

## BACKGROUND AND REQUEST

### Walsh University

#### RECOMMENDATION

Walsh University meets the Chancellor's standards for graduate programs, and the review team recommends provisional authorization for the Master of Science in Nursing and Doctor of Nursing Practice degree programs. Provisional authorization will continue through December 31, 2011, to coincide with the university's next accreditation reaffirmation review with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and is contingent upon the Chancellor's written approval of progress reports that demonstrate satisfactory progress toward compliance with all standards. The Chancellor shall withdraw provisional authorization if, in the Chancellor's judgment, the progress reports do not demonstrate satisfactory progress in any area. Progress reports are to be submitted by June 30, 2010 and 2011. A follow-up review will be performed prior to December 31, 2011 to determine continued authorization of the programs.

**Profile:** Walsh University, located in North Canton, Ohio, is an independent, co-educational institution affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church. Originally established in 1958 as an all-male Catholic liberal arts college, the university today serves over 2,600 students by offering over fifty undergraduate majors, five graduate degrees, and accelerated adult degree programs at four off-site locations.

**Accreditation/Authorization:** Walsh University is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and possesses a number of programmatic/specialized accreditations for its professional programs [including the National League for Nursing (NLN) for its undergraduate nursing program]. In addition, the university has been authorized by the Chancellor since August 1969.

**Program Information:** Walsh University is requesting authorization for the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and Doctor in Nursing Practice (DNP) degree programs. The purpose of the MSN program "to prepare nurses for advanced practice roles (with expert knowledge equipped to provide leadership in nursing practice and education) in the healthcare setting while providing a strong basis in values based education from the Judeo-Christian perspective." The program contains two tracks, Clinical Nurse Leader (36 credit hours) and Nurse Education (37 credit hours), which focus on providing advanced patient care and preparing the nurse as an educator, respectively.

The purpose of the DNP program is "to provide master's prepared nurses advanced nursing practice content with a focus on advanced leadership and management while providing a strong basis in values based education from the Judeo-Christian perspective." The program consists of a 39 to 45 post-master's credit; students may need to complete additional clinical hours to meet American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) standards depending on their previous education. Full-time students can complete the program in 12-15 months; part-time students may take up to three years.

**Review Results:** The external review team noted the following strengths during the review: alignment of university and Division of Nursing missions; the university's intent to pursue NLN accreditation for both programs; the MSN and DNP objectives and goals clearly defined and differentiated; both programs were developed in alignment with AACN criteria; the university appears to have adequate and

appropriate resources in place to support the programs; and the university's expectations for graduate faculty qualifications/credentials and research/scholarship are defined and appropriate to the level and rigor of the proposed programs.

The team also noted areas of non compliance with the Chancellor's standards and recommended that the institution: develop an organizational chart that reflects the relationship of each academic division to the administration; develop a plan to build administrative services for distance education students; implement the institution's student learning assessment plan across all programs; develop a detailed, systematic plan to phase in the implementation of the programs; develop a plan, including policies and standards, for the preparation of faculty for online teaching; develop a detailed, incremental budget for the MSN and DNP programs.

The institution responded appropriately to the recommendations of the consultants' report by demonstrating how the recommendations were accepted and integrated into the proposed programs, or, in the case of recommendations that could only be complied with over time, by presenting a clear plan for the implementation of the recommendations and a timeline for such.

**Recommendation to the Chancellor:** Walsh University meets the Chancellor's standards for graduate programs, and the review team recommends provisional authorization for the Master of Science in Nursing and Doctor of Nursing Practice degree programs. Provisional authorization will continue through December 31, 2011, to coincide with the university's next accreditation reaffirmation review with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and is contingent upon the Chancellor's written approval of progress reports that demonstrate satisfactory progress toward compliance with all standards. The Chancellor shall withdraw provisional authorization if, in the Chancellor's judgment, the progress reports do not demonstrate satisfactory progress in any area. Progress reports are to be submitted by June 30, 2010 and 2011. A follow-up review will be performed prior to December 31, 2011 to determine continued authorization of the programs.

End of Comment Period: August 26, 2009  
No Comments Received, Recommend Approval

APPROVED

Eric D. Fingerhut, Chancellor
9/2/09 Date

mlc