

Nursing Administrators Perspective of the Nurse Faculty Shortage in their Schools: A “Bird’s Eye View”

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At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Integrate collaborative and innovative strategies in their own institutions to address the nursing faculty shortage.
- Describe commonalities nursing administrators share with other schools and how these commonalities can be sources of inter collegial collaboration.
- Explore the themes of: *Onboarding/Integration, Elephant in the Room, Changing Expectations* and *Making do/Getting by* as they relate to your school and faculty.

Purpose

The aim of this study was to explore nursing administrators' experience of the nurse faculty shortage from a personal and institutional perspective in Maryland, U.S.A.



Background

Globally, two factors impact the nurse faculty shortage and subsequent student enrollments:

1. Economic migration contributing to a “brain drain” (Emanuel-Frith, 2018).
2. An aging nurse faculty force (AACN, 2019; Fang & Keston, 2017; Robeznieks, 2015)

Background

- In the United States, the need for nurses is intensified by the health care needs of an aging population. "Compounding the problem is the fact that nursing schools across the country are struggling to expand capacity to meet the rising demand for care." (AACN, 2019, para1).

Background

- The Eastern Shore-Western Shore Faculty Initiative (ES-WSFI) initiated a qualitative research study to explore the experience of the nurse faculty shortage from the perspective of nursing administrators in Maryland, U.S.A.



Method:

A Qualitative-Interpretive Approach

We used Heideggerian hermeneutics, a qualitative, interpretive method, as our analytical approach.

Method

- University IRB approval
- Identifying participating schools
- Identifying interested administrators
- Arranged mutually agreeable date/time for participant interviews
- Qualitative-interpretive method-phone interviews with 25 administrators, chairs and deans-sufficient for saturation
 - One-hour in duration
 - Semi-structured question framework
 - Gathering demographic and quantitative data

Analysis

A modified version of Diekelmann, Allen, and Tanner's (1989) method:

Stage 1. Transcribed texts from the interviews were disseminated and read individually by the team to gain an overall understanding.

Stage 2. Implicit and explicit meanings were extracted.

Stage 3. A hermeneutic story was developed.

Stage 4. Reading and re-reading all texts to identify interrelated themes.

Stage 5. Interpretations, patterns and themes that “go against” the pattern were identified and compared with the text. Benner (1994) describes a pattern as “things that go together in a particular way” (p. 173).

Stage 6. Constitutive patterns were justified.

Stage 7. The completed research report.

Administrator Interview Findings

- All but two participating colleges identified an ongoing nursing shortage.
- Schools experienced a significant impact attributable to the nurse faculty shortage
- For two schools, financial constraints and lack of faculty, were ascribed to external decisions, rather than a faculty shortage.

Administrator Interview Findings

- Increased reliance on part time/adjunct faculty
- Insufficient part-time and clinical faculty
- Difficulty recruiting faculty from under-represented groups
- Mental health, OB, Pediatrics, Women's health, & long-term care are the most challenging clinical specialties to staff

Four emergent themes

Four themes emerged:

- 1) *Onboarding/Integration*
- 2) *Making do/Getting by;*
- 3) *Changing Expectations; and,*
- 4) *Elephant in the Room.*

Onboarding/*Integration*

Onboarding is a “systematic process to establish a positive trajectory early...which includes cultivating key relationships, and access to information- phased implementation...” (Derven, 2008).



Onboarding/*Integration*

- All schools included an informal mentorship process socializing faculty to the institution, in addition to a formal orientation.
- Administrators were less successful using the integration process by which schools retain creative and expert faculty



Onboarding/Integration

“We can’t retire yet-have to get them oriented to the faculty role; need to teach faculty how to be good mentors and preceptors to new faculty.”

“When someone who has 20 years of teaching experience who knows the ins and outs of everything and (is) replaced with a brand new person, they take so much time to mentor; in 2-3 years they will be good.”

Onboarding/Integration

“These new faculty require mentoring, and need to be aware of CNE certification, curriculum design, capstone requirements, evaluation design, item design and design competencies overall.”





Changing Expectations

Changing Expectations depicted the complexity of the academic role, academic environment, and shifting demands and requirements of faculty.

Administrators highlighted substantial increases in faculty workload with already overworked faculty dealing with limited resources.



Changing Expectations

“Morale is low-people are frustrated.”

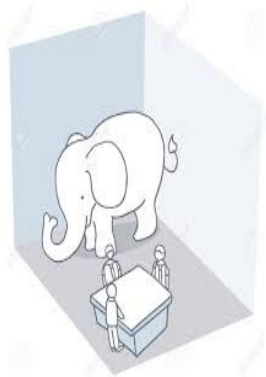
“Faculty workload has increased on (through) the years; (previously) I had a lot of time to read and be scholarly. Now I am too busy to use my PhD.”

Elephant in the Room

Elephant in the Room identified how administrators are facing the impact of salary and financial issues in faculty recruitment and retention.

“lack of pay raises,”

“salaries in the practice world are much higher, which make it difficult to compete and attract faculty,”



Elephant in the Room

- The “elephant in the room” reveals the unspoken truth-salary inequities are real. Across the board, administrators viewed this as a challenge in addressing the faculty shortage, recruitment and retention.



Elephant in the Room

“Salaries are first because there is resentment of other faculty when new faculty get higher salaries.”



Making do/Getting by

Making do/Getting by reflected the measures taken by schools to meet the challenges of the faculty shortage.

Making do/Getting by

Administrators from undergraduate/graduate, four-year schools/community colleges voiced the same concerns:

- increased workload
- significant gaps in faculty clinical expertise
- increased use of adjuncts/part time faculty as outcomes of this shortage

Making Do: Getting by

“We (have) no formal mechanism of addressing the nurse faculty shortage.”

“We have to be proactive about replacing seasoned faculty, need a five-year plan.”

Discussion

- Administrators experience difficulty hiring sufficient faculty who were experientially, highly qualified.
- Increasing reliance on a changing pool of adjunct instructors
- Making-do with faculty without sufficient credentials or who lack expertise in needed disciplines
- Losing qualified faculty to higher paying hospital positions-what can we offer them?

Discussion

Searches are cyclic:

- Faculty are exhausted and have little time and investment in their own scholarship.
- