DNP and Opportunity
Navigating the Road to Success

Dr. Lynne Zajac PhD, RN
Program Director-Doctor of Nursing Practice
Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) versus Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

- Both are doctorate degrees (not roles)
- PhD in Nursing or related fields
  - generates knowledge to advance the profession through research
  - prepares nurses at the highest level of nursing science
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
  - translates research into practice to improve patient outcomes
  - the highest practice degree in nursing
DNP Essentials and Curricular Components

The Eight DNP Essentials:

• are foundational competencies that every nurse with a DNP degree should possess

• 8 Essentials are competencies for every nurse regardless of specialty.

• Additional competencies, content and practicum experience varies and reflects practice and didactic learning for a particular specialty.
DNP Essentials

The Essentials (established by nursing program accrediting body the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN))

- Scientific Underpinnings for Practice
- Organizational and Systems Leadership for Quality Improvement and Systems Thinking
- Clinical Scholarship and Analytical Methods for Evidence-based Practice
- Information Systems/technology and Patient Care Technology for the Improvement and Transformation of health Care
- Health Care Policy for Advocacy in Health Care
- Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes
- Clinical Prevention and Population Health for Improving the Nation’s Health
- Advanced Nursing Practice
The NKU DNP Curriculum and NKU Program

- Includes doctoral courses to meet the 8 DNP Essentials
- Post Master’s program
- All online including orientation
- Learning Management System is Blackboard
- Courses run for 16 weeks
- Students take 5-6 credits per semester
- 16 courses including five one credit practicum courses - so really 11 courses 😊
- Seven semester program - will decrease to 6 semesters
- Curriculum revisions – currently taking place
DNP Practicum and Scholarly Project

• Five one credit courses throughout the program
• Practicum and project - simultaneously
• Students choose practicum sites – consider DNP project topic
• 1000 hours of practicum; special considerations for nationally certified NPS, clinical nurse leaders, and nurse executives.
• Project deliverable – presentation and publishable manuscript
NKU Program Highlights

• Dr. Christin Rust – 2014 NKU DNP Graduate; Won 2013 Kentucky Health Department Excellence Award for her project on pertussis.
• Cynethia Bethel-Jaiteh current student – won one of 6 national wards to fund her DNP Population Health Scholarly project
• Faculty and 3 students attending a national DNP conference next month to present research
Examples of DNP Project Titles:

- Improving Organizational Commitment: A Focus on Registered Nurse Job Satisfaction
- Evaluating Advanced Practice Registered Nurses' Perceptions of Preparedness to Practice: A Needs Assessment
- Examining the Relationship between Creativity and Personality, Motivation, Expectations, and Willingness to Take Risks: A Structural Model Approach
- Improving Interprofessional Communications Across Transitions of Care for Patients with Stroke
- The Effect of Constructive Leadership on Employee Behaviors within the Affective Events
Opportunities for Nurses with a DNP Degree

- Administrative roles - for complex practices with a focus on health care delivery, patient safety
- Health Care Policy work
- Population Health Specialties areas – public health; state and national organizations
- Teaching
- Advanced Practice Nursing – extension of existing role - post MSN DNP programs
A NKU DNP Student’s Perspective

• Julia Blackburn, RN, MSN
  UK Medical Center
  Neuroscience Services Director
  julia.blackburn@uky.edu

• Amanda Martin, RN, MSN
  UK Medical Center
  Neurosciences Assistant Nursing Manager
  amanda.martin66@uky.edu
Questions?

Dr. Lynne Zajac
Assistant Professor
Program Director - Doctor of Nursing Practice
Department of Advanced Nursing Studies
Northern Kentucky University Nunn Drive
Highland Heights, KY 41099
859-572-5178
Zajacl1@nku.edu

Emily LaForge, M.Ed.
Academic Advisor
College of Health Professions
Northern Kentucky University Nunn Drive
Highland Heights, KY 41099
859-572-5552
laforgee1@nku.edu
BURN bright