



# INDIANA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF NURSING  
IUPUI

May 18, 2009

Dr. Sherry Queener  
Associate Dean IUPUI Graduate Office  
IUPUI Campus Union 230  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202

Dear Dr. Queener and Members of the IUPUI Graduate Affairs Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to internal and external reviewer comments and suggestions with regard to the Indiana University School of Nursing proposal for a new program and curriculum for a clinical doctorate – the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree. It appears as if both the internal and external reviewers are in favor of recommending approval of the degree and the curriculum as outlined in the proposal submitted in March 2009. Each of the reviewers did raise some issues for consideration. Detailed below are a response and/or explanation regarding each issue raised.

## Internal Reviewer #1

**Issue:** This reviewer raised the issue of financial support “Regarding financial support, there is really no clearly presented plan to describe the financial support that will be available. The short description (section B.2.e.) is not really adequate to judge the likely level of scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship support that will be available for DNP students. What would stipend levels be? What sort of criteria would be used to evaluate which students are awarded financial support from the School? What proportion of available financial support will go to DNP vs. PhD students? These issues could have been addressed in better detail.”

**Response:** A recent survey of School of Nursing Graduate Students indicated that 60% of the students had no debt associated with their graduate education. In large part this is due to the fact that many graduates work full time and are offered tuition assistance by their employers. While economic times may see a reduction in this benefit, many students are still able to pursue school on a part time basis with this tuition support. In addition, the schools of nursing and federal officials are devising nursing loan and grant programs, for individuals and institutions. The school annually applies for federal funds to support students through the Nurse Faculty Loan Program, and Health and Human Resource Professional Nurse Traineeships. Additionally plans are underway to write a HRSA Grant to support students in the program. Such grants often provide tuition and stipends for students who choose to study full time. Students will also be eligible to apply for School of Nursing Scholarships. Last year the IUSON awarded \$750,000 in scholarships.

**Issue:** “There is some concern that with just the 24 full time faculty listed in the proposal, that the addition of 20 new DNP degree students per year will represent a fairly significant increase in workload for the nursing faculty and it could be quite a challenge. Only 2.5 new FTE are proposed to address the administrative needs of the program. While this might be realistic, it is not clear if, in the longer term, a significant increase in the number of IUSON faculty is planned to meet the challenge of the DNP program.”

**Response:** In anticipation of this degree proposal, the faculty of the school of nursing undertook an analysis and evaluation of its graduate majors during the 2006-2007 academic years. As a result of that analysis, the School of nursing has suspended admission to 6 programs reducing the number of tracks in the masters program from 14 to 8. This academic re-prioritization has resulted in the re-assignment of faculty to this new program. A total of 4 FTE faculty have been identified as necessary for the program. The School has hired 2 faculty and plans to hire an additional 2 faculty once the program is formally approved. We will monitor the program implementation and note the administrative needs as time goes on.

**Issue:** “it was a bit surprising that the proposal/course syllabi did not discuss how health issues of mental health care training will be handled in the program. Topics related to mental health care, mental health systems, and community programs (e.g. Program for Assertive Community Treatment, etc.) should be included in training. Another area in which the nursing profession is needed to make important contribution, but is not discussed in any detail in the proposal, is specifics related to patients and their caregivers. With the trend in increasingly shorter hospital stays following surgery, the problems of at home care giving by family members of the patient as well as by health care professionals is one that should be covered during the training for the DNP degree.”

**Response:** The faculty appreciates the sensitivity of the reviewer on this point in terms of mental health needs. We believe these needs are being addressed by our master’s degree program in advanced practice psychiatric mental health nursing. This program has seen growth in applicants and numbers of admissions in recent years, largely due to support from a HRSA Program Training Grant and efforts to convert the program to distance accessible. Students who do wish to concentrate in this area may in fact choose to complete their DNP Practicum hours in mental health care contexts.

