



May 13, 2015

Dr. Suzanne S. Shipley
President
Shepherd University
PO Box 5000
301 North King Street
Shepherdstown, WV 25443-5000

Dear President Shipley:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Shepherd University by the Institutional Actions Council of the Higher Learning Commission at its meeting on May 4, 2015. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's new status with HLC.

Action. IAC concurred with the evaluation findings and approved the institution's request to offer the Doctor of Nursing Practice.

In two weeks, this action will be added to the *Institutional Status and Requirements (ISR) Report*, a resource for Accreditation Liaison Officers to review and manage information regarding the institution's accreditation relationship. Accreditation Liaison Officers may request the ISR Report on HLC's website at <http://www.hlcommission.org/isr-request>.

Information on notifying the public of this action is available at <http://www.hlcommission.org/HLC-Institutions/institutional-reporting-of-actions.html>.

If you have any questions about these documents after viewing them, please contact the institution's staff liaison Steph Brzuzy. Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Barbara Gellman-Danley".

Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

CC: ALO

REPORT OF A CHANGE VISIT

TO

SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY
Shepherdstown, West Virginia

March 1-3, 2015

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

Professor Jim Perry, HT Morse Distinguished University Professor, University of Minnesota, St Paul, MN 55108

Dean Emerita, Professor Maria Connolly, College of Nursing & Allied Health, University of St. Francis, Joliet Illinois, 60435

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ASSURANCE SECTION

Part I: Context and Nature of Visit

A. Purpose of Visit: Requested Change

Shepherd University is an accredited Bachelor's/Master's institution that offers 28 Bachelor's and 5 Master's degrees. The institution proposes to develop and institute a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program. The DNP would be the first doctoral-level program offered at Shepherd University.

B. Accreditation Status

Shepherd University has been HLC accredited since 1950. Its most recent Comprehensive visit occurred in 2012. The institution is now accredited by NCA/HLC through 2022. The Bachelors of Science in Nursing (BSN) program has specialty accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) beginning 2011, and continuing through Spring 2016.

C. Institutional Context

Shepherd University is a public institution of higher education that serves the eastern panhandle of West Virginia. Shepherd was founded in 1871 has evolved from an institution of 42 students, providing instruction "in languages, arts and sciences," to one with a student body of nearly 4,000 awarding both undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Nursing education has been a part of the campus since 1972 and currently offers the pre-licensure BSN and RN to BSN degree completion programs. The decision to request permission to offer the DNP as the institution's first degree at the doctoral level is based on both a fit with the institution's commitment to serve the region and the national trends moving advanced practice role preparation for nurse practitioners and nurse administrators to the doctoral level.

Internal Factors: One third of the BSN graduates report an intent to continue their education and become advanced practice nurses and obtain their practice doctorates. The environmental scan conducted by the Department of Nursing (DON) and the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission worked together to develop a nursing program to meet the needs of their service region.

External Factors: The Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) released a landmark report on *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health* (October 2010) which recommended doubling the number of nurses with doctoral degrees by 2020. This recommendation is in response to healthcare changes which include the increased complexity of patient care, national concerns about the quality of care and patient safety, the aging population, shortages of nursing personnel which demand a higher

level of preparation for leaders who can design and assess care, and the shortages of doctorally-prepared nursing faculty.

D. Special Conditions and Contractual and Consortial Arrangements

The nursing faculty in the Department of Nursing has been preparing for the implementation of the DNP degree for the past four years including plans to hire four additional doctoral-level faculty with DNP degrees and Family Nurse Practitioner certification. Discussions and planning in the Graduate Council and the Department of Nursing Faculty Committee reflect extensive preparation for the change. In addition, the planning process has been deliberative and has been accompanied by commitments by stakeholders to provide advanced practice nursing preceptors that make Shepherd better prepared to support graduate education.

If approved, the Shepherd DNP program will become the second DNP program in West Virginia (www.directory.ccnecommunity.org) and the only one serving the needs of the rural and underserved area of the panhandle of West Virginia. The planned face-to-face delivery at the Martinsburg Center, along with significant use of distance delivery technology (SAKAI) allows the program to draw from the wide area the institution serves and meet the demand for the education. The program also meets the needs for access to health care in the fifth unhealthiest state in the nation (<http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:http://www.businessinsider.com/these-are-the-10-unhealthiest-states-in-the-us-2013-12>).

E. Approvals Obtained

The following documents in support of the DNP program were reviewed by the HLC team and the document approvals obtained include: Department of Nursing Meeting Minutes of 10/05/2011, School of Education and Professional Studies Meeting Minutes of 10/25/2011, Shepherd Graduate Council Meeting Minutes of 10/24/2011, Board of Governors Meeting Minutes of 9/26/2013, and the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission Letter (July 3, 2014).

F. Interactions with Institutional Constituencies

The Team met with the following groups and individuals during the visit

1. President of the University
2. Associate VPAA & Graduate Dean
3. Chair of Nursing Education
4. Nine FT Nursing Faculty
5. Clinical preceptors- Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Administrators
6. Health care institution Chief Nursing Officers and a Chief Operations Officer

7. Regional Physicians
8. Donors & Executive Stakeholders
9. VP for Academic Affairs
10. Dean School of Education and Professional Studies
11. VP for Enrollment
12. VP for Administration
13. Chairperson of the Board of Governors (BoG) & two members of the BoG
14. Faculty & Staff, Martinsburg Center
15. BSN alumna

G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed
Higher Learning Commission Documents

1. Statement of Affiliation Status
2. HLC Institutional History
3. Report of A Comprehensive Evaluation Visit- March 2012

University-wide Documents

1. Shepherd University Visitors Page: <http://www.shepherd.edu/university/visitors/>
2. Shepherd University Accreditations and Institutional Planning Pages
<http://www.shepherd.edu/accreditations/>
3. HLC Accreditation web pages <http://www.shepherd.edu/accreditation/>
4. Strategic Plan <http://www.shepherd.edu/university/strategic-plan/currents.pdf>
5. Institutional Compact: <http://www.shepherd.edu/compact/>
6. Compact for new degree programs <http://www.shepherd.edu/compact/compact13.pdf>
7. Shepherd University Catalog catalog.shepherd.edu
8. Faculty Handbook

<http://www.shepherd.edu/employees/senate/documents/handbook.pdf>

9. Staff Handbook: <http://www.shepherd.edu/hrweb/handbook.pdf>
10. HR information http://www.shepherd.edu/hrweb/new_employees.html
11. Graduate studies: <http://www.shepherd.edu/graduate-studies/>
12. Staff analysis of institutional report
13. Report of a comprehensive evaluation visit 2012
14. Institutional Update 2012-2013 for Shepherd University
15. Institutional Update 2012-2013 for Shepherd University
16. Institutional status and requirements report
17. Schedule Site Visit for Doctor of Nursing Practice Program March 2---3, 2015
18. Substantive change application
19. HLC Substantive change triage
20. Shepherd University faculty handbook
21. Self-study report <http://www.shepherd.edu/accreditation/self-study/>
22. [Requirements and procedures for institutions](#)
23. Shepherd "At a Glance" <http://www.shepherd.edu/admissions/at---a---glance>
24. Ten Letters of Support
25. Nursing Faculty Curriculum Vitae (12 individuals)
26. Nursing DNP Course Syllabi and curricular tables for each DNP tracks: nurse practitioner and nursing leadership (nursing administration and nursing education) & (total 35 syllabi)
27. School of Education and Professional Studies Newsletter

28. School of Education and Professional Studies Overview of structure for strategic plan

Part II: Evaluation of Documentation Supporting Institution's Request for Change**A. Commitment to, preparation for, and fit of the proposed change to the institution**

Shepherd University has a robust Bachelor's of Science Nursing program with over 400 enrolled students and 1,400 BSN alumni who live within a 75 mile radius of the university. The proposed Doctor of Nursing Practice is well aligned with the institution's history and mission

Interviews with the Chair of the Board of Governors, the University President, the Associate Vice President and Dean, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Dean of the School of Education and Professional Studies, and the Chair of the Department of Nursing clearly affirmed institutional commitment to the DNP and to future growth in health related programming as Shepherd seeks to better serve the region and meet its mission. The President and the Chair of the BoG clearly identified a willingness to commit the resources necessary to see the program become successful and cited significant health care need, strengths in partnerships, and collaborations in the health care sector across the region as reasons for such investment.

