



**THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE  
STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234**

**TO:** The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

**FROM:** Sarah S. Benson *Sarah S. Benson*

**SUBJECT:** State University of New York Polytechnic Institute – Master Plan Amendment for the Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.) program in Psychiatric-Mental Health

**DATE:** April 23, 2020

**AUTHORIZATION(S):** *Sharon L. Tabor*

**SUMMARY**

**Issue for Decision (Consent Agenda)**

Should the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment for the State University of New York Polytechnic Institute to offer a proposed Psychiatric-Mental Health program leading to the D.N.P. degree?

**Reason(s) for Consideration**

Required by State statute.

**Proposed Handling**

The issue will come before the Full Board for action at its May 2020 meeting.

**Procedural History**

A Master Plan Amendment is necessary as this is the institution's first program at the doctoral level in the health professions disciplinary area.

**Background Information**

State University of New York Polytechnic Institute requested approval to offer a D.N.P. program in Psychiatric-Mental Health in distance education format at its campus in Utica, New York. The institute has on-line B.S. and M.S. programs in Nursing including a Family Nurse Practitioner program.

The purpose and goals of the program are to prepare highly qualified advanced practice nurses in psychiatric mental health care to meet societal needs with regard to behavioral and mental health issues; improve the care of those experiencing psychological challenges and disorders, including addictions; increase access to psychiatric-mental care for clients across the lifespan and continuum of care; and improve standards and systems of care through evidence-based, transformational leadership at the point of care and beyond.

The curriculum is 76 graduate credits and can be completed in three years. Core contents include advanced leadership and health policy, theory, and nursing research; advanced pharmacology, health assessment, and pathophysiology; health promotion, disease prevention, advanced diagnostics, and psychopharmacology; biostatistics, epidemiology, and population health; advanced nursing science and translational research; systems leadership and organizational technologies; and health policy. Three courses support the D.N.P. project and culminating seminar. Six psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner courses provide advanced theory with a total of 1,040 direct care hours in direct practice and onsite residencies focused on data analysis and entrepreneurship. The curriculum meets licensing requirement and is aligned with the professional nursing standards and guidelines for doctoral education of the advanced practice nurse and psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner competencies.

Post-baccalaureate applicants must meet the following requirements: hold a current unrestricted license as a Registered Professional Nurse (RN) in New York State or the state in which they reside/work; hold a baccalaureate degree with a major in nursing from an accredited program with a minimum 3.0 grade point average; have completed a statistics course with a grade of C or better; and have a minimum of one year or 2,000 hours of work experience as a RN. Additionally, post-master's applicants must hold a Master of Science degree with a major in nursing from an accredited program with a minimum 3.0 grade point average.

At the outset, the program will primarily serve students from communities within Oneida County, the Capital region, and the surrounding rural areas of Central New York and the Adirondacks. Enrollment projections for Year 1 include ten full-time and five part-time students. By Year 5 the program anticipates enrollment of 40 full-time and 30 part-time students. Oneida and Albany County, the two main recruitment areas, are relatively racially homogenous (71.6%-81.6% white, non-hispanic; 7.1-14% Black-African American; 4.2-6.8% Asian; and 6.1% Hispanic) but have a substantive population of veterans (6.8-10%) and refugees (at least 7.6-10.4 %). It is expected that student enrollment will mirror the regions' demographics.

The University's learning management system (LMS), Blackboard Learn, is equipped to provide synchronous and asynchronous online education. Online utilities, such as the Collaborate Ultra online classroom, captioned video tutorials, and VoiceThread multimedia for discussions, blogs, journals, and wikis are available. Support for online learners is available 24-hours per day and 7-days per week through the LMS and OPEN SUNY; services include an online readiness assessment and Help Desk. Faculty are also provided with support through the campus Help Desk. The Office of Distance Learning provides faculty with workshops, assistance with instructional design, the use of curricular technologies, network resources, and computer accounts. Students

are issued SUNY Poly e-mail accounts to facilitate faculty-student communication and a successful transition to online learning. Currently the nursing programs employ 11 full-time, 7 part-time, and 19 adjunct clinical faculty. Additional faculty lines have been secured to hire one full-time faculty member; two part-time faculty, and an additional full-time clinical coordinator. The nursing programs are assisted by two instructional designers who work with faculty teaching in the online learning environment. The current faculty have all taught online for several years. Funding for the refurbishing of the onsite laboratory to provide simulation-based clinical experiences has been approved.

Staff members from the Department reviewed the application materials. In addition, as part of the review process, staff members conducted a site visit on March 16, 2020. Based upon the review, it is determined that the proposed D.N.P. program in Psychiatric-Mental Health program meets the standards for registration set forth in the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

To determine potential impact on current programs and resources, a canvass of the institutions of the Mohawk Valley region as well as of all institutions in the state offering D.N.P. programs was conducted to determine potential impact on current programs and resources. No objections were received.

### **Related Item(s)**

As the D.N.P. award represents State University of New York Polytechnic Institute's first use of this degree title, a degree authorization will be presented before the full Board at its May 2020 meeting where it will be voted on and action taken.

### **Recommendation**

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approve an amendment to the master plan of State University of New York Polytechnic Institute to authorize the college to offer the D.N.P. program in Psychiatric-Mental Health. If the Board of Regents approves the master plan amendment, the Department will transmit it to the Governor with a recommendation for favorable action. Following gubernatorial approval, the program will be registered.

### **Timetable for Implementation**

If the Governor approves the master plan amendment, the Department will register the D.N.P. program in Psychiatric-Mental Health at State University of New York Polytechnic Institute.