

# RN Scholars: A Novel, Low-Cost, Research Fellowship for RN Retention, Satisfaction, and Scholarly Outcomes

Kimberly A. Lewis, Jonas Nurse Leaders Scholar, PhD Candidate, MSN, RN; Tiffany N. Ricks, PhD, RN; Leona Baxter, MSN, RN; Nancy Ekemike, MSN, RN; Johanna Wynn, MSN, RN; Regina Kofron, MSN, RN; Toni Rowin, MSN, RN; Rebecca Miller, MSN, RN; Leah May, MSN, RN; Lori Kuhl, RN

## BACKGROUND:

- Nurses at the bedside are best positioned to understand the gaps in understanding of nursing practice.
- In addition, clinical nurses need a career development pathway that incentivizes higher education and allows them to apply their advanced skills, such as those obtained from a master's degree, while remaining in a bedside nursing role.
- Further, growing organizations need to involve clinical nurses in nursing research endeavors to build research capacity and to provide the highest quality of care..

## OBJECTIVE:

The purpose of this study is to describe the development and implementation of a novel, low-cost, streamlined Registered Nurse (RN) Scholars Research Fellowship Program at a large hospital system with an academic medical center and multiple Magnet-designated teaching hospitals. The program was designed and evaluated with scholarly outcomes as well as retention, satisfaction, and intention-to-stay outcomes.

## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT:

Methods: A theoretical model (Boyer's Model of Scholarship) was used to guide the program development, implementation, and evaluation. Program development was based on elements discussed in previous literature: Leader/mentor selection; participants; project selection; approach; curriculum; program cost; and program outcomes.

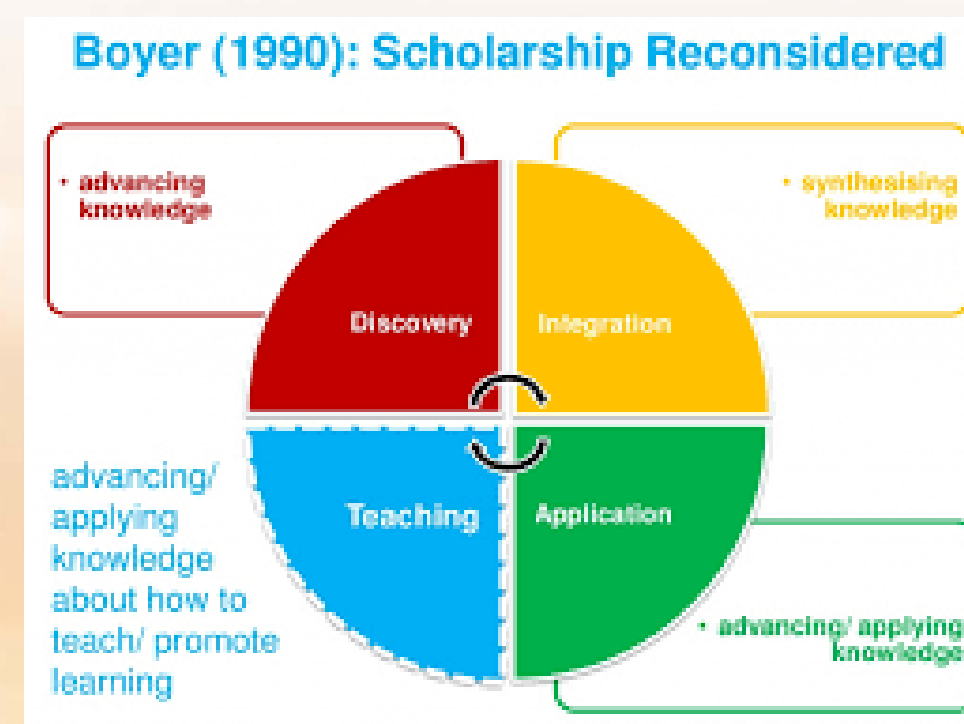
## RESULTS:

Table 1. Scholarly Works Produced by Type of Scholarship

Type of Scholarship (Boyer)	Purpose	Activities
Discovery	Build new knowledge through traditional research	Designed 2 research studies (1 on hold due to CNO request) Collected pilot data Submitted a grant application
Integration	Interpret knowledge across disciplines	Completed 2 systematic reviews of the literature
Application	Aid society and professions in addressing problems	Evaluated quality, reliability, and validity of measures Evaluated theoretical models to guide research design Participated in network committees Provided recommendations for program development
Teaching	Study teaching models and strategies to achieve cognitive learning	Presented 2 abstracts at nursing research conferences Participated in network level research events (i.e. Research Symposium, Research Dinners) Scholars can become mentors of other scholars in years 2-3 of the program

A cohort of four RNs from diverse backgrounds (diverse in clinical specialty, location, department, and nurse characteristics) participated in the first year of the program.

Budgeted Costs: \$89,000 USD; Actual Costs: \$55,626



## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Persistence is required in an ever-changing and at times unstable environment
- Research is a marathon, not a sprint – advocate for the long term value as opposed to short term action; stay the course or remain flexible with changes
- Projects look different from QI or EBP projects – show people the way
- Skills take time to develop – set reasonable expectations
- Identify stakeholders early and communicate often
- Integration with professional portfolio program and nursing research scientist mentors are key to the success of the program

## CONCLUSION:

The RN Scholar Program achieved the same or more scholarly output as previous programs described in the literature with less cost to the organization and minimal time investment. This program has the potential for broad applicability and widespread dissemination to hospital systems that are challenged to produce high quality clinical nursing research involving direct-patient-care nurses. Further research is warranted to determine the impact of the intervention on retention and satisfaction in a broader sample of nurses.

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