

**DATE:** May 17, 2018

**SUBJECT:** New Academic Program  
University of Memphis  
Nursing, Doctor of Philosophy  
(CIP 51.3817—Nursing Education)

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Approval

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**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The University of Memphis proposes a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nursing that will prepare faculty in academic nursing to educate future nurses, clinicians, and scholars/researchers. For 50 years, the Lowenberg College of Nursing (LCON) at the University of Memphis has prepared nursing professionals at the baccalaureate and Master’s level. The proposed PhD program will assist in increasing the number of doctoral-prepared nurse educators. Program graduates will be prepared to conduct rigorous nursing and interdisciplinary research to promote health equity, integrate research knowledge to serve interests of the community, and to lead educational research in program and course design, clinical education, and the evaluation of learning.

**INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNING BOARD APPROVAL**

The proposed Nursing PhD program was approved by the University of Memphis Board of Trustees on March 7, 2018.

**PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

Fall 2018

**RELEVANCE TO INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STRATEGIC PLAN**

The proposed Nursing PhD program aligns with the University of Memphis’ institutional mission to be a “learner centered metropolitan research university providing high quality educational experiences while pursuing new knowledge through research, artistic expression, and interdisciplinary and engaged scholarship.” Graduates in academic nursing will lead program and course design, clinical education, and the evaluation of learning to prepare nurses of the future.

The proposed program aligns with the *2015-25 Master Plan for Tennessee Postsecondary Education* and will provide Tennessee residents in the nursing profession the opportunity to increase their educational attainment to the doctoral level, address growing workforce demand by providing qualified nurse educators and researchers, and integrate research knowledge to serve the interests of the community.

## **CURRICULUM**

The proposed Nursing PhD program requires the completion of 60 credit hours beyond the Master's degree. The curriculum will consist of 36 hours devoted to four core areas (research, education, health equity and nursing science); 12 hours of electives and 12 hours devoted to the dissertation. The program will require students to take courses in other disciplines. The LCON works in collaboration with various academic units such as the College of Education, School of Public Health, and the School of Communication Science and Disorders.

Students will be able to complete the proposed Nursing PhD program fully online which will provide flexibility. To complete certain milestones, students will be expected to be on campus (i.e., proposal defense).

## **PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY**

The proposed Nursing PhD program projects attrition rates to be 25 percent. Enrollment projections are anticipated to be similar to the current MSN program.

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Enrollment</b>	4	9	14	21	21	25	28
<b>Graduates</b>	--	--	--	--	2	3	4

## **PROGRAM DUPLICATION**

Currently, four universities in Tennessee offer Nursing Science PhD programs. The Nursing Science doctoral program prepares graduates as researchers that will conduct develop and conduct scientific research that will advance the nursing profession and healthcare. The Nursing Science PhD program is offered at East Tennessee State University, UT Knoxville, UT Health Science Center and Vanderbilt University.

The proposed Nursing PhD program at the University of Memphis will be a unique program that prepares graduates for an academician role in higher education with a focus on educational research and health equity research on diversity and vulnerable populations.

## **EXTERNAL JUDGEMENT**

On October 23-25, 2017, Dr. Deidre D. Wipke-Tevis, Associate Professor and Program at the University of Missouri and Dr. Cynthia Jacelon, Professor and Program Director at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst conducted a campus visit to evaluate the proposed Nursing PhD program. They stated in their written report that "There is a severe shortage of PhD prepared faculty in the profession of nursing. So at the professional level the program is needed. [The University of Memphis] is well prepared to support the proposed program. They have many PhD programs on campus and have adequate support to deliver this program."

## **STUDENT DEMAND**

The University of Memphis conducted a market analysis in October 2016 to determine the local need for a doctoral program. The survey was administered to current students, alumni, and community leaders. Among respondents, 78 percent indicated an interest in a proposed Nursing PhD program offered by the University of Memphis. Among those interested, 71 percent indicated they would be interested in applying within the next two years, with 51 percent preferring an online form and 45 percent preferring a hybrid program. This survey guided the development of a doctoral program that can be offered fully online and that is flexible and provides a part time option.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM GRADUATES**

The lack of doctoral prepared nursing faculty is a central issue for 21<sup>st</sup> century healthcare in the United States. Across the United States, nursing's efforts to meet the need for an additional half million nurses by 2020 are stymied by a lack of adequately prepared faculty. In a 2010 survey conducted by the American Association of College of Nursing of baccalaureate and higher degree programs, there were close to 900 vacant faculty positions. The AACN survey respondents cited the limited pool of doctoral prepared faculty as the primary reason for faculty vacancies. The proposed Nursing PhD program will assist in meeting this need.

## **INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO DELIVER THE PROGRAM**

With a long and rich history of preparing nurses for 50 years, the Lowenberg College of Nursing at the University of Memphis is positioned to offer the proposed Nursing PhD program. Initially, no additional nursing faculty will be needed until the third year of the program. Currently, there are 19 faculty members with research doctorates and 16 members with practice doctorates; there are three unfilled tenure track positions. The program will be housed in the Community Health Building erected in 2015. Library and technology resources including support for distance learning are adequate. The external reviewers highlighted both faculty and the University's Department of Instructional Technology as strengths for the proposed Nursing PhD program.

## **ASSESSMENT AND POST-APPROVAL MONITORING**

An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first seven years following program approval. The review will be based on benchmarks established in the approved proposal. At the end of this period, the campus, institutional governing board, and Commission staff will perform a summative evaluation. The benchmarks include, but are not limited to, enrollment and graduation, program cost, progress toward accreditation, and other metrics set by the institution and Commission staff. If benchmarks are not met during the monitoring period, the Commission may recommend that the institutional governing board terminate the program. If additional time is needed and requested by the institutional governing board, the Commission may choose to extend the monitoring period.