

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
Advanced Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Program Report
October 1, 2015

[Pursuant to W.S. 21-17-116 (e) and (f)]

To the Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Interim Committee

Program Overview

The Fay W. Whitney School of Nursing offers a graduate program that prepares Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners (PMHNP). PMHNPs are advanced practice registered nurses who provide a full range of psychiatric care, including assessing, diagnosing, and managing the prevention and treatment of psychiatric disorders and mental health problems. PMHNPs work in various settings, from outpatient settings such as clinics to hospitals.

A master's program, started in the fall of 2005, began with funding assistance from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Student enrollment began in the 2005-2006 academic year.

The State of Wyoming established an educational loan repayment program for PMHNP students in 2006. Under this program, the University of Wyoming is authorized to provide up to \$10,000 per academic semester or \$2,500 per summer session for nurses enrolled in a PMHNP program full-time. Students enrolled part-time can receive funds proportionally reduced based on the number of credit hours the student is taking.

The PMHNP loan program was organized to support six students annually for two years of education. Students receiving support from the State are obligated to actively engage in professional practice as a PMHNP for up to one year for each academic year of study for which support was provided under this program, for a maximum of two years, or repay all amounts expended by the State for the student's education.

Program Update

In 2010, the University's Board of Trustees approved the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program to replace the master's degree nurse practitioner program. The move to the DNP is part of a larger national movement in nursing shifting advanced practice registered nursing (APRN) education to the doctoral level. In fall 2005, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing voted to change the level of preparation necessary for advanced practice nursing, including education for nurse practitioners, from the current master's degree to the doctorate level (DNP) by the year 2015. The move to the DNP was in response to several key national studies highlighting problems with the quality of health care in the US, the increasing scope of advanced practice nursing, the explosion of information and biomedical technology, pressures to improve quality of care while reducing costs, an aging and increasingly diverse population, and worsening disparities in care with larger barriers to access.

The DNP program allows the UW School of Nursing to continue the successful pipeline of primary care and mental health providers into practice in Wyoming, with students being able to choose to complete the DNP requirements for national certification as either a family nurse practitioner (FNP) or a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner.

The first DNP students started fall 2012, with 14 students choosing to complete the requirements for the FNP option. Unfortunately, the one applicant who wanted to complete the PMHNP option did not accept the offer of admission. In addition, the one PMHNP faculty member in the School of Nursing left UW for a new position in Pennsylvania. Through the Centralized Position Management process at UW for vacated positions, the position was not reallocated to the School in Summer 2013. Given the lack of a faculty position, the School did not accept applications into the DNP program for 2013-2014 for students interested in the PMHNP option.

Despite these challenges, the College of Health Sciences and the School of Nursing have remained committed to providing education for students interested in the PMHNP option and to providing this much needed profession to the state. Using a new source of funding, the UW School of Nursing hired two part-time nationally certified and doctorally educated PMHNP faculty who will teach in the DNP program and oversee the clinical experiences of the PMHNP students. In addition, the UW School of Nursing has a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Colorado College of Nursing that will allow PMHNP students from UW to complete four key PMHNP didactic courses required for the program. Consequently, in August 2014, the UW School of Nursing admitted four PMHNP students in to the DNP program. Since there was no longer any state funds to support the loans, UW used funds from the internal loan repayment account (see below) to offer loans to these students under the same conditions as detailed in the statutes. Three of the students opted to accept the loans. These three students will be funded a 2nd year through the internal loan repayment account this coming academic year. In addition, three more PMHNP students have been admitted to the DNP program for this coming year. One of those students has received a one-year loan using funds from the internal loan repayment account.

This internal loan repayment account will be depleted this coming year given the funding of the four students described above. State funding is necessary to provide further loans to these students and to future students. UW has included an exception request to revive the loan repayment program in its 2017/2018 budget request for the Agency 167 (Medical Education).

Another issue to note is that when the statutory language governing the PMHNP's loan repayment program (21-17-116 (d)) was created, UW offered a two-year master's degree. Thus, students received two years of loans that were required to be repaid with two years of service. In transitioning to the three-year doctorate program, the statute permits UW to offer three years of loans, but the length of required work to pay back the loan remains capped at two years. If the legislature wishes to require three years of work to pay back three years of loans, the statute will need to be amended.

Required Reports

W.S. 21-17-116 (e) – Under this provision, like the WWAMI program, the University's Board of Trustees, upon the recommendation of the President of the University, may relieve a student from repayment of a loan provided under this section for undue hardship. The provision requires the University to report to the Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Interim Committee the number of students who have been relieved of the obligation to repay the loan. No student was relieved of a loan last year, and only one student has received such dispensation over the years.

W.S. 21-17-116 (f) – Under this provision, again similar to the WWAMI program, all loan repayments are to be credited to an account to be used by the University to fund loans under this program. This provision requires the University to report to the Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Interim Committee regarding expenditures from this account during the preceding fiscal year.

Loan Repayment Update

A total of 33 students have been supported by the PMHNP loan payment program since it was established. The table below summarizes the status of those participants who currently owe on their loan as of July 1, 2015. Two are currently in the process of repaying the loan through professional practice as a PMHNP in Wyoming (Deferred for Practice) and three participants are repaying the loan (Repayment). Four students are in an enrolled status. Of those not listed on the table, the UW Board of Trustees canceled one loan due to hardship for a former student and the remaining participants have paid their loan either in professional practice or through monetary payment.

Status July 1, 2015	Hometown	Practice Town
Deferred for Practice	Laramie	Laramie
Deferred for Practice	Laramie	Casper
Repayment	Buffalo	
Repayment	Laramie	
Repayment	Laramie	
Enrolled	Lingle	
Enrolled	Boulder, CO	
Enrolled	Laramie	
Enrolled	Gillette	

FY15 – Fiscal report

As outlined below, no expenditures have occurred from the repayment funds.

Advanced Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Program	
Beginning balance per FY 2014 Fiscal Report	\$ 152980.61
Collections (principle & interest)	\$ 20,009.55
FY 15 earnings (interest income)	\$ 160.69
Loan advances	\$ (67,500)
Ending cash balance	\$ 105,650.85
<i>Loans canceled for practice in Wyoming – FY14</i>	
	\$ 101,039.49