## **Internal Reviewer #2**

**Issue:** “Clarify the process for determining whether new students must take prerequisite coursework in informatics and statistics. On p. 5 of the proposal it is stated that students must take R505 or L650 or an equivalent graduate level course within the past 3 years. However, on p. 6 of the proposal it is stated that new students would do a self-assessment to

determine if they needed to take statistics or informatics. Create a list of possible elective courses”

**Response:** Informatics is a major part of the DNP curriculum. In an effort to support student success the faculty want to be sure that students have the requisite knowledge needed to succeed. I631 Clinical Informatics, a required course in the DNP curriculum, has a pre-requisite of I630, Introduction to Nursing Informatics. Nationally informatics is being required as one of the essentials in baccalaureate curricula. Some students may already have this knowledge, and in the near future all students will come to the program with this essential knowledge. For the time being, the faculty believe that demonstrated success with graduate level statistics and informatics is a pre-requisite. The faculty will advise and assess students through a portfolio process to see what knowledge, skills, and abilities they bring and then prescribe pre-requisite course work for them based on this evaluation process. Thus, there are choices in the pre-requisite course offerings. In terms of electives, students may be interested in a number of schools of nursing offerings such as pathophysiology, pharmacology, physical assessment, or health economics for nursing. In addition, courses in non profit management, health policy and epidemiology would be suitable electives. Potential electives could also be taken in the SPEA and the Department of Public Health and or School of Informatics.

### **External Reviewer #3**

**Issue:** “The same course number, D751, (see page 3, 7 and 9) is assigned to two courses, namely, Knowledge Complexity (3 credits) and Relationship-Centered Leadership in Complex Systems (3 credits). Additionally, on page 3 and 7 the course is titled Knowledge Complexity. In the program of study example on page 9 it is titled Knowledge and Complex Systems”

**Response:** Yes - this is true. D751 is a Topical course number and there are several D751 courses, but each has a different title. The correct title of the D751 is Knowledge Complexity. It will be corrected on the sample program of study.

**Issue:** “The purpose and objectives of the clinical hours and project/product components of the DNP Practicum (D749) are vague and unclear. In terms of clinical hours, the document implies that students will only be required to complete enough hours to meet the AACN 1000 post baccalaureate practice hour requirement for the DNP degree. If this is the case, it implies that the practicum objective is only to complete the hour requirement. The purpose and objectives of the DNP clinical hour requirement needs to be defined. The necessity, purpose and objectives of the DNP project/product need to be defined and described.”

**Response:** As noted, the clinical hour expectation of the AACN is 1000 hours post baccalaureate degree. Since this is a post MSN program it is very likely that graduate students will have had a number of supervised practicum hours that will “count” toward the 1000 criteria established by the AACN. Many of the master’s students will also have obtained national certification in a specialty. Such certification requires documentation of clinical practice/ experience hours. Students will be advised on an individual basis in light of practice hours accomplished or certification achieved. The Practicum Course D749 is designed as a variable hour credit course for this purpose. Finally, the practicum purpose and objectives will be defined by student interest as well as organizational support. Students must have a letter of support and endorsement from their clinical agency to apply to the program. The practicum is designed with a health system patient population in mind.

**Issue:** “Admission requirements include 1 year of post-Master’s work experience. What is the rationale to support such a requirement? This may deter potential applicants to seek admission to other programs.”

**Response:** The faculty feel strongly that since this is an advanced practice degree, applicants to the program need some clinical practice experience upon which to build and develop. It is true people may seek and apply to other programs.

#### **External Reviewer #4**

**Issue:** “*Reviewer Recommendation:* Although the proposal gave no indication of problems in differentiating between practice and research programs, the Dean and faculty are encouraged to continuously evaluate faculty perceptions about the differences and similarities in programs. In addition, administrators and faculty are encouraged to explore and seek sources of revenue to help off-set the fiscal costs that students will encounter. Finally, evaluate to assure that allocation of .50 staff assistant for the program administrator is sufficient”

**Response:** The faculty is currently engaged in a number of activities to clarify and differentiate the practice and research programs. In the spring of 2009 the PhD program was reviewed by an external program review committee. The faculty discussed the findings and recommendations of this review at a two day retreat held May 11 and 12, 2009. Several topics for action and issues that will be discussed by the PhD Advisory Committee to the IUSON Graduate Curriculum Committee will become the agenda items for the 2009-2010 academic years. We are also currently evaluating the percentage effort of administrative support and will, as the reviewer advises, consistently monitor the effort and support for the program administrator.

