Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

Program Overview

The DNP program at the UMass Dartmouth College of Nursing prepares advanced practice nurses who will:

- Function as adult gerontology primary care nurse practitioners working in increasingly diverse populations, complex healthcare systems and clinical nursing education;
- Transform patient care through interdisciplinary collaboration, population-focused and evidenced-based health interventions, and measurement of the outcomes of these interventions at both the individual and community aggregate levels; and
- Be the future leaders that advance nursing and health care practices in Southeastern Massachusetts, the Commonwealth, and beyond.

The graduate of the DNP program will lead the transformative reform of health systems to achieve and maintain safe clinical practice environments, promote health, wellness and high quality patient care, and translate research into innovative practices that improve health outcomes and contain health care costs to both patients and society.

The DNP course work includes translation research methods, theory, health policy, population health, informatics, systems leadership, leadership residencies, and a capstone project to achieve the goals for the DNP and to meet national accreditation and certification standards.

Faculty and principal area of expertise

- Deborah Armstrong, Assistant Professor; PhD, University of Massachusetts Worcester; Spinal cord injury, Pathophysiology
- Marilyn Asselin, Associate Professor; PhD, University of Rhode Island; Reflection in practice, knowledge utilization, leadership, reflective teaching practice, qualitative methodology
- Elizabeth Chin, Assistant Professor; PhD, University of Massachusetts Worcester; COPD, self-management, symptom management, qualitative methodology
- Kerry Fater, Professor; PhD, CNE, University of Connecticut; Professional competence, professional development, curriculum development, education
- Susan Hunter Revell, Associate Professor; PhD, University of Rhode Island; Spinal cord injury, technology in the classroom
- Mary McCurry, Associate Professor; PhD, Boston College; Decision making, family care givers, technology in the classroom
- Gail Russell, Professor Emeritus; EdD, NEA-BC, Columbia University; Leadership in health systems
- Kristen Sethares, Professor; PhD, CNE, Boston College; chronic cardiac illness, self-care, Symptom management, quantitative methodology
- Caitlin Stover, Assistant Professor, PhD, RN, PHCNS-BC, CNE, University of Massachusetts Worcester; Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Healthcare, Health Disparities, Community Program Planning and Evaluation
- Barbara Weatherford, Assistant Professor; PhD, University of Massachusetts Worcester; Organizational culture and patient care safety, leadership

Degree and certificate

Doctor of Nursing practice (DNP) with a focus in Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner.

An RN-BS student with GPA of 3.3 or better and the recommendation of RN-BS program director may take up to 9 graduate credits (from among the following courses: NUR 500, 511, 520, 547 or 605) that count as undergraduate electives. If the student applies and is admitted to graduate study immediately after receiving the BS degree, the courses will also count toward the DNP degree.

In addition, the Graduate Admissions Program (GAP) is open to registered nurses who hold a BS or BA degree in another field. GAP students take NUR 503 Transition to Advanced Practice Nursing in which they complete a portfolio that documents how they attained undergraduate nursing program outcome objectives.

Finally, a 27 credit, post-MS, DNP program is available for nurses who hold an MS in Nursing and certification as an APRN.
**Program Requirements**

In addition to completing the UMD admission package, applicants to the DNP program must:
- Have a GPA of 3.0 in undergraduate study.
- Hold a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from a program accredited by the NLNAC or CCNE. Registered Nurses with a bachelor degree in a related field may seek admission through the GAP program.
- Hold a current license to practice professional nursing in MA or be eligible to obtain a license. Please submit a copy of your license.
- Have at least one year of clinical experience in acute care nursing
- Submit three references that document competence and leadership in professional nursing practice. If possible, one reference should be from a supervisor who is a professional nurse that holds a DNP and one from a nurse educator.
- GRE is NOT required.
- Applications are due March 15 for Fall matriculation.

**Degree Requirements**

DNP students complete 63 academic credits that include over 1000 hours of clinical practice. In addition, students complete a scholarly project that translates research into practice and measures the effectiveness of this intervention in terms of both health outcomes and cost effectiveness.

**Program Highlights**

The nursing faculty create rich and meaningful student experiences that build on undergraduate education and clinical competencies to address the career aspirations of the student. Classroom, laboratory, and clinical experiences are structured to expand the skills and grow the confidence of the student as APRNs and nurse leaders. The support and collaboration of community partners—both clinicians and health care agencies—are essential components of this program.

**Faculty Research**

The faculty of the College of Nursing conduct research in two broad areas—living with chronic illness and innovations in nursing education. Support for this work comes from a variety of sources—the US Department of Health Education and Welfare, National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, and many professional groups, and community agencies. Faculty have numerous small grants from internal and external sources. Recently, Dr. Kirsten Sethares’ work on congestive heart failure and patient self-care was recognized when she was an invited presenter at the Chancellor’s Colloquium.

The faculty of the College of Nursing are recognized experts and are actively involved in service projects in SE MA and beyond. Our faculty serve as consultants for our practice partners and professional groups. Faculty are frequently invited speakers at professional meetings and give peer-reviewed poster and podium presentations throughout the US. Many faculty volunteer for local, regional, national and international health initiatives.

**Alumni**

The UMD graduate nursing program opened in the late 1980s and has produced over 250 MS graduates who work in southeastern Massachusetts and beyond. In 2007, the PhD in Nursing admitted its first cohort of students and has grown steadily. The new DNP program positions the graduates of UMD in 2015 and after to meet revised certification criteria for advanced practice nurses. This is a very important new program for the College.

Many graduates continue their affiliation with the College of Nursing by serving as preceptors, mentors, clinical instructors and guest lecturers for our students. We are very proud of the many accomplishments of our graduates and their continuing commitment to UMD. Some examples are:
- Dr. Mary McCurry, Associate Professor and the DNP Graduate Program Director here at UMD is a graduate of the ANP track of the MS program.
- Dr. Margaret Arieta-Rudd, DNP Faculty at UMass Dartmouth, is a graduate of the Post-MS DNP Program.
- Dr. Christine Gadbois, Vice President, Seven Hills Rhode Island, DNP Adjunct Faculty at UMass Dartmouth, is a graduate of the Post-MS DNP Program.

**Contact information**

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To access online application  
www.umassd.edu/admissions/apply/