

**NEW DEGREE PROGRAM PLANNING NOTICE OF INTENT
(PNOI)**

Program Information

Institution Name: **Washington State University**

Degree Title: **Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)**

Degree Granting Unit: **College of Nursing**

Level: **Doctoral** Type: **Nursing Practice** Major: **Nursing**

Minor: **N/A** Concentration(s): **Family Nurse Practitioner, Psych/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, Community-Based/Population-Focused, Nurse Educator**

CIP Code: **51.1601**

Proposed Start Date: **Fall 2009**

Projected Enrollment (FTE) in Year One: **16** At Full Enrollment: **27** by Year : **Two**

Proposed New Funding: **State High Demand Funding**

Funding Source: State FTE Self Support Other – Foundation Grants

Mode of Delivery / Locations

On- Campus Delivery Vancouver, Spokane, Tricities

Off-site Walla Walla, Yakima

Distance Learning WSU Academic Media Services sites

Substantive Statement of Demand and Need

See attachment

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Attachment: State Need and Student Demand for the Program

The Higher Education Coordinating Board's February 2006 *State and Regional Needs Assessment Report* delineates nursing as a high demand profession. Not only do we need to increase the number of registered nurses entering the profession, we must also increase the number of nurses prepared to fill roles in advanced practice, education, administration, policy and research. Some of the critical factors contributing to this increased demand for both nurses entering the profession and prepared at the graduate level include the increasing complexity of health care issues, an aging society with multiple chronic conditions, increasing obesity and its complications, high rates of diabetes, and the need to improve individual and population care.

A recent report from the Health Care Personnel Shortage Task Force indicates high levels of need and difficulty hiring qualified faculty in a wide range of health care occupations at all educational levels. Representatives of the western colleges of nursing, meeting in 2003 at the first meeting of the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education/Northwest Educational Outreach Network Project, reported severe shortages with a large number of projected retirements looming. Six western public universities reported a total need for 218 doctorally prepared faculty by 2008, excluding the faculty needs of the region's private universities and community college nursing programs. One advanced practice pathway of the DNP at WSU will be the nurse educator program designed to prepare nurses to serve as faculty.

The state's need for the DNP program is supported by the call for reform in health professional and nursing education. Several prestigious national organizations have called for substantial reform in educating the health care workforce of the future, including the Institute of Medicine (2001), the Future of Family Medicine Project (2004), the PEW Commission (1991,1999), and the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF, 2003). The increasing complexity of health care has made nursing education increasingly complex. Graduate programs are pressured to add more course requirements and increase the number of required credits to assure that students are prepared at the time of graduation to assume an advanced scope of practice.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) recommends that the DNP curriculum prepare the advanced practice nurse for a specific area of practice, including but not limited to the four defined advanced practice roles of nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, nurse midwife and nurse anesthetist. In addition to development of an area of advanced practice, the AACN recommends that DNP graduates be prepared to serve as leaders and administrators in health care organizations and to be active participants in the health care policy process.

AACN's (2004a) Position Statement on the Practice Doctorate in Nursing represents a vision for the future, and as such, AACN members have endorsed the transition from specialty nursing practice education at the master's level to the DNP by the target goal of 2015. AACN recognizes the importance of maintaining strong interest in roles (e.g., nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, nurse midwife, and nurse anesthetist) to meet existing health care needs. In response to practice demands and an increasingly complex health care system, programs designed to prepare nurses for advanced practice nursing will begin the transition to the practice doctorate for nurses who initially want to obtain the DNP, as well as for nurses with master's degrees who want to return to obtain the practice doctorate. AACN will assist schools in their transitioning to the DNP and in their efforts to partner with other institutions to provide necessary graduate level course work. Specialty focused master's level programs will be phased out as transition to DNP programs occurs. Master's programs will continue to be offered and will prepare nurses for advanced generalist practice.

American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2006)

While some master's prepared graduates will still fill general practice and supervision roles, it is apparent that institutions not offering the DNP will quickly be non-competitive, and eventually non-accredited at the specialty advanced practice level.

Focus Groups

To assess the need and demand for the DNP, five stakeholder focus groups were held in Spokane, Tri-cities, and Vancouver. Health care, nursing and community leaders were invited to provide input on their needs for DNP prepared nurses. Participants included nurse executives, middle managers, strategic planners from hospitals and community agencies as well as alumni from our Master of Nursing Programs.

The focus group data were analyzed for themes, which included, (a) a lack of concrete understanding of how the advanced practice nursing role would be changed; (b) strong opinions both for and against the new advanced practice education requirements; and (c) enthusiasm about the potentials of the new role and requests for partnerships with us. Our Master of Nursing alumni who participated were unanimous in their enthusiasm for more advanced education now that they had some practice experience.

Student and Alumni Survey

Current College of Nursing students and alumni from 2001-2004 were surveyed to assess their knowledge of and interest in obtaining a DNP, with a total of 183 responses. Sixty of the

respondents were alumni and about half of the students were undergraduates and the other half graduate students. Sixty-four percent (n=117) were aware that the American Association of Colleges of Nurses has recommended that the DNP be the initial educational preparation for advanced practice nurses. Of those surveyed 131 said they would be interested in starting within the next two to ten years. The major reasons people were not interested in obtaining a DNP degree were that they were "too old" or because of the "amount of time and money" it would require.

Several factors were identified as being likely to encourage a person to enroll in the DNP program. Flexible course scheduling, tuition reimbursement, and a job market that required the DNP would be likely to motivate people. Another important factor in deciding whether to pursue DNP education was the format of course offerings. Hybrid courses with some in-person classes and some web based work were preferred by 106 of 160 respondents while 36 preferred classroom based courses and 21 preferred totally web based classes.

Other Programs

Several DNP programs in the region have been implemented or planned to begin within the next year or two. Each program is designed in a way that it fulfills the AACN Essentials of DNP education, yet they each offer a different program of study. Rather than duplication, the region will offer programs that can be considered by potential students who can find the best fit for their needs. In addition, a DNP Summit was co-hosted by WSU and UW, bringing faculty together from Alaska, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, and Washington to discuss future collaborative opportunities.

The University of Washington implemented its DNP program in January 2007 with a cohort of post-master's students. The first post-BSN students were admitted in summer/fall 2007. The University of Washington and WSU have initiated preliminary discussions to identify ways in which the two universities can share resources to maximize the number of students who can be served by the DNP programs. Each university serves different geographic areas, different types of students, and has different resources. For example, UW tends to serve students in western Washington who are more likely to be in commuting distance of Seattle or able to move to Seattle. WSU will distinguish itself by offering a DNP program accessible to students using Academic Media Services to televise courses and video streaming of courses to serve students on multiple campuses and in rural areas, especially in southwest, eastern, and central Washington. Many courses will be web-based or partially web-based to offer another delivery mode. Offered part time, the WSU DNP program will accommodate nurses who need to continue to working while enrolled in graduate school.

WSU College of Nursing has received planning grants from the Southwest Washington Medical Center's Foundation and the Samuel S. Johnson Foundation in both 2006 and 2007 to plan the DNP program.