Memorandum

To: Rebecca Pillai Riddell, Chair, Senate APPRC
From: Rhonda Lenton, Provost
Date: September 15, 2015
Subject: Proposal for PhD Program in Nursing

I am writing to follow up on my initial letter of May 8, 2015 (attached) with regard to the Faculty of Health’s proposal to establish a PhD program in Nursing. I now have in hand the external reviewers’ report and the Dean’s response, as well as a revised proposal taking account of the reviewers’ suggestions. I am pleased to note that the reviewers’ report is very positive with regard to the importance of this program and its design. The reviewers make a number of suggestions to enhance the proposal, and recommend a somewhat less ambitious approach to curriculum and enrolment planning as the program is introduced.

As I noted earlier, this proposal is consistent with institutional goals in relation to graduate growth and the expansion of health-related programming in support of a more comprehensive university. It is designed to respond to significant demand for doctorate-prepared nurses in academia and the profession in Canada. In the response to the reviewers’ report, the proponents have provided further details with regard to this demand in order to strengthen the case for the establishment of the program. Undergraduate and MScN programs are already in place in the Faculty of Health, and this PhD proposal will build on the strengths and resources of those programs.

The reviewers conclude that the curriculum, which is based on critical philosophies/theories/perspectives, is important and fills a gap in Canadian Nursing PhD programs. They suggest that the number of courses required for the degree be reduced in order to make the program more attractive to students and in light of the number of research courses already offered; the proposal has been amended to reflect this change. Other changes have been made to clarify comprehensive requirements, research expectations, and graduate student support structures; and the program has addressed other matters raised by the reviewers including admission and comprehensive requirements, noting that the proposal is consistent with Nursing PhD programs in Canada in relation to these aspects. The reviewers also recommend the development of a human resources plan to ensure that sufficient resources will be in place for
the next ten years, and suggest that the number of admissions to the program be reduced at
the outset in order to build faculty experience and provide appropriate support for students.
In response to the latter suggestion, the program’s intake has been reduced to 5-6 students in
alternating years for the first four years, with a projected steady state enrolment of 24-26
students by 2023. With regard to the complement, as the Dean notes, a complement plan is
being developed for the next several years. I am pleased to confirm that, as a step towards
further building the Nursing complement, a search for a new Director to lead the School is
well under way and two professorial stream positions in Nursing have been approved for
search in 2015-2016. Taken together with the complement already in place, I believe this
will provide a strong foundation for the initiation of the program. Further appointments will
be considered in future years as the program develops.

I am pleased to record my support for this important initiative.

Cc: Dean H. Skinner
Vice-Provost Academic A. Pitt
ASCP