

BACKGROUND AND REQUEST

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

Conversion of the Certificate of Professional Nursing (CPN) to: Master of Nursing (MN)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

This program clearly meets the Chancellor's standards for graduate degree programs. The Regents' Advisory Committee on Graduate Study recently voted approval for the conversion of the Certificate of Professional Nursing (CPN) to the Master of Nursing (MN) degree program. There were no serious concerns raised in the review.

Request: Case Western Reserve University's Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing requests approval for the conversion of the Certificate of Professional Nursing (CPN) to the Master of Nursing (MN) degree program.

Program Mission and Background: The purpose of the proposed conversion of the Certificate of Professional Nursing to a Master of Nursing degree is to alleviate the barriers that students encounter in the workplace and to facilitate further graduate education.

The Certificate of Nursing currently is awarded to students who successfully complete the sixteen month, pre-licensure phase of the Graduate Entry Doctor of Nursing Practice Program. Although the CPN program prepares second degree students for licensure, all courses are at the graduate level. Since these students are not granted a degree, they regularly experience clear barriers to practice as registered nurses and continued graduate education not encountered by their peer second-degree students who have received at least a BSN degree. It is anticipated that the proposed MN degree will alleviate the barriers students encounter in the workplace and will facilitate further graduate education.

Within the profession of nursing, the MN is a generalist degree as opposed to the MSN which is a specialist degree. It is anticipated that the MN will satisfy all employment requirements of the VA and other acute care and community employers. While they are working, these MN graduates will complete the MSN and Post-MSN DNP courses. The proposed MN is an appropriate degree to award the students at this level.

This change in the pre-licensure phase of the DNP program for individuals who are seeking a career change to nursing has advantages not only for the students themselves but for the Ohio healthcare system. Graduates with a MN have wider opportunities for entry level employment. This is critical in finding avenues for financial support while they complete the DNP degree. Employment enables them to implement their newly gained knowledge and skills in addressing the day to day challenges of providing safe, quality care to diverse populations. These practice opportunities are essential because some of the MSN specialty tracks (such as nurse anesthesia and acute care nurse practitioner) require two years of practice before beginning the MSN level specialty practice courses. This change is also advantageous for healthcare employers because it provides a greater opportunity to engage these talented individuals in direct practice at the bedside or within the community. Employers of MN graduates also have an opportunity to develop relationships that will give them a competitive edge in retaining the services of these individuals in direct practice when they complete the DNP degree. While the State of Ohio is making some progress in heading off a catastrophic shortage of bedside nurses, the need for nurses with more education remains critical. Nurses with advanced education are needed to assume positions of advanced practice with underserved populations and to lead, educate, and mentor newer nurses. Thus, the change from awarding a CPN to awarding a MN at the end of the pre-licensure phase of the DNP will be an advantage for both DNP students and employers of nurses.

Curriculum: The current CPN program requires 64.5 credits. An additional three core courses have been added to the MN program for a total of 72 credits. The added core courses are; Integrated Assessment (NURS 459), Health Promotion (NURS 410), and Evidence-Based Practice (NURS 502).

Faculty, Facilities and Resources: No additional faculty, facilities or resources are needed for the proposed conversion to MN program.

Evidence of Need: The proposed change to a Master of Nursing degree is essential in assuring that the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing is able to provide second career students a legitimate, viable, and desirable option for entering the nursing profession than another baccalaureate degree. The Master of Nursing degree is a more appropriate first component of the Doctor of Nursing Practice program. Without such a change, the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing will lose the ability to be competitive in recruiting academically talented non-nursing graduates into the Doctor of Nursing program.