EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT

INDIANA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF NURSING IN INDIANAPOLIS
PROPOSAL for DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE (DNP) PROGRAM

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Disclaimer: The review was an independent, voluntary professional service activity that reflects the
                    opinions of the author only; there are no conflicts of interest to report.

This External Review Report is in response to a request from the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, Indiana University for a review of a proposal to implement a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree program at the School of Nursing in Indianapolis. A summary of the critique of the DNP Proposal components and reviewer recommendations are included. The Proposal components section of the report includes all categories described for the planned DNP program including the context, description, need, assessment and advising, and resources.

OVERVIEW

The Indiana University School of Nursing DNP Program Proposal

I.   Abstract

Section I of the Proposal provides the reader with a succinct overview of the proposed DNP program objectives, target population, curriculum including number of credits, list of courses by number and title, and employment potential for graduates of the program. An important statement is included about the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) recommendation for the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree as the preferred credential for advanced practice nursing by 2015.

Reviewer Recommendation. None.

II.   Program Description

Section II of the proposal gives an in-depth description of the proposed program. It includes foundational information differentiating the practice doctorate from the research doctorate. Statements about the target population (post-MSN), type of program (professional), projected student outcomes (role preparation focus), delivery model (distance accessibility), and program objectives (n=7). The description gives the reader essential information about the program and, more important, provides a framework for program evaluation. In particular, the program objectives are in keeping with the national movement in that they reflect a focus on leadership, evidence-based practice, evaluation of health services, change, and translation of knowledge for application in advanced practice.

Potential students: Admission requirements and financial support. According to the proposal, the Graduate Curriculum Committee of the School of Nursing approved the program and designed admission and progression policies based on those of the unit and parent institution. Given approval by external councils, the President and Board of Trustees, students will be recruited for admission to the program fall 2010. Admission criteria include requirements to approximate positive program and student outcomes. For example, admission criteria include practice experience and RN licensure as well as quantitative measures of previous graduate study success. In addition, faculty evaluation of the applicant's practice competency will be determined through applicant self-assessment, resume or curriculum vitae and portfolio. Admission will be limited to 20 students; this number is congruent with class size for the proposed curriculum delivery model that incorporates technology.

Proposed curriculum. The curriculum includes existing courses and those developed specifically for the practice doctorate program. Informatics and statistics are pre-requisite. There is a sound plan for evaluating, monitoring and offering students options in their self-evaluation of competency in the two aforementioned pre-requisite areas of knowledge. Descriptions of the required courses (n=10) in the proposed DNP program include basic information that indicates a focus on practice complexity that is congruent with stated program objectives. For example, key concepts of courses include but are not limited to leadership, translation science, and health care outcomes as well as advanced study in epidemiology and statistics that supports implementation of key concepts in the DNP practicum. The importance of addressing the AACN accreditation requirement for a minimum 1000 practicum hours has been incorporated. Sample full-time and part-time plans of study are reasonable for a 37credit program.

Faculty and administrators. The description of the faculty and administrators is impressive. Of the total 24 full-time faculty listed, 10 hold the DNS/Sc degree suggesting preparation with a focus on practice as well as research; an additional 11 faculty members have the PhD based on research doctorate preparation; and 2 faculty members have advanced preparation in education or public health. This mix of faculty preparation is sound for the design, implementation and evaluation of a DNP program. It is equally important to note areas of clinical expertise which includes focus on different populations across the life span, public health, gender, community health and administration. These areas are important for translating knowledge about expected leadership and clinical knowledge to students of the program. In addition, other faculty has expertise in knowledge that is necessary to support the students' role and population focus. These expertise areas includes evidence based practice, clinical reasoning, health policy, and methodology. Although the 29 page proposal that was the subject of this evaluation did not

include a list of faculty scholarly productivity, web information illustrates that all or most have a record of scholarly productivity, In addition, many are recognized and respected nationally and internationally for their leadership and contributions in the nursing discipline and in the academy. There is a specific plan for allocation of faculty, including new hires, and support staff for the program. Allocation of .50 administrative support staff is minimal given implementation and evaluation aspects of a new program.

Learning resources. Resources available to faculty and students includes both unit and parent institution technology infrastructure and staff available to assist in services related to computer courses, consultation of evaluation outcomes and Web audiovisuals and courses. In addition there is the capacity for videoconferencing with technical support centrally and locally. There are multiple libraries within the IUPUI system and holdings are comparable to or exceed those necessary for a scholarly program and student endeavors. Given the context of the program, clinical practice is crucial. The proposal description indicates there are over 300 sites and over 200 preceptors available for program implementation and there are policies and procedures for assuring legal contractual agreements with the sites. Core institutions include acute, urgent, ambulatory, outpatient and primary care settings as well as community, public health, public and private healthcare agencies.

Other program strengths. The description of the faculty qualifications, quality of existing programs, and overall reputation nationally and internationally is accurate.

Institutional factors. Likewise, there is an accurate description of the background information relative to the practice doctorate purpose, reference to AACN, acceptance of the practice doctorate movement and rapid increase in the number of practice doctorate programs nationally. Moreover, the proposal clearly reflects that faculty has synthesized recommendations of the AACN *Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice* in their proposal development and curriculum plan. Further, the proposal suggests that faculty who developed the proposal and curriculum plan incorporated elements that are considered key items for accreditation status. For example, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditation standards for graduate degree programs includes congruence of mission and goals between the unit and parent institution; the mission of IUPUI and the vision statement of IUSON are described and are congruent with the overall purpose of practice doctorate programs. In addition, the proposal describes the year long planning process that involved comprehensive assessment of resources and costs; these and similar items can be used to illustrate how the program meets accreditation standards.

Student demand. The proposal is for post-MSN entry; the pool of applicants is potentially 3,162 for the 60 admissions (20 per year) when the program reaches capacity.

Transferability, access to professional programs, employment factors, and regional/state/national factors. All these areas are clearly described in the proposal. More important, statements accurately reflect the state of the practice doctorate movement. It is timely for the School of Nursing to implement a practice doctorate program in order to remain in the forefront of nursing education nationally as well as within the state.

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.

III. Program Implementation and Evaluation

The evaluation plan is based on standards that key organizations and agencies use in determining how faculty meet stated program goals and outcomes. They include AACN, CCNE, and Indiana specific governing regulations. The plan is based on formative and summative measures that involve recognized means for measuring program, faculty and student outcomes and success. The plan also incorporates strategies currently used in other IU School of Nursing programs with success. Key elements of the plan include specific criteria for item assignment responsibility, means of assessment, measurement results and future action.

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.

SUMMARY

This report was in response to a request from the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, Indiana University for a review of a proposal for a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program presented by faculty of the Indiana University School of Nursing. Information for the independent proposal review was supplemented by specific web site information, numerous publications studied since the practice doctorate was initiated in the 1990s and as it currently exists.

The history of success and prestige as well as the resources available at the University of Indiana at large and at the School of Nursing in particular are indicators that faculty in the SON will be successful in implementing a DNP program. The recognized integrity of the SON's faculty accomplishments available on the web was impressive. It was especially noteworthy that the faculty and administrators used a deliberative, measured, and systematic approach in arriving at the decision to propose a practice doctorate program, and it is timely for them to do so given the AACN recommendations for advanced practice nursing education and widespread acceptance of the practice doctorate movement.

The proposal for the DNP program was well developed. Moreover, University and School of Nursing web site and published information that is readily available verifies statements made in the proposal. An overview of each proposal category with recommendations is described in specific sections of this report. The overall recommendation follows.

OVERALL RECOMMENDATION

As noted in the report, the proposal contains all the components one considers when designing curriculum in general and practice doctorate programs in particular. Key findings of the review are:

- Evidence of a pool of potential applicants for the program;
- Program description and objectives that are congruent with the principles of the AACN practice doctorate documents;
- Admission criteria fit for the proposed post-MSN program;
- The proposed curriculum has the potential for approximating program objectives and proposed student outcomes;
- There is a plan for assuring that the minimum 1000 post Baccalaureate AACN-CCNE practice hour requirement is met;
- Faculty for the program with Graduate School status has impressive and requisite rank, credentials, and areas of expertise for the program;
- Resources are available in the University at large and at the School of Nursing in particular for the faculty to implement the program and anticipated teaching-learning methods for course objectives;
- The evaluation plan is based on key AACN and CCNE documents and includes strategies for approximating program, faculty and student objectives.

For these reasons, I recommend that the Indiana University Graduate Affairs Committee, the President and the Board of Trustees

Approve the Indiana University School of Nursing proposal for a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program.

REFERENCES

AACN and CCNE documents (available on respective web sites or as designated below):

- *AACN Applauds the National Academy of Sciences" Report Which Supports the Practice Doctorate in Nursing and Calls for More Nurse Scientists*

- *AACN Essentials of Masters Education*

- *AACN Position Statement on the Practice Doctorate in Nursing*

- *Certification and Regulation of Advanced Practice Nurses*

- *DNP Toolkit: Template for the Process of Developing a DNP Program, August 15, 2006*

- *Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Degree Nursing Programs Amended April 2009*

- *The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice*
  http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Education.pdf/MasEssentials96.pdf
    http://www.aacn.nche.edu/DNP/pdf/Essentials.pdf
- http.//www.aacn.nche.edu/accreditation/standards.htm
- http://www.aacn.ccne.edu/CCNE/reports/accprog.asp

- Demand and Development: The Doctor of Nursing practice (D.N.P.) Degree, *Executive Summary of Findings* (www.Eduventures.com).

The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (documents available on respective web site or as designated below):

- *Sample Curriculum Templates for Practice Doctorate NP Education*

- *NONPF Recommended Criteria for NP Scholarly Projects in the Practice Doctorate Program*.
- http://www.aacn.nche.edu/DNP/pdf/Essentilas/pdf
- http://www.nonpf.org/NONPF2005/PracticeDoctorateResourceCenter.htm

Additional references upon request.

PBH:ca
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