

**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS**

**Academic and Student Affairs**  
**Consent**

**AGENDA ITEM: 5 – B (2)**  
**DATE: April 3-4, 2024**

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**SUBJECT**

**New Specialization Request – SDSU – Clinical Nurse Leader Specialization – DNP in Nursing**

**CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY**

[BOR Policy 2.3.2](#) – New Programs, Program Modifications, and Inactivation/Termination

**BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION**

South Dakota State University (SDSU) requests authorization to offer a Clinical Nurse Leader specialization within the DNP in Nursing program. The Nursing (DNP) – Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) Specialization curriculum, which is currently offered through the MS in Nursing program, prepares graduates to provide highly skilled point-of-care coordination for patients in both acute and non-acute settings.

The new specialization is requested in response to changing standards and national trends. At the annual CNL Summit in February of 2023, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) identified the increasing need for the CNL to be prepared at the doctoral level. The CNL program at SDSU is currently delivered according to AACN’s Essentials document and the AACN competencies for the CNL. As AACN changes these documents to reflect the competencies at the doctoral level, it will be necessary for SDSU to also transition this specialization to the DNP to meet new standards for the CNL program.

**IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION**

SDSU requests authorization to offer the specialization online. SDSU is not requesting additional state resources to offer the program. Eleven new courses will be required.

Board office staff recommends approval of the program.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment I – New Specialization Request Form: SDSU – Clinical Nurse Leader – Nursing (DNP)

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**DRAFT MOTION 20240403\_5-B(2):**

I move to authorize SDSU to offer a Clinical Nurse Leader specialization within the DNP in Nursing program, as presented.



**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS FORMS**

**New Specialization**

<b>UNIVERSITY:</b>	<b>SDSU</b>
<b>TITLE OF PROPOSED SPECIALIZATION:</b>	<b>Clinical Nurse Leader</b>
<b>NAME OF DEGREE PROGRAM IN WHICH SPECIALIZATION IS OFFERED:</b>	<b>Nursing (DNP)</b>
<b>BANNER PROGRAM CODE:</b>	<b>SDNP.NUR</b>
<b>INTENDED DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:</b>	<b>Fall 2024</b>
<b>PROPOSED CIP CODE:</b>	<b>51.3820</b>
<b>UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT:</b>	<b>Nursing</b>
<b>BANNER DEPARTMENT CODE:</b>	<b>SNUR</b>
<b>UNIVERSITY DIVISION:</b>	<b>College of Nursing</b>
<b>BANNER DIVISION CODE:</b>	<b>3N</b>

**Please check this box to confirm that:**

- The individual preparing this request has read [AAC Guideline 2.6](#), which pertains to new specialization requests, and that this request meets the requirements outlined in the guidelines.
- This request will not be posted to the university website for review of the Academic Affairs Committee until it is approved by the Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer.

**University Approval**

*To the Board of Regents and the Executive Director: I certify that I have read this proposal, that I believe it to be accurate, and that it has been evaluated and approved as provided by university policy.*



Institutional Approval Signature

*President or Chief Academic Officer of the University*

1/29/24

Date

**1. Level of the Specialization:**

Baccalaureate       Master's       Doctoral

**2. What is the nature/purpose of the proposed specialization? Please include a brief (1-2 sentence) description of the academic field in this specialization.**

South Dakota State University (SDSU) requests authorization to offer the Clinical Nurse Leader Specialization in the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP). The Nursing (DNP) - Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) Specialization curriculum prepares graduates to provide highly skilled point-of-care coordination for patients in both acute and non-acute settings. Point-of-care is provided to clients across the lifespan; coordination of care occurs across the healthcare system. Clinical leaders will be prepared to focus on care coordination, outcomes

measurement, transitions of care, interprofessional communication and team leadership, risk assessment, implementation of best practices based on evidence, and quality improvement.

SDSU's College of Nursing is currently authorized to deliver the B.S.N., M.S., Ph.D., and DNP in Nursing along with post-graduate certificates. This includes a master's level Clinical Nurse Leader specialization and post-graduate certificate. The new specialization is requested in response to changing standards and national trends. At the annual CNL Summit in February of 2023, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) identified the increasing need for the CNL to be prepared at the doctoral level.<sup>1</sup> With the increased complexity of healthcare, a higher level of scientific knowledge, along with clinical expertise is required.<sup>2</sup> In discussions and work groups at the meeting, the intent to establish a task force to work on the transition to a doctoral-level CNL was discussed. The CNL program at SDSU is currently delivered according to AACN's Essentials document and the AACN competencies for the CNL. As AACN changes these documents to reflect the competencies at the doctoral level, it will be necessary for SDSU to also transition to the DNP to meet new standards for the current CNL program.