B. Capacity for implementing and sustaining the change(s)

The institution is located in a geographic area where there is a high demand for Doctor of Nursing Practice professionals. Shepherd has tenured/tenure track faculty and a pool of adjuncts with which it has a relationship that will allow it to implement this DNP program with well-qualified instructors and clinical preceptors. The institution has identified this DNP program in its Strategic Plan and has budgeted for the transition to financial sustainability. Shepherd recognizes the need to set tuition rates for its first doctoral program at a level that will allow it both to be competitive within the target service area and to provide the programmatic support that will allow the program to develop and flourish including providing resources for faculty development, support of scholarship and continuing development of the doctoral program as it is implemented.

The Department of Nursing has contracted with NursingCAS, a company that provides centralized application services for nursing programs. This service will assist in the vetting of future qualified DNP students and prompt enrollment.

C. Strategies for systematically monitoring and evaluating the effects, performance, and/or quality of the change(s)

Shepherd's learning management system (LMS) is an open source SAKAI and is the primary delivery mechanism for use in both Face to Face (F2F) and hybrid courses. Through SAKAI, instructors can provide a variety of activities (e.g., assignments, quizzes, discussion forums) and resources (e.g., web links, documents, web pages, embedded videos) to students. Additionally F2F courses will be held in the Martinsburg Adult Learning Center with state of the art classrooms equipped with SMART boards, LCD projectors, computers with webcams and microphones, to name just a few features. The Department of Nursing has

five clinical laboratories equipped with high fidelity simulators on the main campus. The Shepherd libraries subscribe to evidence-based databases including CINAHL, Cochrane and RefWorks.

The Department of Nursing holds BSN programmatic accreditation through the Collegiate Commission on Nursing Education (CCNE). The DNP program will be required to undergo accreditation review after initiation and prior to graduation of the first class of students. Initial CCNE accreditation for a newly accredited program can only be for a period of five years in the first cycle of approval. The Chair of the Department of Nursing plans on taking the BSN up for reaccreditation and the DNP for initial specialty accreditation in the late Spring 2016.

In addition to accreditation as a quality measure for the proposed DNP program, FNP graduates will be required to achieve both certification and hold licensure to practice in the advanced practice role. The certification is the eligibility requirement for advanced practice licensure in West Virginia. The Department of Nursing has set a benchmark for their FNP/DNP graduate first time test takers to achieve an 80% pass rate.

The Department of Nursing plans to use American Association of Colleges of Nursing's (AACN) Educational Benchmarking (EBI) DNP Assessments for Program Improvement. They already use AACN/EBI for their BSN program. EBI has a suite of assessment tools and the nursing department will choose which of the assessment tools it requires for continuous quality improvement.

D. Strategies for addressing strengths, challenges, or strategic issues (especially those previously identified by the Commission) related to the change(s)

The University had a comprehensive visit in 2012 and that team identified several items the university might consider as challenges. Within 18 months, the university had addressed all of those and received praise from the Commission for its efforts. For that reason, this major change team identified few challenges or strategic issues of concern. The principal area of future challenge appears to be faculty depth. The Nursing faculty currently have limited experience teaching at the doctoral level. However, four new tenure track faculty are being recruited and individuals within the current faculty are completing current faculty are now competing either DNP or Ph.D. programs. There will be a need for continued attention to growth and management of the faculty body as the DNP enrollment grows from an initial cohort of 15 to an intended enrollment of 45 per year.

E. Potential positive or negative effects of the change(s) on other institutional operations

This proposed change will allow Shepherd to make a positive impact on the nursing shortage in the surrounding geographic area and the DNP program will make a positive financial contribution to the institution within five years.

F. Quality standards

Faculty and students involved in any research must complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program to assure human subjects' protection and protection against conflict of interest and National Institute of Health Human Subject certifications. Investigational Review Board (IRB) guidelines and processes for submission are well established and maintain integrity of the university's research. Shepherd University and the Department of Nursing have policies that will govern the DNP projects and scholarship activities. Those policies include full compliance with IRB and Use of Human Subjects

Part III: Recommendation and Rationale

A. Recommendation

The team recommends that the DNP at Shepherd University be approved.

B. Rationale for the Team's Recommendation

The institution has a carefully considered strategic plan that guides its programming. HLC conducted a comprehensive visit in 2012, reaccredited the institution through 2022, and identified issues the institution should consider in its planning and operation. The institution considered those recommendations, made changes and sent a follow-up, staff analysis to HLC in 2013. HLC responded that the follow up report was very well done and that planning appeared to be effective. In continuing that planning process, the institution now proposes this DNP program to advance its mission and meet market needs.

Shepherd has provided strong and compelling evidence of their readiness to offer the DNP. Resources are available to offer a quality educational experience. There is also evidence of both need and demand for the proposed offering.

C. Other Accreditation Issues

None

Part IV: Statement of Affiliation Status

A. Affiliation Status

B. Nature of Institution

Shepherd University is an Accredited, Public, Bachelor's & Master's institution

C. Conditions of Affiliation

D. Monitoring

Progress Report:

Topic(s) and Due Date (month/date/year)

Rationale and Expectations

Monitoring Report: Topic(s) and Due Date (month/date/year)

Rationale and Expectations

Conditions (if . . . then)

Contingency Report:

Topic(s)

Rationale and Expectations

Other visits scheduled. State the type of visit required, the topics to be addressed, the recommended date, and the rationale for the visit recommendation.

Type of Visit

Comprehensive visit 2021-2022

Topic(s) and Timing (academic year - xxxx-xxxx)

Rationale and Expectations

E. Commission Sanction or Adverse Action

Placed on Notice:

Due Date for the Report

Rationale and Expectations

Areas That Must Be Addressed

Probation:

Date of Next Evaluation Visit

Rationale

Requirements for Removal of Probation

Denial or Withdrawal of Status:

Rationale

F. Summary of Commission Review

Timing for next comprehensive visit (academic year - xxxx-xxxx)

Rationale for the recommendation:

ADVANCEMENT SECTION

I. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The team believes that planning for this proposal and for this visit was thorough and inclusive. That planning process involved university administration, faculty, and external stakeholders. (Although the university reports that a high percentage of BSN students are interested in pursuing the DNP, the team encountered no other evidence that students were otherwise involved in the planning). The document supporting the proposed change was well prepared, thorough and informative. Discussions between the team and the university stakeholders, both internal and external were collegial, well-informed and thoughtful. It is clear that Shepherd University has the benefit of a very engaged community within its programs and its surrounding community. Facilities at the main campus and at the Martinsburg learning center are modern, well maintained and well-equipped for this new program. The university has built and now maintains strong ties with the nearby medical community, a critical asset for a program that requires extensive external participation by students.

