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# Georgia Southern University Now Offers BSN-to-DNP Pathway

JULY 18, 2014



The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia recently approved a significant proposal to establish a defined pathway for students seeking an education in graduate nursing programs. Therefore, Georgia Southern University now offers a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) to Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Pathway which allows students to eliminate one year of study and become exposed to core doctoral level concepts much earlier in the educational process.

Deborah Allen, graduate program director of Georgia Southern University's School of Nursing, says ultimately the change means better quality of care for Georgians and the nation. "This program indicates that Georgia Southern is responsive to provide educational experiences that will improve the health care of Georgians," said Allen. "It also shows the University's commitment to continue meeting the educational preparation necessary for nurse practitioners to work in the ever-changing health care environment."

Previously, to become eligible to take the national certification exam allowing graduates to become licensed to practice in the state of Georgia, they had to complete three years of study to earn their Master of Science in Nursing degree (MSN), and an additional three years of study to earn their DNP.

The new BSN-to-DNP Pathway allows students to choose from two options: They can either opt-out of the program having earned a Master of Science in Nursing degree and take their national certification at that time, or they can choose to continue taking family nurse practitioner courses toward earning their DNP degree. If students choose to opt-out and return to the program within four years, they may complete the remaining courses without repeating any course content to obtain their DNP degree. Currently in Georgia, students are eligible to take the national certification exam with an MSN or DNP.

Students who graduate with a DNP degree are employable in a variety of areas in the health care field, including private practice, hospitals and other health care organizations. Georgia Southern faculty teaching the DNP portions of the program have doctoral degrees and many are licensed Advanced Practice Registered Nurses in the state of Georgia.