**Issue:** “*Reviewer recommendation.* It is important to evaluate the DNP program outcome early and in an ongoing fashion to off-set potential problems that may occur in actual implementation of courses particularly those related to methods for measuring and evaluating quality and practice innovations. It will also be important to screen preceptors to assure that their expertise is utilized at the level of the learner and also assure that they are aware of the focus of the practice doctorate purpose in general as well as the specific program objectives and outcomes.”

**Response:** The Associate Dean for Evaluation in the School of Nursing is responsible for programmatic evaluations. The school has used with great success instruments developed by the Educational Benchmarking Institute [http://www.webebi.com/\\_AsmtServices/Nursing/default.aspx](http://www.webebi.com/_AsmtServices/Nursing/default.aspx) there is in fact, an instrument designed to evaluate achievement of program outcomes for the Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree. This instrument uses the essentials of doctoral education espoused by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. [www.aacn.nche.edu/DNP/pdf/Essentials.pdf](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/DNP/pdf/Essentials.pdf). The Faculty is also keenly aware of the recommendation regarding preceptors for these advanced practice candidates. Currently there is a process in place to select and monitor preceptors. The School of Nursing also has an online preceptor orientation program. This will need modification as we develop the DNP program. The reality is that DNP graduates are just now making their way into health care systems. Currently there are limited numbers of these graduates, so initially; precepting will have to be accomplished with advanced practice nurses in practice who will be supported by faculty coaches. Each student will also have a three member committee consisting of their preceptor and two faculty members so that students will have built in support as needed.

### **External Reviewer #5**

**Issue:** Reviewer # 5 raised several issues related to the curriculum and its content. Specifically this reviewer suggested attention to the following essential competencies:

- Demonstrate sensitivity to diverse organizational cultures and populations, including patients and providers.
- Develop and/or evaluate effective strategies for managing the ethical dilemmas inherent in patient care, the health care organization, and research.
- Function as a practice specialist / consultant in collaborative knowledge-generating research.
- Provide leadership in the evaluation and resolution of ethical and legal issues Within healthcare systems relating to the use of information, information technology, communication networks, and patient care technology.
- Evaluate consumer health information sources for accuracy, timeliness, and appropriateness.



- Evaluate care delivery models and/or strategies using concepts related to community, environmental and occupational health, and cultural and socioeconomic dimensions of health.

**Response:** Since this is a post masters degree option the faculty believe that the competencies identified above are currently addressed in our master's degree core course offerings that include: N 504 Leadership for Advanced Practice in Nursing, N 502 Nursing Theories and R500 Nursing Research. These courses deal with the legal, ethical, organizational and economic issues related to health care. Some attention is given to the issue of culture and health disparities. All of the master's degree specialty tracks reinforce current standards of care in the context of the identified specialty. Students do evaluate care delivery models in N 504. The issues of consumer health information and the use of technology are covered in the informatics pre-requisites courses and in the clinical informatics course in the DNP curriculum. Students will also have to abide by the policies and procedures in effect at their clinical sites. We will pass the very helpful course by course recommendations made by this reviewer on the faculty of record for each of the courses mentioned: D735, Clinical Epidemiology and Statistics; D736, Inquiry I; D744, Strategic Resource Management in Nursing and Health Systems.

I hope the responses in this document satisfactorily answers all issues raised by the reviewers and that the committee will approve and forward the proposal for this new degree offering of the Indiana University School of Nursing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel J. Pesut", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniel J. Pesut, PhD, RN, PMHCNS-BC, FAAN  
Professor and Associate Dean for Graduate Programs