The university has made it clear that it understands and is prepared to implement the next steps if the Commission approves this DNP proposal, increasing the probability that a Fall 2015 first cohort could be viable. Based on our experience with similar programs elsewhere, the team believes it unlikely that the DNP program will be financially rewarding, but we believe the program is likely to remain financially self-sufficient.

There are two areas to which the team suggests the university pay close attention as the program is implemented and grows to maturity: faculty depth and management of its external community. The Department of Nursing University currently has limited depth and limited experience teaching at the doctoral level. The university administration, and the program specifically have identified strategies for addressing that depth, including hiring four new faculty members and being supportive as two current members complete doctoral programs. The team encourages the university to explicitly engage the issue of faculty depth through hiring, mentoring and supporting its nursing faculty. Second, the nursing program requires extensive support from the medical community, including preceptors. The Department now has excellent relationships with a substantial number of institutions and medical providers. The team encourages the Department to be very explicit in its management of those relationships, continuing to nourish them and to develop others as the DNP program grows.

II. CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM



Shepherd University

Site Visit for Doctor of Nursing Practice Program

March 2-3, 2015

Submitted to:

Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500
Chicago, Illinois 60604-1411
312-263-0456 | Fax: 312-263-7462

Reviewers:

Dr. Jim Perry, HT Distinguished University Professor
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Dr. Maria A. Connolly, PhD, CNE, FCCM, ANEF
Dean Emerita, College of Nursing
University of St. Francis

Shepherd University, DNP Site Visit Schedule

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***Note:** For hyperlinks contained in this document, you make click on them directly to access PDF files; however, if they do not load properly, copy and paste the address into your browser.

Shepherd University
DNP Site Visit Schedule—

Sunday, March 1st

Date and Time	Description of Events	SU & HLC Participants	Location
Afternoon/early evening	Arrive at Dulles Airport	*Reviewers have transportation to hotel.	Dulles Airport
	Travel to Hotel	Contact Dr. Beard (240-285-8455-cell) for any questions.	Bavarian Inn
6:30	Dinner	Drs. Perry & Connolly	Bavarian Inn
8:00	Team members meeting*	Drs. Perry & Connolly	Bavarian Inn *We can arrange for a conference room for teamwork.

Monday, March 2nd

7:45 or 8:00	Breakfast		Bavarian Inn
9:00	Travel to the University	Dr. Beard to pick up site reviewers.	Bavarian Inn to Shepherd University
9:15	Set up team member computers/laptops in Meeting Room	Dr. Beard, Dr. Ames, IT personnel as needed.	Scarborough Library, Room 309 (WV Room)
10:00	Meeting with the President	Dr. Suzanne Shipley	Ikenberry, Room 204
10:40	Tour of Nursing Facilities	Dr. Beard, Dr. Mailey (Chair of Nursing Education), Nursing Faculty	Erma Ora Byrd hall
11:00	Meeting with Nursing faculty members	Dr. Beard, Dr. Mailey, Nursing Faculty	Conference Room, EOB Hall
Noon	Lunch	Lunch with clinical preceptors.	Scarborough Library, Room 309 (WV Room)
1:30	Meeting with Academic Affairs Stake Holders	Dr. Chris Ames, VP for Academic Affairs; Dr. Scott Beard, Associate VPAA &	Scarborough Library, Room 309 (WV Room)

		Graduate Dean; Dr. Virginia Hicks, Dean, School of Education and Professional Studies, Dr. Sharon Mailey, Chair, Dept. of Nursing Education	
2:30	Travel to the Martinsburg Center	Dr. Beard, Dr. Mailey, Dr. Ames	
3:00	Tour of Martinsburg Center Facilities	Dr. Beard, Dr. Mailey, Mr. Jim Klein (Director of the Center).	Martinsburg Center
3:30	Meeting with Martinsburg Center Staff	Mr. Klein, Ms. Donovan, Ms. Barker,	Martinsburg Center, Room 105
4:15	Meeting with Members of the Board of Governors		Martinsburg Center, Room 105
5:15	Travel back to the Bavarian	Dr. Beard	
6:00	Team time/dinner	Site team members	Bavarian Inn or other restaurant.

Tuesday, March 3rd

7:45 or 8:00	Breakfast		Bavarian Inn
8:45	Travel to the University	Dr. Beard to pick up site reviewers	Bavarian Inn to Shepherd University
9:00	Team time		Scarborough Library, Room 309 (WV Room)
10:00	Exit Interview	President Shipley, Dr. Ames, Dr. Beard, Dean Hicks, Dr. Mailey	President's Conference Room, Ikenberry Hall

Helpful Links:

Prior to arriving on campus, there are several links that will be helpful in preparation for your visit:

Driving directions: <http://www.shepherd.edu/admissions/directions-to-shepherd>

Shepherd “At a Glance:” <http://www.shepherd.edu/admissions/at-a-glance>

Shepherd University Accreditations and Institutional Planning Pages:
<http://www.shepherd.edu/accreditations/>

HLC Accreditation web pages (access to recent reports and actions):
<http://www.shepherd.edu/accreditation/>

Strategic Plan: <http://www.shepherd.edu/university/strategic-plan/currents.pdf>

Institutional Compact: <http://www.shepherd.edu/compact/> ; on this page, the compact comprehensive plans for 2013-2018 include information on implementing new degree programs like the DNP: <http://www.shepherd.edu/compact/compact13.pdf>

Shepherd University Catalog

Shepherd University’s catalog has been online since 2011-2012 in an interactive, fully inter-linked format using the ACALOG catalog management system software: <http://www.acalog.com/>. Acalog is a powerful tool used by many institutions of higher learning across the United States to present their catalog [<http://www.acalog.com/clients/key-experiences.php>]. The current (2014-2015) Shepherd University Catalog is available through this link: catalog.shepherd.edu

Archival access to the previous catalogs are available through the drop-down menu, and via PDF files of catalogs prior to 2011, through this same catalog link. The Shepherd University Catalog outlines the university mission, vision, core academic policies and procedures, degree programs and course structures within each program.

Graduate Studies

Information regarding Shepherd University’s current graduate programs and policies may be accessed through the web pages for that division. As a note, the history, mission, vision, core

values and strategic plan are located under the first drop box entitled “graduate studies.”
Graduate studies: <http://www.shepherd.edu/graduate-studies/>

Handbooks

In addition to the PDF versions of handbooks, this information is also available through the hyperlinks listed below:

Faculty Handbook: <http://www.shepherd.edu/employees/senate/documents/handbook.pdf>

Staff Handbook: <http://www.shepherd.edu/hrweb/handbook.pdf>

Additional HR information is also available here:

http://www.shepherd.edu/hrweb/new_employees.html



New Programs

Substantive Change Application

Institution: Shepherd University **City, State:** Shepherdstown, WV 25443

Name of person completing this application: Dr. Scott Beard **Date Submitted:** 12/05/14 & 01/5/14

Title: Assoc. Vice President for Academic Affairs, and HLC ALO **Phone:** 304-876-5651 **Email:**
sbeard@shepherd.edu

The questions are designed to elicit brief, succinct, detailed information, rather than a narrative or references to extensive supporting documents. Do not attach other documents unless they are specifically requested in the questions. The total submission should be no more than 10-12 pages on a single classification of change. (The page limit excludes attachments.)

If the name of the person completing this application is not the CEO, CAO, or the ALO of the institution, it is understood that the person completing and submitting this application has consulted with and informed those individuals.

Submit the completed application as a single electronic document (in Adobe PDF format) on the following webpage:
http://www.hlcommission.org/document_upload/.

Part 1: General Questions

1. Requested Change(s). Concisely describe the change for which the institution is seeking approval.

Shepherd University and the Department of Nursing Education (DON) seek permission to implement the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree program (DNP) at Shepherd University. The DNP would be the first doctoral-level program offered at Shepherd University.

With the ever-increasing focus on our nation's healthcare system, providing affordable and accessible advanced nursing education to Shepherd's graduates, the regional workforce, and national and international partners is a crucial next step in Shepherd's mission of access, service and opportunity. A Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) will improve the quality of life for clients and patients and ensure the region has an educated and diverse workforce, thereby transforming the quality of care at the local, regional, national, and international levels, all in support of Shepherd's mission.

The University and the Department of Nursing Education (DON) have worked closely with the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WV-HEPC) to develop a program that will meet the needs of the service region. Since the

previous Graduate Council’s approval to establish a graduate program in the Department of Nursing Education, profound and unprecedented changes in healthcare have occurred, creating a greater need for knowledgeable and innovative nurse leaders. “Some of the many factors building momentum for change in nursing education at the graduate level include: the rapid expansion of knowledge underlying practice; increased complexity of patient care; national concerns about the quality of care and patient safety; shortages of nursing personnel which demands a higher level of preparation for leaders who can design and assess care; shortages of doctorally-prepared nursing faculty; and increasing educational expectations for the preparation of other members of the healthcare team” (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, April 2011, Fact Sheet: The Doctor of Nursing Practice). In response to these factors, the Institute of Medicine and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation released a landmark report on The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health (October, 2012), which recommended doubling the number of nurses with doctoral degrees by 2020.

During exit interviews with Shepherd’s graduating nursing students, over one third intended to continue their education and have expressed interest in graduate studies in nursing at Shepherd. Most of Shepherd’s 1,400 BSN graduated nursing students are within a seventy-five mile radius of the campus, providing a fertile opportunity for recruitment. West Virginia (WV) is divided into seven workforce regions, with Shepherd University located in Workforce Region 7. Workforce Region 7 includes Berkeley, Grant, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral, Morgan, and Pendleton Counties. This region includes only one baccalaureate of nursing program (Shepherd University) and two associate degree-nursing programs (Blue Ridge Community and Technical College and Eastern WV Community and Technical College). Our region has one of the longest fill times in regard to nursing faculty positions, primarily due to a shortage of qualified faculty and the need to compete across state lines for qualified faculty (Source: WV Center for Nursing’s 2010 Workforce Demand in Nursing Survey Reports and Recommendations, 2011). Shepherd's DNP program would have an immediate impact on filling healthcare vacancies in the region.

2. Is this application being submitted in conjunction with another application?

- Yes
- No

3. Classification of Change Request. Check all boxes that apply to the change.

Note: not every institutional change requires prior review and approval. Review the “[Overview of Commission Policies and Procedures for Institutional Changes Requiring Commission Notification or Approval](#)” to make certain that current HLC policy requires the institution to seek approval.

New academic program(s):

- Certificate Bachelor’s Diploma Master’s/specialist
- Associate’s Doctorate Check if program is at a new degree level

An institution submitting more than one change request should complete multiple applications, one for each type of change. The types of change requests include:

- Change in mission
- Change in student body
- Direct assessment competency-based program(s)
- Consortial arrangement
- Contractual arrangement
- Substantially changing the clock or credit hours required for a program

- Change in academic calendar (e.g., quarters to semester) or change in credit allocation
- Teach-out plan if closing location provides total degree programs
- Distance delivery
- New Programs
- Certificate Programs
- Branch Campuses and Additional Locations

4. Special conditions. Indicate whether any of the conditions identified below fit the institution (Yes or No). If Yes, explain the situation in the box provided.

- a) Is the institution, in its relations with other regional, specialized, or national accrediting agencies, currently under or recommended for a negative status or action (e.g., withdrawal, probation, sanction, warning, show-cause, etc.)?
NO
- b) Is the institution now undergoing or facing substantial monitoring, special review, or financial restrictions from the U.S. Dept. of Education or other federal or state government agencies?
NO
- c) Has the institution's senior leadership or board membership experienced substantial resignations or removals in the past year?
NO
- d) Is the institution experiencing financial difficulty through such conditions as a currently declared state of exigency, a deficit of 10% or more, a default or failure to make payroll during the past year, or consecutive deficits in the two most recent years?
NO
- e) Is the institution experiencing other pressures that might affect its ability to carry out the proposal (e.g., a collective bargaining dispute or a significant lawsuit)?
NO

5. Approvals. Mark the approvals that are required prior to implementing the proposed change and include documentation of the approvals to the request or evidence that approval is not needed.

- Internal (faculty, board) approvals
 System approvals (for an institution that is part of a system)

State approval(s) for:

- Program(s)
 Additional location(s) or campus(es)
 Contractual or consortial arrangements
 Clock/credit hour changes
 For Distance Delivery only: process in place to ascertain and secure state approval(s) as required
 Foreign country(ies) approvals (for an overseas program or site)
 No approval required

6. Specialized Accreditation. Complete this section only if specialized accreditation is required for licensure or practice in program(s) covered by this change application.

The institution has already obtained the appropriate specialized accreditation. Attach a copy of the letter from the agency granting accreditation.

The institution has begun the process of seeking or plans to seek specialized accreditation. Specify the name of the agency and the timeline for completing the process. (If approval is a multi-stage process, the institution should contact the HLC staff liaison to discuss the timeline before submitting this change application form.)

The institution does not plan to seek specialized accreditation. Provide a rationale for not seeking this accreditation.

7. Changes Requiring Visits. This section is not for Commission-mandated visits such as additional location confirmation visits or campus evaluation visits.

Note: Complete this section only if the institution is already aware that the proposed change will need to be reviewed through a visit. (If the institution is unsure whether a visit is required, the Commission will advise the institution based on the information provided in both Part 1 and Part 2 of the change application.)

Request to schedule a Change Visit.

Request to add a proposed change to an already scheduled visit. Specify type of visit and date scheduled:

Whether the change will be reviewed through a separate Change Visit or embedded in an already scheduled visit, the following schedule will apply.

- Part 1 of this change form must be submitted at least 4 months before the visit. If the visit has not already been scheduled, this filing will initiate the process of scheduling the visit.
- The institution files Part 2 of this change form at least 2 months before the scheduled visit. If the change will be embedded in an already scheduled visit, the form should be filed as an attachment to the report prepared for that visit.

Please note: The Commission plans to update the change forms annually, on or about September 1 of each year. However, if a Change Application form was accessed more than 90 days prior to filing, it is recommended that the institution visit <http://www.hlcommission.org/change> to ensure that there have been no changes in the application form in the intervening time.