The larger healthcare institutions and several smaller hospitals in South Dakota currently have CNLs working in a variety of capacities, particularly in their quality improvement roles. As the role transitions to a broader scope, it will be imperative that SDSU prepare its graduates to meet the new standards. Workforce demands are expected to increase both nationally and within the state.

No significant new resources will be needed to launch and sustain the program. The Nursing (DNP) - Clinical Nurse Leader Specialization will be offered online with a field-based practicum and utilize mainly existing courses offered at SDSU in combination with newly developed courses. The College of Nursing has two faculty members with CNL specializations which would be sufficient to meet the qualifications to teach the CNL-specific coursework. The Nursing (DNP) - Clinical Nurse Leader Specialization will replace the Nursing (M.S.) – Clinical Nurse Leader Specialization.

**3. Provide a justification for the specialization, including the potential benefits to students and potential workforce demand for those who graduate with the credential.**

The increased demand for nursing professionals with advanced degrees is related to an aging population with multiple co-morbidities, and rigorous standards for quality and safety. Specialized knowledge and approaches to health care delivery are needed at point-of-care roles such as Clinical Nurse Leaders (CNL). The Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) role is supported by the AACN as well as by established regional clinical partnerships. According to Lightcast<sup>3</sup>, employment trends indicate a projected growth of 8% in the United States and 6.6% in South Dakota between 2023 and 2028.

Students will benefit from additional opportunities to engage in direct and indirect practice experiences. When educated at the master's level, CNL students complete a minimum of 500 practice hours; however, with the transition to the DNP CNL, students will complete a

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<sup>1</sup> American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN]. (2023a, February 23-25). *Round table discussion*. AACN CNL Summit, Lake Buena Vista, Florida.

<sup>2</sup> AACN. (2022). *AACN fact sheet- DNP*. Retrieved from <https://www.aacnursing.org/news-data/fact-sheets/dnp-fact-sheet>

<sup>3</sup> Lightcast. (2023). *Nursing (M.S.) - Clinical Nurse Leader Specialization*. Retrieved from [https://catalog.sdstate.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=48&poid=10973](https://catalog.sdstate.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=48&poid=10973) (visited December 5, 2023)

minimum of 1000 practice hours.<sup>4</sup> This increase in clinical hours will enhance CNL graduates' preparation for their advanced practice role. CNL graduates are also qualified to sit for the AACN CNL certification exam offered through the Commission on Nurse Certification.

**4. List the proposed curriculum for the specialization (including the requirements for completing the major – *highlight courses in the specialization*):**

Prefix	Number	Course Title	Credit Hours	New (yes, no)
HSC	502	Rural Healthcare Matters	3	No
HSC	631	Biostatistics I	3	No
NURS	615	Foundations of Advanced Nursing	3	No
NURS	623	Pathophysiology Across the Lifespan: Application to Advanced Practice Nursing	2	No
NURS	626	Research in Nursing and Healthcare	3	No
NURS	630	Advanced Assessment Across the Lifespan for CNLs/Nurse Educators	3	No
NURS	644	Introduction to the CNL Role	1	Yes
NURS	644L	Introduction to the CNL Role Practicum	3	Yes
NURS	645	CNL Improvement Science: A Microsystem Approach	3	No
NURS	645L	CNL Improvement Science: A Microsystem Approach Practicum	2	Yes
NURS	646	CNL Clinical Immersion and Project	1	No
NURS	646L	CNL Clinical Immersion and Project Practicum	5	Yes
NURS	670	Health Policy, Legislation, Economics, & Ethics	3	No
NURS	675	Cultivating a Practice of Cultural Humility in Healthcare	3	No
NURS	750	Transformational Leadership in Nursing	3	No
NURS	760	Advanced Concepts in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention	3	No
NURS	772	Healthcare Technology & Informatics	3	Yes
NURS	783	Healthcare System Management & Evaluation	3	Yes
NURS	784	Quality Metrics for the CNL	2	Yes
NURS	784L	Quality Metrics for the CNL Practicum	2	Yes
NURS	800	Introduction to the DNP-CNL Project	1	Yes
NURS	800L	Introduction to the DNP-CNL Project Practicum	2	Yes
NURS	860	Health Operations & Financial Management for Nurse Managers	3	No
NURS	870	DNP Project Proposal Development	2	Yes
PHA	645	Pharmacotherapeutics Across the Lifespan: Application to Advanced Practice	2	No

Total number of hours required for completion of specialization  
 Total number of hours required for completion of major  
 Total number of hours required for completion of degree

33
37
31

The Doctor of Nursing Practice program includes different options for students. This includes the Nursing (DNP) open to registered nurses with a master's degree in nursing with national

