Assessing Doctoral Student Learning with Direct Measures and Ensuring On-time Graduation

WASC ALA Project 2014-2015*

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PROJECT PURPOSE

- Develop doctoral level program learning outcomes mapped to required courses and evidence of student learning that are defined by direct measures using signature assignments.
- Monitor and support on-time graduation using milestones identified as integral to the development of a nurse scholar that are mapped to the program completion timeline.

DOCTORAL PROGRESSION POLICY ESTABLISHED MAY 2014

Define key developmental milestones that signify the evolution of a scholar in nursing, mapped to degree completion timeline.

Program duration:
- 2 years DNP (post masters)
- 5 years PhD in Nursing (post masters)

JOURNEY FOR BOTH PROGRAMS

> DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE (DNP)
> PhD IN NURSING (PHD)

DNP

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing’s (AACN) DNP Essentials serve as the foundation for the Program Learning Objectives (PLOs).

1st PLOs evolved from AACN Essentials, highlight what is unique about the UH Mānoa program.

2nd PLOs mapped to the proposal defense and final project defense (2 signature assignments)

3rd rubrics were developed for each signature assignment

PhD

1st program goal developed

2nd curriculum revised to focus on scientific knowledge development

3rd identified core competencies that defined essential knowledge and skills

4th overall themes from core competencies emerged as the PLOs

5th PLOs mapped to the comprehensive examination, proposal and dissertation defense (3 signature assignments)

6th rubrics were developed for each signature assignment

SIGNATURE ASSIGNMENTS AS DIRECT MEASURES IN DOCTORAL EDUCATION (RESPONDING TO PROFESSIONAL FORMATION)

“Signature Pedagogy are important precisely because they are pervasive they implicitly define what counts as knowledge in a field and how things become known. They define how knowledge is analyzed, criticized, accepted or discarded.” Lee Shulman (2005)

Signature Assignments are student products of learning that reflect deep elements of a profession. Amy Driscoll (2011) They build the identity and character, disposition and values of a profession.” Lee Shulman (2005)

Student products graded by faculty verify the student’s ability to demonstrate (written; performed) knowledge, values and skills that are intrinsic and unique to the Nursing discipline. Signature assignments are used in this program assessment model to monitor, assess and ensure the evolution and development of nursing scholars.

Doctoral Program Signature Assignments

To be implemented 2015-2016

DNP Program – 2 year program

Graded by 3 member committee

- DNP Proposal Defense (end of year 1)
- DNP Project Defense (end of year 2)

PhD Program – 5 year program

Graded by 5 member committee

- Comprehensive Examination (end of year 3-4)
- Proposal Defense (end of year 4)
- Dissertation Defense (end of year 4-5)

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED TO STUDENTS

DNP Program
- 5 chapters defined/outlined
- Rubrics for each signature assignment
- Faculty roles defined: ✓ Academic Advisor (committee Chair)
- ✓ External Advisor

PhD Program
- 5 chapters defined/outlined
- Rubrics for each signature assignment
- Faculty role defined: ✓ PhD advisor

EARLY OUTCOMES

DNP Program: N= 28 89% on time
PhD Program: N= 47 75% on time

*Action plans or learning contracts in place for those not on time (11% DNP, 25% PhD).

Next Step

Data from rubrics will be used to grade signature assignments
1. Trends from aggregate data will support continuous improvements in the program/courses
2. Used to monitor individual student academic progression and on-time graduation.

Beyond doctoral programs – using direct measures to assess other SONDH programs:
- MS Program
- BS Programs

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- DNP CESA Committee
- PhD Committee

Rubrics

- Developed to grade signature assignments
- Distributed to students during the orientation at the onset of the program (summer 2015)
- Will be used to give students feedback
- Created consistency about what is tested and how student products are graded
- Aggregate data to assess strengths/weaknesses of the courses and the programs

Key Terms

Student-centered
- Continuous improvement
- Transparency
- Valuing faculty expertise
- Clarity about learning expectations
- Consistency
- Valuing faculty expertise
- Professional formation at the doctoral level
- Deep learning
- Direct Measures
- Academic progression
- On time graduation
- Faculty development (advisor best practices)

IMPLEMENT CHANGES

Evaluate outcomes

Recommend improvements

Review and reflect

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS