

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN – FLINT  
REGENTS COMMUNICATION**

Approved by the Regents  
December 13, 2007

**ACTION REQUEST**

**SUBJECT:** Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree (DNP) at the University of Michigan-Flint

**ACTION REQUESTED:** Approval to grant the Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree through the School of Health Professions and Studies at the University of Michigan-Flint, which would replace the existing Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Degree

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 31, 2008

The University of Michigan-Flint requests approval for a change in the current Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree to a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree, through the School of Health Professions and Studies, effective January 31, 2008. The DNP degree will be offered in distance education format, building upon our extensive experience in distance education with our accredited online Registered Nurse (RN) to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree and with the support of the Office of Extended Learning.

The Master of Science in Nursing Program received Regental approval in 1977, following University of Michigan-Flint faculty and administrative approval. The MSN program received full five-year specialty accreditation the first time it was eligible from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) in 2001. Most recently, the University of Michigan-Flint Department of Nursing submitted a self-study and underwent a site visit of all undergraduate and graduate programs of study with the CCNE in 2005 and received full accreditation of all programs through December of 2016.

The Doctor of Nursing Practice degree is a modification of the existing MSN degree and does not involve the establishment of a new program. The DNP degree will consist of the addition of 31 new credits and enhancements to the existing 50 credits in the MSN Program in keeping with professional standards appropriate to doctoral-level education. The DNP proposal has a curriculum of 80 credit hours that follows the completion of a baccalaureate degree and licensure as a registered nurse. The DNP degree would be a practice doctorate similar to a Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) program, and would be our second professional doctorate program at the University of Michigan-Flint. Once the transition to the DNP program is achieved, the MSN degree program will no longer be offered. However, an MSN to DNP program that consists of a curriculum of 31 credit hours and includes all of the courses that were added to the existing MSN curriculum will be offered to those students who are currently master's prepared nurse practitioners who wish to earn a DNP.

The University of Michigan-Flint has extensive experience in distance education, including the fully online Registered Nurse (RN) to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program for registered nurses throughout the country. The University of Michigan-Flint's approval of the RN to BSN via distance delivery mode occurred in 2002 when the program was reviewed via proposal and site visit by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, as well as the fully online Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree approved by the Higher Learning Commission.

The proposed Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree has been thoroughly reviewed and supported by the UM-Flint nursing faculty, School of Health Professions and Studies faculty, Graduate Programs Committee, Academic Affairs Advisory Committee, Chancellor's Advisory Committee for Budget and Strategic Planning, the provost and chancellor.

Nationally, enrollment in nursing programs at all levels has increased rapidly in recent years; however, many qualified applicants are being turned away because of a shortage of nursing faculty to teach classes. The need for nursing faculty will only increase as a large number of instructors reach retirement. The DNP degree will help address this issue by increasing the number of nurses with advanced degrees and will allow increased access to those nurses seeking an advanced degree. In addition, a series of surveys was conducted in April of 2007 to verify applicant interest in the program and to identify issues that must be considered in the design of the University of Michigan-Flint DNP program. The surveys were reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Michigan-Flint prior to initiation of the research to ensure all established criteria were met.

Pending approval, the instructional resources and current faculty are sufficient to implement the DNP degree, and those few faculty who have not yet obtained Online Teaching Certification through the Office of Extended Learning, are scheduled to complete this prior to the start of the DNP in Fall 2008.

Based upon the extensive research and plans that have been completed, the University of Michigan-Flint requests the change in the current Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree to a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree, through the School of Health Professions and Studies, effective January 31, 2008.

Recommended by:



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Vahid Lotfi, Interim Provost and  
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Recommendation endorsed by:



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Jack Kay, Interim Chancellor  
University of Michigan-Flint

December 2007