Part 2: Topic Specific Questions

An institution should submit a separate application for each requested program (unless the programs represent closely related disciplines). Each proposed new program should be identified by using the *Classification of Instructional Programs* terminology (CIP codes). CIP codes are established by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics as a taxonomic scheme that supports the accurate tracking and reporting of fields of study and program completions activity. More information is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/>.

Attach the “Substantive Change Application, Part 1: General Questions” as page one of your application. That completed form and your answers to the questions below will constitute your request for approval of a substantive change. This form will be the basis for review of this application.

Name of Institution: Shepherd University

Section A. Characteristics of the Change Requested

1. Identify the basic characteristics of the proposed educational program as indicated below:

- a. the full name of the proposed program, the specific degree (if applicable) or the instructional level (if not a degree program), and the six-digit CIP code XX.XXXX of the program [CIP codes, program name, and additional description (optional)]

Name of Program: Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

Specific Degree: same

Instructional level: graduate/doctoral

CIP Code: 51.3818

Definition from the National Center on Education Statistics Website: A practice-focused program that prepares registered nurses for increasingly complex evidence-based nursing practice, including translating research into practice, evaluating evidence, applying research in decision-making, and implementing viable clinical innovations to change practice. Includes instruction in healthcare delivery systems, health economics and finance, health policy, research methods, translating evidence into practice, concepts in population health, and nursing leadership.

The concentrations are the following: Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) and Nursing Leadership (Administration or Education Track).

- b. total credit hours (indicate whether semester or quarter) for completion of the program

The University's degree programs are based on a 14-week semester (fall or spring), with graduate students also being able to enroll in any of the three summer sessions (4-weeks, 4-weeks and 11 weeks respectively). The DNP program will consist of a minimum of 75 credits at the post-baccalaureate entry point. The credits hours for the specific programs and tracks are as follows: FNP-84 credits; NL (Administration)-75 credits; NL (Education)-79 credits. See Appendix B for full curricular details and information.

- c. normal or typical length of time for students to complete the program

Typical full-time students would complete the coursework in credits to be delivered over three years. For those with a master's degree, twelve months of full-time study would be required to obtain the additional doctoral-level competencies. Additionally, in keeping with graduate studies policy, part-time students have up to 7 years to complete the program.

- d. proposed initial date for implementation of the program

The proposed initial date for implementation of the program is fall semester 2015.

- e. primary target audience for the program (e.g., full-time, part-time, traditional college age, working adults, transfer students, military personnel, or particular ethnic group)

The primary target audience for the program is full- and part-time practicing baccalaureate- and masters-prepared nurses. Applicants must be registered nurses and have received their degree(s) from a CCNE accredited program. While the DNP program would focus on working adults, traditional-age graduate students coming from a BSN accredited program are also part of the targeted applicant pool.

f. projected life of the program (single cohort or ongoing)

This will be an ongoing program, as students after the first semester of admits may enter the program in any semester, including summer session(s).

g. whether the program will be part of contractual or consortial arrangement

NO

2. Identify if the institution is requesting new stipulations for the proposed program and provide rationale for this request.

NO

3. Is your institution planning any involvement by external organizations (other than accredited higher education institutions) in key operations as identified below, provide the information requested for each planned involvement. (Note that such involvement by a parent company or by one of its subsidiaries external to the institution in any of these operations should be reported.)

Type of Involvement	Name(s) of External Organization(s)	Percent of Involvement
A. Recruitment and admission of students	NursingCAS (Centralized Application Service for Nursing Programs) *NursingCAS is a partner with AACN (American Association of Colleges of Nursing) and is a centralized application service for students applying to CCNE accredited programs. See Appendix D for admissions entry points and requirements.	50 % for recruitment of qualified applicants and location for admissions materials. *Admission of qualified applicants will be 100% completed by the institution's DNP admissions committee.
B. Course placement and advising of students		
C. Design and oversight of curriculum	Independent Consultant (hired in preparation for CCNE site visit in 2016)	Advisory
D. Direct instruction and oversight	Independent Consultant (hired in preparation for CCNE site visit in 2016)	Advisory
E. Other support for delivery of instruction		

Section B. Institution's History with Programs

4. Does the institution currently offer a program at the same instructional level and with the same 4-digit CIP code (XX.XX) as the proposed program? If so, identify the program currently offered and whether it is a degree program. Will the proposed program replace the program currently offered?

NO

5. Does the institution currently offer two or more programs at the same instructional level with the same 2-digit CIP code (XX.) as the proposed program? If so, identify the two such programs with the highest numbers of graduates during the past year, along with their numbers of graduates.

NO

Section C. Institutional Planning for Program Change

6. What impact might the proposed program have on challenges identified as part of or subsequent to the last comprehensive visit or reaffirmation panel and how has the institution addressed the challenges?

Some past challenges have included the development of “graduate culture” at the institution and workload for faculty teaching graduate courses. These issues were successfully addressed in the institution’s most recent progress report for the HLC (December 2013). The staff analysis of the report and the report itself may be accessed through the institution accreditation web pages: <http://www.shepherd.edu/accreditation/progress2013.pdf>. To summarize from the staff analysis: “Shepherd University submitted a very complete report of graduate education, including the structure for representation, policies and procedures, governance, increased enrollment, etc. Shepherd University is commended for a well organized and convincing progress report that effectively addressed the concerns of the comprehensive visit team.”

Since the date of that report, graduate enrollments have continued to be an area of growth for the institution, with enrollments rising over 8% in fall 2014.

7. Briefly describe the planning process for determining the need for this new program, including the role of faculty in the planning and approval process.

Providing affordable and accessible doctoral nursing education to Shepherd’s graduates, the regional workforce, and national and international partners will improve the quality of life for clients and patients. Having an educated and diverse workforce will transform quality care at the local, regional, national, and international levels and thereby support Shepherd’s mission. Shepherd University’s DNP program is poised to provide qualified nursing faculty for our University, WV’s Workforce Region 7 and surrounding areas. The preparation of nursing faculty will assist in alleviating the challenges associated with recruitment of qualified doctorally-prepared nursing faculty and allow nursing programs to expand their enrollment, thus providing nurses to improve the very poor health indices facing West Virginia residents and the aging of the state’s population.

In consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), Graduate Dean & Associate VPAA, DON faculty were involved at all stages of the planning process, from developing the curriculum, syllabi, to assessment matrices, and admissions requirements. A brief timeline is included below:

2011-2012: Shepherd is re-accredited by the Higher Learning Commission for the maximum period (10 years), with a progress report due in December 2013 on the development of graduate education.

2012-2013 An Intent to plan document for the DNP is developed by the DON and following approval by the department and School of Education and Professional Studies, is also approved by the Graduate Council.

The first HLC report in December 2012, which addresses faculty workload (this also relates to the graduate area), is received enthusiastically, with no areas for follow up.

The DON continues to meet with the GSCE Dean, the President and the VPAA regarding next steps and to further refine the proposal. The Graduate Council is informed of progress with the program on a regular basis.

2013-2014 September-The DNP Intent to plan proposal is approved by the Shepherd University Board of Governors and forwarded to the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WV-HEPC) in early 2014.

December-The HLC progress report on graduate culture is received with no areas for follow-up.

April-Meeting with Shepherd's HLC Liaison regarding next steps and the viability of a DNP proposal.

The Intent to Plan document is held by WV-HEPC pending a conference call with West Virginia University, which is collegial, informative and positive in its outcome in regard to Shepherd offering the DNP.