<sup>4</sup> AACN. (2023b). *The Essentials: Core competencies for professional nursing education. Frequently asked questions*. Retrieved from <https://www.aacnursing.org/Portals/0/PDFs/Essentials/Essentials-Revised-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf>

certification and licensure as a NP, CRNA, CNM, or CNS along with the Family Nurse Practitioner Specialization and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Specialization that both offer BSN to DNP and Post Master’s to DNP pathways. HSC 631 Biostatistics I (3 cr.) and NURS 750 Transformational Leadership in Nursing (3 cr.) are required courses for all DNP students. Courses highlighted in turquoise are also required for students in the Nursing (DNP) - Family Nurse Practitioner Specialization and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Specialization. Students that are practicing as an APRN (such as a CRNA, FNP, etc.) may have already taken some of these courses as part of their previous coursework. Yellow highlighted courses (27 credits) are required specifically for the Clinical Nurse Leader Specialization.

**5. Delivery Location**

*Note: The accreditation requirements of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) require Board approval for a university to offer programs off-campus and through distance delivery.*

**A. Complete the following charts to indicate if the university seeks authorization to deliver the entire program on campus, at any off campus location (e.g., UC Sioux Falls, Capital University Center, Black Hills State University-Rapid City, etc.) or deliver the entire specialization through distance technology (e.g., as an on-line program)?**

	Yes/No	Intended Start Date
<b>On campus</b>	No	

	Yes/No	If Yes, list location(s)	Intended Start Date
<b>Off campus</b>	No		

	Yes/No	If Yes, identify delivery methods <i>Delivery methods are defined in AAC Guideline 5.5.</i>	Intended Start Date
<b>Distance Delivery (online/other distance delivery methods)</b>	Yes	S15 – Online Asynchronous	<b>Fall 2024</b>

**B. Complete the following chart to indicate if the university seeks authorization to deliver more than 50% but less than 100% of the specialization through distance learning (e.g., as an on-line program)? This question responds to HLC definitions for distance delivery.**

	Yes/No	If Yes, identify delivery methods	Intended Start Date
<b>Distance Delivery (online/other distance delivery methods)</b>	No		

**6. Additional Information:  
 Program Description**

The Nursing (DNP) – Clinical Nurse Leader Specialization program prepares nurses to assume advanced roles as Clinical Nurse Leaders (CNLs) to transform clinical practice as expert clinicians and leaders, focusing on rural and underserved populations. In addition to delivering evidence-based and outcomes-based care to individuals across the lifespan, the program prepares nurses to serve as experts within the microsystem to produce and implement outcomes-based practice and quality improvement strategies, while being prepared to work collaboratively with rural communities and providers to reduce health disparities. Upon



<b>Individual Student Outcome</b>	HSC 502	HSC 631	NURS 615	NURS 623	NURS 626	NURS 630	NURS 644-644L	NURS 645-645L	NURS 646-646L	NURS 670	NURS 675	NURS 750	NURS 760	NURS 772	NURS 783	NURS 784-784L	NURS 800-800L	NURS 860	NURS 870	PHA 645
comprehensively assess, design, and deliver care for individuals or populations.																				
Utilize microsystem assessment data to design, implement and evaluate evidence-based interventions that improve safety and quality for selected populations (CNL Specific).							X	X	X							X	X		X	

**Additional Admissions Requirements**

- GRE: Not required
- TOEFL: Score of 81 Internet-based
- TOEFL Essentials: 8.5
- IELTS: 6.5 total band
- Duolingo: 110

**Additional Admission Requirements for Bachelor’s to Doctor of Nursing Practice**

In addition to meeting the Graduate School admission requirements, applicants for graduate study for the Bachelor’s to Doctor of Nursing Practice – Clinical Nurse Leader Specialization must have:

- Current licensure as a Registered Nurse in the United States or its’ territories prior to enrollment in first graduate nursing course.
- 1500 hours of documented nursing practice experience prior to taking NURS 630.
- Completed and verified application to the Graduate Nursing program via NursingCAS website.
- Completed Compliance requirements: Clear Background check, clear FBI rolled fingerprint, clear drug screen, Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers, ACLS certification for FNP specialization, professional liability insurance, influenza vaccine, and TB test.
- Interview assessment reviewed by graduate faculty.

For applicants who completed their higher education within the United States:

- Bachelor’s degree in nursing from an ACEN or CCNE accredited program with a minimum cumulative preferred GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 point grading system.

For applicants who completed their higher education outside the United States:

- A degree deemed equivalent (by the World Education Service) to a Bachelor’s degree in nursing (within the United States Education System) with a minimum cumulative preferred GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 point grading system.