

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The DNP by 2015: A Study of the Institutional, Political, and Professional Issues that Facilitate or Impede Establishing a Post-Baccalaureate Doctor of Nursing Practice Program

In October 2004, nursing schools affiliated with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) voted to endorse a position statement that called for moving the level of educational preparation necessary for advanced nursing practice from the master's degree to the doctorate by the year 2015. This endorsement of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree was preceded by almost three years of research and consensus-building by an AACN task force charged with examining the need for the practice doctorate with a variety of stakeholder groups nationwide.

Though post-master's degree DNP programs are important in the short-run to move master's prepared Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) and other specialists to the doctoral level, the transition to the DNP will ultimately require nursing schools to close their master's level APRN programs, while taking steps to ensure that the pipeline of new nurses prepared for advanced nursing practice is adequate to meet workforce needs.

With two and a half years remaining in the transition to the DNP timeline, significant progress towards this goal has been accomplished. As of 2012, a total of 217 DNP programs are currently enrolling students at schools of nursing nationwide, and an additional 97 DNP programs are in the planning stages. While most schools now offer post-master's degree DNP programs, 83 schools are offering post-baccalaureate DNP programs, and another 90 schools are planning to offer this option. Though 173 nursing schools are on track to offer the post-baccalaureate DNP, more than 200 schools that currently offer master's level APRN programs have not reported plans to move in this direction.

With the national movement to the DNP well underway, the AACN Board of Directors is commissioning a study to assess the facilitators and barriers to transitioning to the DNP. The AACN Board is seeking to identify best practices related to facilitating programmatic change and delineate barriers that may be addressed through focused advocacy and other means. The study resulting from this RFP will provide a framework for next steps by the AACN in its work to meet the goals established by its membership.

Deliverables: This study should uncover the full spectrum of factors that facilitate or impede implementation of a post-baccalaureate DNP program. Elements to be assessed must include (but are not limited to) institutional mission issues, state policy and/or regulatory structures, university system constraints, sociological factors, and issues related to financial impact. Study authors must give examples of best practices related to the full transition to the DNP, including programs with the scalability needed to maintain graduation levels in DNP programs that meet or exceed the number of students graduating from master's level APRN programs. The final report also must include specific action items for AACN to advance the national movement to the DNP.

Vendors responding to this RFP must outline their plan for conducting this study, including a detailed timeline for completion and a budget. Responses to this RFP will be evaluated based upon the applicant's experience mounting similar studies, a demonstrated understanding of the issues associated with this re-envisioning of nursing education, and an appropriate time frame for completing the study. Note: Academic institutions are not eligible to submit proposals in response to this solicitation.

Technical Support: AACN maintains the nation's premiere database on enrollment and graduation data from the nation's nursing schools with baccalaureate and graduate programs. AACN will furnish contact information for all nursing schools directly impacted by the transition to the DNP and provide expert advice on how to interpret findings in consultation with the selected vendor.

Timeline:

RFP Issued:	Thursday, August 8, 2013
Technical Assistance Calls:	Individually arranged August 19-30, 2013
Proposal Due Date:	Wednesday, September 4, 2013
Vendor Selected:	Friday, September 20, 2013
Final Submission Due:	Friday, December 20, 2013

Resources: To assist in the preparation of proposals and to enhance understanding about the transition to the DNP, please see the following:

AACN Position Statement on the Practice Doctorate in Nursing

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/dnp/position-statement>

Latest AACN Data on DNP Program Enrollment and Graduations

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/dnp/JK-2013-DNP.pdf>

The Doctor of Nursing Practice Fact Sheet

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/media-relations/fact-sheets/dnp>

DNP Program Frequently Asked Questions

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/dnp/faqs>

Point of Contact:

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