication, Dr. Patricia Howard, January 29, 2011).

Resources and Budget

Year 1 of the DNP will require approximately $326,643, which includes the following: (a) $269,000 in salaries and benefits from existing Education & General (E&G) funds for the equivalent of 2.5 nursing faculty whose effort will be redirected from the master’s program to the doctoral program; (b) $46,500 in new E&G funds for support staff; and (c) $11,143 in new E&G funds for additional library resources.

By Year 5, projected costs will be approximately $1,002,414, which includes the following: (a) $941,750 in E&G funds for the equivalent of 7 faculty members, 2.5 from Year 1 plus an additional 4.5 to be hired in Years 2 through 5; (b) $46,500 in E&G funds for support staff hired in Year 1; and $14,164 in E&G funds for library resources.

Classrooms, laboratories, administrative space, and equipment are adequate to implement and sustain the program through Year 5.

The School of Nursing currently receives graduate student tuition waivers. There are also funds for one graduate teaching assistantship ($3,000/year). Many graduate nursing students obtain tuition reimbursement from their employers.

Consistency with University Mission and Strategic Plan

The development and implementation of the proposed doctor in nursing practice is consistent with the University’s mission to increase the number of degrees awarded and create programs of quality and excellence. The College of Health Professions and Social Work has one professional practice doctoral degree program in physical therapy. The strength of FGCU’s advanced practice graduates, as evidenced by their high certification first-time passing rates,
will be further enhanced with the implementation of the proposed doctoral program.

Additionally, the proposed program provides a foundation for on-going improvements in the bachelor’s nursing program by offering opportunities for undergraduate students to become involved in evidence-based research and continue their education. The integration of doctoral level, practice-oriented research into clinical practice will allow for the implementation of research-based improvements in the quality of health care delivery in Southwest Florida.

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