

The Wayback Machine - https://web.archive.org/web/20140223040110/http://gazette.unc.edu/2013/03/11...

## University Gazette

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

# Board of Governors approves new advanced nursing degree at Carolina

*March 11, 2013 – 11:17 am | Posted in Campus, Health & Safety, Leadership, Teaching, Working at Carolina*

On Feb. 8, the Board of Governors authorized UNC's School of Nursing to offer a graduate-level nursing degree, the doctor of nursing practice (DNP). Nurses with the advanced degree will be educated to fill critical roles in an increasingly complex health care environment in which people need better access to primary care, chronic illness management and preventative health services.

Until now, there were no state-supported colleges or universities offering the DNP degree in North Carolina, which has 91 counties out of 100 that are designated as medically underserved areas. The decision of the Board of Governors allows UNC and five other state-supported schools to join Duke University and Gardner Webb University in offering the most-advanced level of clinical education to North Carolina nurses.

"The health of our nation relies on the availability of a highly educated nursing workforce," said Debra J. Barksdale, an associate professor in the School of Nursing and the newly appointed director of the DNP program. "With this historic decision, UNC-Chapel Hill will educate nurses at the doctoral level to practice collaboratively with other care providers and offer care that is accessible, affordable and of the highest caliber."

Recognizing that nurses with advanced degrees could address the state's critical need for skilled primary care providers, Kristen Swanson, dean of the School of Nursing, worked closely with her peers from five state-supported schools (Winston-Salem State University, East Carolina University, UNC Greensboro, UNC Charlotte and Western Carolina University) to petition the Board of Governors for permission to offer DNP education at each school. Their effort to advance nurses' education will also assist the state in preparing to enact provisions of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

DNP students will be able to choose preparation for direct care as nurse practitioners or for leadership roles as nurse executives. Along with three years of coursework, students will complete a "capstone" project in which they will use the knowledge they gained to study new approaches to improve care delivery or patient care outcomes.

"In addition to coursework and clinical training in advanced nursing practice, students in DNP programs also study population health, patient safety, clinical leadership and health policy," said Swanson. "This advanced education enables nurses to serve as leaders at the bedside, in the board room or in the legislature."

[Read more.](#)

*By News Services*

The University Gazette's mission is to build a sense of campus community by communicating information relevant and vital to Carolina's faculty and staff and

### Contact the Gazette

CB# 6205  
Phone: (919) 962-7124  
Fax: (919)


### Links

News Services  
Carolina Budget Information  
Faculty/Staff Resources

### Next Gazette

February 26, 2014

### Feeds

 [RSS \(How to use RSS\)](#)

to advance the  
University's overall  
goals and messages.

962-2279  
Email:  
gazette@unc.edu

[Campus Map](#)

 [Twitter](#)

© 2014 The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill | University Operator: 919.962.2211 |

[SOCIAL MEDIA](#)