

**Academic Programs Committee Resolution on  
School of Nursing Proposal for Transition from  
Accelerated Bachelor's Degree to  
Master of Nursing Professional Degree  
March 20, 2024**

**I. Introduction**

Subcommittee A of the Academic Programs Committee reviewed the School of Nursing proposal to transition pre-licensure education from the Accelerated Bachelor of the Science of Nursing to Master of Nursing. Representing the unit were Interim Dean Dr. Michael Relf, Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs Dr. Anne Derouin, and Interim Assistant Dean for Pre-licensure Programs, Dr. Stephanie Gedzyk-Nieman. APC was provided the Proposal for New Professional Degree from the School of Nursing.

**II. Summary of APC Discussion with Drs. Relf, Derouin, and Gedzyk-Nieman**

- a. By peer comparison, the School of Nursing accelerated bachelor's degree is ranked #1 by US News & World Report. The ABSN program boasts excellent facilities and PhD level, regular rank faculty. Currently there are no master's entry to practice programs in North Carolina, however many peer institutions have transitioned from bachelor to master programs. To remain competitive among applicants and with peer institutions, the SoN proposes that now is the time to create the MEPN program.
- b. There are changes imposed by nursing governing bodies that will be required to be in place by 2025; these are aligned with the changes that SoN proposes to take the ABSN program to the level of a master's degree. Task forces have been formed to overhaul the curriculum with the dual purpose of creation of a competency-based curriculum with goals of meeting accreditation and master's degree requirements simultaneously. They are currently in task force 3 of the 4 planned.
- c. With consideration of funding opportunities for students, the SoN leadership explained that many ABSN students are not eligible for funding having used all of their undergraduate funding opportunities. The MEPN allows students to be eligible for graduate student funding. This is attractive to applicants and supports the School's on-going DEI efforts.
- d. Anticipated standards of acceptance were discussed. As all current candidates hold a bachelor's degree, they are eligible to be considered for a master's entry to practice program. The SoN will be recruiting from the same

pool of applicants, but with the MEPN, the School is poised to offer an advanced degree to these post-baccalaureate students. Surveys from the students accepted to Duke School of Nursing ABSN program who matriculated elsewhere listed this as one of their main deciding factors. Having the MEPN program will allow the SoN to complete on solid footing for the best students, and they anticipate their competitive acceptance standards to be exceeded.

### **III. Resolution**

- a. APC endorses the proposed change from the Accelerated Bachelor of Science of Nursing to the graduate level Master of Nursing. This proposed change means initially creating a new MEPN and subsequently retiring the ABSN after the students who are enrolled in the ABSN at the time the MEPN is created have finished their ABSN program.
- b. APC supports consideration of a supplemental track for previous Duke School of Nursing ABSN graduates to earn a Master's degree under the new program

### **IV. Vote**

- a. 9 Yes Votes
- b. 1 Abstention – committee member was unable to attend this meeting.