July-Shepherd received the notification that the Chancellor approved Shepherd's DNP Intent to plan document.

August-DNP Implementation plan is sent to the WV-HEPC. A follow-up request for faculty vitae and course syllabi is completed in August. Current faculty are involved in gathering documents and creating complete syllabi.

WV-HEPC sends the report to an external reviewer who has very positive feedback:

- The Shepherd University nursing faculty is to be commended for developing a comprehensive DNP program. The University and faculty seem well positioned to implement the program. The proposal was thorough and professional. Excellent planning and attention to detail.

- The program adheres to the standards and guidelines described in *The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice* (AACN, 2006). All required areas for accreditation appear to be included and the required academic credit is in line with national standards. This proposal also actually shows the additional clinical courses required for the MSN-DNP nurse practitioner program.

The WV-HEPC approves the final implementation plan in its November 21, 2014 meeting.

8. What are the physical facilities and equipment needed to support the program? Indicate the impact that the proposed change will have on the physical resources and laboratories that currently accommodate existing programs and services, or identify new laboratory and preceptor needs.

Initial additional resources for implementing the DNP Program would be minimal. Erma Ora Byrd (EOB) Hall, built in 2007, was planned with the consideration that space might be needed for a graduate nursing program. There is sufficient classroom and clinical simulation laboratory space available for this program.

The computer lab in the EOB building will accommodate the graduate nursing students, who will use it primarily in the evening hours when undergraduate student classes are not scheduled. However, the budget for the DNP Program will include the purchase of software (e.g. SPSS and databases for the Health Information Management course) used only by graduate students.

In August 2013, Shepherd University opened an additional location in the Aikens Center along Edwin Miller Boulevard in Martinsburg, approximately ten miles from the main campus. It is intended that this new campus location will eventually house most of Shepherd's graduate programs and programs designed for non-traditional students such as the RN-BSN program track. The DNP program will be administered through the Martinsburg

campus. Included in the allocations by the university are office space for the DNP program coordinators, as well as a dedicated classroom for distance learning.

9. What is the evidence that a market for the new program(s) exists? How has estimated program demand been factored into realistic enrollment projections? How has this evidence been used in planning and budgeting processes to develop a quality program that can be sustained?

In 2004, nursing schools affiliated with AACN voted to move advanced nursing practice education from the master's degree to doctoral preparation by the target year of 2015. Both post-baccalaureate and post-master's DNP programs are available with "184 DNP programs currently enrolling students" and an "additional 101 DNP programs are in the planning stages" (AACN, 2012). "From 2010 to 2011, the number of students enrolled in DNP programs increased from 7,034 to 9,094. During the same period, the number of DNP graduates increased from 1,282 to 1,595" (AACN, 2012). The landmark report "The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health" released in October 2010 by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) addressed the need for a transformed education system for future nurses and recommended doubling the number of nurses with a doctorate by 2020. The DNP will provide evidence-based practices in education that promote inter-professional collaboration and leadership.

Leadership - Nursing Faculty Shortage

The Association of American Health Centers (2007) reported that worsening faculty shortages are threatening the nation's health professions educational infrastructure. In 2011, nursing schools in the United States turned away 75,587 qualified applicants from baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs primarily due to faculty shortages (AACN, Nursing Faculty Shortage, 2014: <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/media-relations/fact-sheets/nursing-shortage>). In addition, many nursing faculty members are nearing the age of retirement. "The average ages of doctorally-prepared faculty holding the ranks of professor, associate professor, and assistant professor were 60.5, 57.1, and 51.1 years respectively. For master's degree-prepared nurse faculty the average ages for professors, associate professors, and assistant professors were 57.7, 56.4, and 50.9 years respectively" (AACN, Nursing Faculty Shortage, 2013).

The IOM landmark report, "The Future of Nursing," (2010) called for increasing the number of baccalaureate-prepared nurses in the workforce to 80% and doubling the number of nurses with doctoral degrees by 2020. The current nursing workforce falls far short of these recommendations, with 50% of registered nurses prepared at the baccalaureate or graduate degree level.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 26% growth in RN positions between 2010-2020 (<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/Healthcare/Registered-nurses.htm>). Jurasehek, Zhang, Ranganathan, and Li (2012) estimated an RN shortage ratio of 249 per 100,000 West Virginians by 2023 (United States Registered Nurse Workforce Report Card and Shortage Forecast, American Journal of Medical Quality, 2012). "With nursing faculty shortages and difficulties in recruitment of qualified faculty, expansion of nursing programs beyond current capacity is worrisome. An estimated 50 new faculty positions would be needed to increase enrollment by 20 students per respondent program in WV schools of nursing" (WV Center for Nursing's 2010 Workforce Demand in Nursing Survey Reports and Recommendations, 2011).

As stated in Part I, Question 1, West Virginia (WV) is divided into seven workforce regions; with Shepherd University located in Workforce Region 7. Workforce Region 7 includes Berkeley, Grant, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral, Morgan, and Pendleton Counties. This region includes one baccalaureate of nursing program (Shepherd University) and two associate degree-nursing programs (Blue Ridge Community and Technical College and Eastern WV Community and Technical College). Workforce Region 7 has one of the longest times to fill nursing faculty positions: primarily due to a shortage of qualified faculty and the need to compete across state lines for qualified faculty (WV Center for Nursing's 2010 Workforce Demand in Nursing Survey Reports and Recommendations, 2011).

Currently, there are only six doctorally-prepared registered nurses in the Workforce Region 7, three of which are current faculty members at Shepherd University (WV Center for Nursing's 2010 Workforce Demand in Nursing Survey Reports and Recommendations, 2011). The report also noted that state-wide nursing faculty members are aging, with an average of six faculty retirements per year; the number of nursing faculty retirements is expected to grow significantly over the next five years.

Using the evidence cited above regarding future demands in the profession, and building on the strong reputation of our current undergraduate program, a five-year plan regarding enrollment and budget projections has been developed, and also approved by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. The DNP program will be self-sustaining following the first full year of enrollment. Additional information on impact and need for the program is found in Appendix G.

10. If the program request is approved, what future growth do you anticipate (e.g., in the next six months, three years) and how do you plan to manage this growth?

The enrollment projections contained in the appendices indicate growth from an initial class of 15 students, doubling in the next year, with enrollment reaching approximately 45 students in the third year. Most of the increase is not in the size of the entering class but in the multiple cohorts as new classes enter each year. As tuition revenue and FTE are generated, budget projections also include the hiring of additional faculty.

As the largest major at the university, the current undergraduate nursing program has an ongoing history of managing growth in enrollments to fit available clinical and tenure-track faculty, facilities and fiscal resources. If growth exceeds targets in the DNP budget and enrollment projections, as with our current undergraduate program, we would continue current practice of evaluating each applicant and selecting the best-qualified candidates to fill the limited number of available slots.

11. How does this program fit into the current and expected financial picture of the institution? In particular, will the program be financially self-sufficient within three years? If not, when do you expect the program to be financially self-sufficient and how do you expect the program to operate until then?

The program will be self-sufficient in year two.

