5.5.40.8 Graduate Programs:

A Proposal for a Master of Science in Nursing

Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) Track

Western New Mexico University

Silver City, NM 88062

A program to be administered by the
School of Nursing of Western New Mexico University

Graduate Program Committee

Sherry Bassi, EdD, PHCNS-BC
Professor and Graduate Program Coordinator

Joe Heidrick, MSN, RN
Associate Professor and Faculty Chair
A. Program Description

The Western New Mexico University (WNMU) School of Nursing (SON) is proposing a new Master of Science (MSN) degree to be identified as the Clinical Nurse Leader track which will:

- Meet the demands of the changing health care environment.
- Increase the number of master’s prepared nurse-leaders at the microsystem level.
- Generate a source of revenue for the SON.

In 2007, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) published a White Paper on the role of the Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL). In the White Paper, preparation for this role was defined as graduate level education, with entry at the master’s degree level (AACN, 2007). The CNL is prepared to function in various settings, with expertise in quality improvement and safety, risk reduction, fiscal stewardship, and evidence-based practice, in their chosen clinical fields (CNLA, 2013).

We envision that our Master’s education program is the next step in our pursuit to provide quality education as outlined in our RN-BSN Mission.... Faculty is committed to creativity in program development and delivery. The fostering of life-long learning within students is a preeminent goal of the program. The CNL track will be a seamless progression for our current RN-BSN students as they are familiar with our online pedagogy and the clear expectations for students. Expanding the nursing program to include Master’s education coincides with the university’s mission statement that recognizes not only a changing healthcare environment but a changing world......develops the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare our students for the challenges of a changing world.

Our program contains an inter-departmental component where we have partnered with the WNMU School of Business faculty to offer two (3 credits) courses that will fulfill the requirements of the CNL program and already serve as a catalyst for 2 new post baccalaureate healthcare-related certificate programs. In addition to our partnership with the WNMU School of Business we have expanded our collaboration to both the UNM School of Nursing and the NMSU School of Nursing to offer 9 credits of core courses. All Master degree programs that prepare graduates for roles that have a component of direct care practice are required to have graduate level content/coursework referred hereafter as the 3 P’s- physiology/pathophysiology, physical health assessment, and pharmacology (AACN, 2011). In the future, if a student decides to matriculate towards a terminal degree these credits would apply to both institutions’ Doctorate of Nursing Practice. In turn, students from our partners would be eligible for admission to WNMU’s School of Nursing CNL track. By creating this inter-institutional partnership we are able to offer the graduate track without requesting more
faculty positions and thus create an opportunity for NMSU and UNM to refer students to our program without duplication of efforts.

Our faculty has successfully designed a “TRIAD Model” where the instructor, preceptor and student work together as a triad to identify, assess, design, implement and evaluate a clinical problem that the student uses as part of the immersion experience. “Thinking out of the Box” students and institutions are encouraged to allow graduate CNL students to function in the CNL immersion role while on duty to model the CNL role to other RNs. This has been a very successful aspect of the CNL immersion clinical practicum resulting in the creation of formal partnerships with one or more local clinical sites to ensure that CNL students have a professional preceptor experience. This CNL initiative now includes over 90 partnerships across the country between the education and practice settings (AACN, 2013).

The Veteran’s Administration looking for cost-effective ways to enhance quality care and patient satisfaction, has been an enthusiastic, national leader in both supporting CNL nursing education and in redesigning their systems to effectively employ CNLs. Dr. Cynthia Nuttall PhD, RN Associate Chief of Nursing, Department of Veterans Affairs New Mexico VA Healthcare System writes: “We are currently funding (5) CNL students who are enrolled in various CNL online programs throughout the nation. We would have preferred to have our students stay within the State of New Mexico, but that was impossible due to the fact that there are no CNL programs in New Mexico. We would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with you as you implement this new graduate program. As an Academic Partner with WNMU we are especially interested in the areas of providing opportunities for Clinical Immersion experiences and CNL preceptorship by offering you the expertise of our institution’s certified Clinical Nurse Leaders”.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) has mandated that the Clinical Nurse Leader track be designed to graduate RNs within 3 full time semesters to address voids at the microsystem level across all healthcare systems (AACN, 2007). WNMU School of Nursing can also be validated as a certification site and administer the certification examination upon successful application. If our proposal is approved New Mexico residents will benefit from a cohort of advanced generalists who are certified and provide lateral integration of care emphasizing quality, safe and cost effective patient care.

B. The new proposed program is currently not being offered at any New Mexico Institution of higher learning.

C. There currently are no nearby non-New Mexico institutions of higher learning planning or offering the Clinical Nurse Leader graduate program.

D. Reasons that the CNL program should be established at the WNMU School of Nursing are discussed in the following passages:
The dynamic nature of the current healthcare delivery system supports the need for the nursing profession to plan for the future and anticipate the healthcare needs of the population and geographic area we serve. The complexities of health and wellness require that nursing knowledge be expanded to provide such complex care. In 2010, the Institute of Medicine published “The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health”. The report noted the trends in health care that would challenge current health care models: an aging population, a shift to high incidences of chronic health problems, with an increasing emphasis on prevention, and on community and public health approaches. One conclusion was that as the complexity of the population increases, nursing education geared towards advanced competency in areas of leadership, policy, quality improvement, research and evidence-based practice (major components of the CNL curriculum) could address these needs (IOM, 2011). To date local inpatient facilities including Gila Regional Medical Center in Silver City, NM have committed to utilizing the CNL role. Dr. Bassi has already presented several information sessions on the proposed program in the region. Internally we have been working with the university Office of External Affairs assisting them in developing outreach plans that include nursing graduate education. Hidalgo Medical Services (HMS) and a collaborative exchange program with the University of Juarez to offer online education for their BSN prepared faculty is in the planning stages.

In little over 8 years our RN-BSN program has grown to 98 matriculating students. Those students who have graduated from our program are seeking to continue their education and have expressed interest in returning to WNMU for graduate studies. Locally, RN’s employed at Gila Regional Medical Center have responded to a survey (n=98). When asked if they were interested in pursuing graduate education 63% responded yes or maybe. Specifically 50% expressed interest in the CNL track and 67% were interested in enrolling in a graduate course for continuing education credit. In spring of 2013 graduates of our RN-BSN program were surveyed by mail assessing their interest in attending WNMU and entering the CNL graduate track specifically. Twenty-six graduates responded positively to the survey stating they were interested in pursuing the CNL graduate track if WNMU were approved. Students indicated overwhelmingly those barriers to their pursuit of graduate education 1) finances, 2) work schedules, and 3) family commitments. These results confirm that the structure and curriculum design of the CNL graduate online program will be appealing to the RN student with multiple commitments. Currently, we have 8 students enrolled in our post baccalaureate certificate program who plan to enroll in the CNL track if it is approved.

Recent 2011 (AACN) estimates suggest that the nations’ schools of nursing turn away applicants by the thousands due to an inadequate number of qualified RNs with graduate degrees to serve as nursing faculty. New Mexico is no exception. Due to our geographic isolation it is difficult to
recruit graduate-prepared faculty to WNMU’s SON—especially for Clinical Instructors who
oversee students in the practicum areas. By offering the CNL graduate track—candidates will
be able to specialize in the education “microsystem”, thus allowing WNMU to cultivate a cohort
of our own qualified clinical instructors who will be prepared at the Master degree level.

E. Projected Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Year</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Students</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning Students</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTE</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.5 FTE</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Head Count</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F. Projected Cost

(See accompanying document)