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Johnette M. Magner, Ph.D.

December 3, 2012

Dear Members of the University of Louisiana Board of Supervisors:

As a coalition of business leaders and business organizations representing the Shreveport-Bossier community, we are writing to express our support for Northwestern State University's application for a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree. We believe Northwestern is the university in our area best-suited to fill a clear and present need we see both as employers and community leaders. Northwestern not only has the largest nursing program in the state, but it also has the largest number of students, currently 180, in its nurse practitioner program. Northwestern's graduate nursing program is also the only graduate nursing program in Louisiana to be ranked among the top 100 programs in the nation last year by U.S. News and World Report.

Traditional reasons for denying new programs often include regional duplication, lack of student interest, few employment opportunities and no real community need. These excuses are simply not true here and as we will show, can easily be refuted if argued.

There is no Doctor of Nursing Practice offered in North Louisiana although there are five such programs in South Louisiana. Duplication does not exist north of Interstate 10. Yet, there is strong demand in the area. According to a Louisiana State Board of Nursing report, there are more than 200 nurse practitioners pursuing their DNP out of state, and most are from North Louisiana. Moreover, across the state, including in northwest Louisiana, we are suffering both a shortage of primary care physicians as well as a shortage of physicians

willing and able to serve in our rural communities. According to the Kaiser Family State Health Facts, Louisiana has 124 primary care physicians per 100,000 citizens compared to the national average of 271 per 100,000. Noted in the Louisiana Health Report Card is the disturbing fact that 21% of Louisiana residents have limited or no access to primary care. Nurse practitioners are increasingly filling these critical voids, and those who have mastered the 30 additional hours required for the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree, are even better prepared to work in our underserved communities. Thankfully, 93% of nurse practitioner degree graduates from Northwestern stay in Louisiana.

Northwest Louisiana needs more Doctors of Nurse Practitioner, and as the SBBA we believe it is time for a DNP in our region of the state. We ask that you help us better educate our local, place-bound health care providers as they seek to learn more and provide better services to our region.

Sincerely,



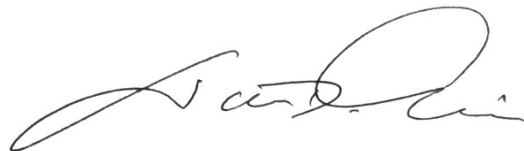
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