During the last several years, graduate enrollment has been an area of growth for the institution. While undergraduate numbers experienced a 5% drop over the last two years, graduate headcount has grown steadily during that period, particularly in relation to FTE:

- Increase in enrollment: (Fall 2010: 148 to Fall 2014: 185), an increase of 25%;
- Increase in FTE: (Fall 2011: 77.92 to Fall 2014: 114.83), an increase of 47.36%

In an era of decreased state appropriations, as well as additional budget cuts, the increases in graduate enrollment have enabled the institution to meet its budget obligations. The small deficit noted in the first year of operation of the DNP would be covered by donor funding. With a different tuition revenue model set, the deficit could be under \$10,000 for the first year of operation.

West Virginia is a state with an underserved, rural population with poor health indices. Implementation of the proposed DNP program would make available grant opportunities through organizations such as the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Large grant opportunities for DNP scholarships, particularly in BSN to DNP programs, would be a good fit for potential Shepherd students.

12. What controls are in place to ensure that the information presented to all constituencies in advertising, brochures, and other communications will be accurate?

Controls regarding accurate information and compliance with state and national regulations and accreditation standards are in place through the oversight of the HLC Institutional ALO, Dean of Graduate Studies, the Director of Nursing Education, DNP graduate program coordinators, Graduate Council and a DNP-specific advisory council. The Office of University Communications and Division of Enrollment Management is also responsible for accuracy in media relations, publications, community relations, admissions materials and management of the University's website.

Section D. Curriculum and Instructional Design

13. Please list all the courses that comprise the program. Include course descriptions and number of credit hours for each.

The courses that comprise the program, including the number of credit hours, as well as clinical requirements are found in Appendix B.

14. What are the requirements students must fulfill to complete the program successfully (including specific courses, course options, and any other requirements)?

The courses outlined in the curricular charts in Appendix B are all required.

Some other features of the program include:

- Program orientation prior to the first year;
- On-site course sessions during each semester;
- Attendance at the annual Shepherd University DON Education and Martinsburg Veterans Affairs Research Conference;
- Oral defense of DNP Project Proposal and qualifying exam;
- Oral defense of DNP Project.

A hallmark of Shepherd's Doctor of Nursing Practice is the successful completion of the DNP practicum, which encompasses 1,080 practice hours. The DNP practicum provides opportunities to develop knowledge and skills in specific areas of advanced nursing practice or professional roles, building on didactic courses. The project includes in-depth work with experts from multiple disciplines and engagement within communities of practice. This clinical work enables students to synthesize and integrate leadership, policy, inquiry, evidence-based practice, and teaching and clinical expertise in selected settings. Students will develop and implement a scholarly inquiry project through sequential experiences within the practicum courses. The DNP practicum will be reviewed and evaluated by a faculty mentor and project committee, and chaired by a member of the Shepherd University DON graduate faculty with doctoral preparation, who is engaged in practice relevant to the student's topic.

Additional information regarding clinical internships and practicum experiences is found in Appendix C. Appendix D provides more in-depth information on the DNP Project.

15. For programs using prior learning credit, compressed time frames, online delivery, accelerated formats, or other approaches to learning, explain how the institution will ensure that student work and the levels of knowledge and competencies comparable to those required in traditional formats have been achieved.

For assessing prior learning, all applicants to the DNP program will be evaluated individually based on prior educational, work and current employment experience. This evaluation will take place at the point of admission (See Appendix D). This assessment is accomplished through the examination of the transcript for statistics and research course pre-requisites (assisted by Nursing CAS service), a letter of intent, personal interview, and two professional

references. Programs of study will be designed to include additional course work, if necessary, to meet the educational objectives of the program.

Section E. Institutional Staffing, Faculty, and Student Support

16. How many and what types of faculty (full-time or part-time) will be employed in the program? Why is the number and type of faculty sufficient to support the program?

To address the number of faculty in the program, Shepherd will start its DNP program with a smaller cohort (15 students), minimizing initial admission, coupled with controlled growth over its first five years. Hiring underway currently to replace retiring faculty will allow for an increase of doctorally-qualified faculty, corresponding with the beginning of the graduate program in fall, 2015. Additional full-time, tenure-track faculty hires will be phased in starting with the spring 2016 semester and will be ongoing as indicated through the pro-forma document. Shepherd is fortunate to be positioned geographically in an area where it has access to an impressive array of health care professionals, many of whom are interested in being affiliated with Shepherd's proposed program. This roster of healthcare professionals is included in the teaching assignments and faculty qualifications in Appendix H.

While Shepherd will maintain some nursing faculty who teach exclusively in the undergraduate program, the majority of doctorally-qualified graduate faculty will teach in both programs. This allows one strong department to staff both programs and permits us to build the DNP on the foundation of our well-respected BSN. Given that the undergraduate program is substantially larger than the proposed graduate program, most faculty will teach a mix of graduate and undergraduate courses.

Courses in the program have been mapped for delivery using five current tenure-track faculty (includes the FNP faculty member currently in the hiring process), with additional support from one doctorally-qualified clinical faculty member and seven affiliate graduate (adjunct/PT) faculty members. Of those slated to teach in the program, 12 out of 14 are doctorally qualified or 85.71%. In total, the department has 10 tenure-track faculty lines, 3 part-time or adjunct faculty members at the undergraduate level, and 18 clinical faculty. Support staff for the proposed program would include a total of 5 staff members: 2 in nursing education, 1 in graduate studies and 2 at the Martinsburg Center. With current faculty/staff and proposed additional hires in the budget projections, we feel this mix of full-time faculty, affiliate graduate faculty and support staff, coupled with the use of NursingCAS in the admissions process will enable Shepherd to provide the necessary academic, clinical, administrative and supportive services required of the DNP.

17. What will the impact of the new initiative be on faculty workload?

Nursing Education is one of the largest undergraduate majors at Shepherd University. Development of this advanced practice degree will necessitate the reassignment of some faculty to a partial load in the graduate area, with possible release time for research and additional clinical practice. Implementation of the program will lead to a more qualified workforce allowing for the development of qualified clinical faculty, thereby alleviating current shortages of those faculty for to supervise our undergraduate nursing student population.

With several pending retirements in the current nursing faculty and the implementation of the DNP, this degree program will help to increase the profile of Shepherd's nursing program and enable the institution to recruit faculty with the best qualifications.

18. Provide a brief attachment that inventories each faculty member employed to teach in the program, including names of existing personnel, a description of each faculty member's academic qualifications, their prior instructional

responsibility and other experiences relevant to the courses they will teach in the program in question, each faculty member's course load in the new program, and the course work each teaches in other programs currently offered.

See Appendix H for DNP faculty inventories and qualifications.

19. For graduate programs, document scholarship and research capability of each faculty member; for doctoral programs, document faculty experience in directing student research.

In addressing faculty scholarship, Shepherd's graduate programs utilize the Boyer model for scholarship. Boyer (1990) challenged all disciplines to embrace the full scope of academic work, moving beyond an exclusive focus on traditional and narrowly defined research as the only legitimate avenue to further the knowledge of the discipline. He proposed that scholarship involves four areas that are critical to academic work. These are the scholarship of

- discovery, where new and unique knowledge is generated;
- teaching, where the teacher creatively builds bridges between his or her own understanding and the students' learning;
- application, where the emphasis is on the use of new knowledge in solving society's problems; and
- integration, where new relationships among disciplines are discovered.

These four aspects of scholarship are salient to academic nursing, where each specified area supports the values of a profession committed to both social relevance and scientific advancement. This is especially true in the scholarship of practice and the development of clinical knowledge. Faculty, particularly those associated with the FNP track, will need 400 practice or clinical hours annually for re-certification.

