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February 8, 2010

To: Phyllis Wise, Provost  
Douglas J. Wadden, Executive Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Planning

From: Gerald Baldasty, Vice Provost and Dean  
James S. Antony, Associate Vice Provost and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

RE: Review of the Graduate Certificate Program in Advanced Practice Nursing (GCPAPN)

This memo outlines the recommendations on the five-year review of the Graduate Certificate Program in Advanced Practice Nursing (GCPAPN). The GCPAPN is a graduate certificate program in the School of Nursing (SON) that has multiple distinct pathways. Detailed comments on the program can be found in the documents that were part of the following formal review proceedings:

- GCPAPN self-study (March, 2009)
- Charge meeting between review committee and administrators (April 1, 2009)
- Site visit (April 22, 2009)
- Review committee report (April 22, 2009)
- GCPAPN response to the report (October 14, 2009)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (February 4, 2010)

The review committee consisted of:

Frederick A. Connell, Professor, UW Health Services and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, School of Public Health and Community Medicine

Donna Hathaway, Dean and Professor, College of Nursing, University of Tennessee Health Science Center

A subcommittee of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on February 4, 2010. After discussion, Council recommended continuing status for the certificate program, with the next review to be scheduled during the 2018-2019 academic year. Specific comments and recommendations regarding the GCPAPN include the following:

### Program Strengths

- The pathways offered through the GCPAPN fulfill the needs of both currently matriculated students and post-graduate students who do not want to pursue a full degree but seek specialty training.
- Pathways are established via a rigorous internal SON review process and in response to recognized needs in the nursing community.
- Students in the GCPAPN can enroll in two types of classes: courses privately funded for a particular pathway or ones already offered through a regular degree program, which has the effect of modestly increasing class sizes.
- The School of Nursing (SON) plans to undertake a strategic planning process, to be informed by a recent cost analysis study, which will include a review of GCPAPN to enhance its coordination with the SON's other academic offerings.

### Challenges & Risks

- The administrative structure appears quite complicated.
- The costs associated with each pathway of the GCPAPN as a whole are uncertain.
- Many of the certificates require advanced degrees as a prerequisite. Potentially, the pool of certificate applicants may be quite small. For example, the Certificate in Nurse Educator and the Certificate in Forensic Nurse Specialist have only about 2 students each. Over time, the viability of the some certificates may become questionable because of administrative costs (e.g., compensation to a faculty advisor).

### Areas of Concurrence

- The review committee and the SON concur that the program be renewed for ten years.
- Whereas the review committee finds the certificates perhaps overly complicated, the SON believes that they reflect the state of the profession. The School notes that all offerings will be reviewed during an upcoming strategic planning process.
- The review committee and the School concur that costs remain an uncertain issue.
- The review committee is concerned about ad hoc proliferation of pathways and recommends that the standard for pathway creation be raised. The School, however, notes that the committee reviewed the Memorandum 23 instead of Memorandum 37, which outlines a very rigorous process for establishing a new pathway.
- The review committee and the SON concur that regular needs-assessment (e.g., student demand) must be conducted over time.
- The review committee and the SON concur that a fee-based model may not be appropriate for the GCPAPN.

### Graduate School Council Recommendations

- The Graduate School Council recommends the GCPAPN should be on continuing status with the next review in 10 years (2018-2019).
- The School of Nursing should be lauded for creating an innovative program that provides non-degree specialty training to the nursing community.

- Council supports the intention of the SON to be attentive to simplifying its programs.
- A “true cost structure” should be determined for the program (e.g., implement full cost accounting).

We concur with the Council’s comments and recommendations.

cc: Marla Salmon, Dean, School of Nursing  
Susan L. Woods, Associate Dean for Academic Programs, School of Nursing  
Julie R. Katz, Assistant Dean, Academic Services, School of Nursing  
Members of the GCPAPN Review Committee  
Members of the Graduate School Council  
David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School  
Jake Faleschini, President, GPSS