See Appendix H for DNP faculty research qualifications and outcomes.

20. What library and information resources—general as well as specific to the program(s)—and staffing and services are in place to support the initiative? If the proposed new program is at the graduate level, document discipline-specific refereed journals and primary source materials.

The DON is supported through services and staff members in the Scarborough Library. The Scarborough Library has most of the resources needed to support a DNP program in nursing. The current database subscriptions include access to all the online information sources that would be needed, including the Cochrane Library, Medline, CINAHL, Clinical Pharmacology, and ERIC. The DNP ProForma includes funds for purchasing additional book titles to support graduate study in nursing, health information management, for additions to our current SPSS software license. and a specialty in health information management in particular.

Shepherd has recently upgraded its CINAHL subscription from the basic CINAHL Plus to CINAHL Complete.

This is the definitive research tool for nursing and allied health professionals. With CINAHL Complete users get fast and easy access to top nursing and allied health journals, evidence-based care sheets and quick lessons.

CINAHL Complete provides broad content coverage including over 50 nursing specialties, speech and language pathology, nutrition, general health and medicine and more.

Section F. Evaluation

21. Describe the process for monitoring, evaluating, and improving the overall effectiveness and quality of the program. Indirect and direct qualitative and quantitative assessment measures will be used to assess the four intended learning outcomes for the DNP. For more detailed information on assessment, including program outcome matrices, please see Appendix F. Student learning will be evaluated according to the programmatic outcomes. The program is designed so each student will be able to:
1. Critically appraise current scientific findings and theories to enhance the practice of nursing and health care.
 - o Evaluate strengths, limitations, and health disparities in current health care systems, especially vulnerable populations.
 - o Integrate current theoretical and research literature to impact positively the quality of health care.
 - o Construct and evaluate new approaches to practice, utilizing a collaborative interdisciplinary approach.
 2. Translate and utilize evidence-based practice and information systems to promote optimal health in vulnerable populations, diverse settings, and systems.
 - o Use databases, information technology, and research methods to participate in data collection that generates and evaluates evidence-based practice.
 - o Design effective methods for the empowerment of health care consumers that encourages active participation in their own health care.
 - o Evaluate, apply, and revise evidence-based practice protocols to promote wellness.
 - o Use analytical methods to design, implement and evaluate best practices to meet current and future needs of patients or for patient care and systems of care.
 - o Effectively lead quality improvement and patient safety initiatives to ensure safety and quality health care for patients and vulnerable populations.
 3. Assume leadership roles and collaborate with other professionals to effect changes within complex systems.
 - o Propose and implement ongoing changes in delivery approaches to promote quality, safe care.
 - o Impact the ethical, economic, social, and political issues that affect health care outcomes at local, regional, and/or national levels.
 - o Apply information systems and patient care technology for the improvement and transformation of healthcare.
 - o Lead inter-professional teams in efforts for improving patient and population health outcomes for vulnerable populations.
 4. Pursue clinical scholarship and scientific inquiry to transform education and health care practice and systems.
 - o Demonstrate accountability for and utilization of evidence-based practice.
 - o Advance the practice of nursing through scholarship, mentorship, and leadership efforts.
 - o Disseminate results of evidence-based practice protocols, systems changes, and health care initiatives for health disparities and vulnerable populations.
 - o Advance the effective use of health care information systems to assure high quality health care outcomes for vulnerable populations.

The DNP program will adhere to the standards identified by the AACN entitled the Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Practice Nursing (DNP Essentials). The DNP Essentials identifies standard foundational curriculum content and outcomes-based competencies essential for all DNP graduates.

The Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs by the CCNE outlines assessment criteria for DNP programs (http://www.aacn.nche.edu/ccne-accreditation/Proposed_Standards_Clean_3-2013.pdf). Data will include, but is not limited to:

- Program completion rate (Goal - at least 70% of full-time students will graduate within three years of entrance into the program)

- Certification rate (Goal - at least 80% of FNP and leadership (education) graduates will pass the certification exam on their first attempt)
- Employment rates (Goal - at least 80% of graduates will be employed within 12 months of graduation in their area of specialization)

- Student intended learning outcomes
- Faculty outcomes
- Formal complaints

In addition, the FNP track will adhere to the standards identified in the Report of the National Task Force on Quality NP Education entitled Criteria for Evaluation of NP Programs. The Criteria for Evaluation of NP Programs provides a framework for review of NP educational programs, focusing on faculty, curriculum, evaluation, students, organization and administration and clinical resources/experiences available for NP students.

Data will be collected from program faculty, current students, program graduates, and clinical preceptors of program students, using the following methods:

Semester Course Evaluations: In addition to the university course evaluations, forms developed and approved specifically for the DNP program will be distributed to students enrolled in each DNP course. Evaluation forms will ask students for input specific to the course and learning experiences and not in regard to the respective faculty member(s). The program coordinator will review the aggregate data from each course and in consultation with the advisory board and graduate council will make or propose appropriate course or program revisions.

Clinical Faculty Evaluations of Student Performance: In NURS 632, the DNP practicum, under faculty supervision, students will have a mentored experience. Evaluation tools designed to assess mastery of standards of advanced practice performance, as set forth by the relevant professional organization will be used for these assessments. Aspects of the assessment will include, but not be limited to: student self-assessment, clinical preceptor assessment, and clinical faculty assessment. The instruments will provide both subjective and objective measurement of the DNP student's ongoing clinical performance, and provide an indirect measure of learning

Aggregate Student Performance on National Certifying Examinations or DNP qualifying exam
Graduate performance on national certifying examinations such as those offered by the American Nurse's Credentialing Center or the National Association of Nurse Practitioners will be aggregated for each graduating class and compared across classes. The program will request that students inform their advisors when they have successfully passed a national certifying examination. Pass rates will be aggregated to determine the percentage of doctoral students successfully passing their examination. These data will serve as a direct measure of the student learning outcomes as they relate to professional advanced nursing practice.

DNP Project: According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), doctoral education is distinguished by the completion of a specific project that demonstrates synthesis of the student's work and lays the groundwork for future clinical scholarly work. The DNP Project must be used to demonstrate mastery of the DNP curricular content. The DNP Project will demonstrate the student's ability to identify a practice or system related problem through clinical immersion, synthesize and critically appraise the evidence related to addressing that practice problem, negotiate within the system to implement evidence based change within an organization, implement that change, and systematically measure the results of the practice or system related change initiative. The DNP Project documents outcomes of the student's educational experiences, and summarizes the student's growth in knowledge and expertise. The DNP Project experience should serve as a foundation for leadership in future scholarly practice within the clinical setting. Criteria for evaluation are found in Appendix E.

22. Describe the process for assessing and improving student learning, including student persistence and completion, in the new program.

Assessment of student performance in this practice doctorate, in alliance with AACN & CCNE guidelines (as outlined in question 21) will be the foundation of assessing and improving student learning, persistence and completion. In consultation with the DNP Advisory Council, Graduate Dean and Graduate Council, revisions will be made to program curricula if student performance expectations are not met. Each student will be evaluated against the expected student learning outcomes (see question 21 and Appendix F), faculty clinical evaluations of student performance, and written communication competencies for the DNP project. In addition, graduation/completion rates, first-time pass rates on national certification examinations, graduate surveys and employer surveys will be monitored annually with any revisions made based upon findings.

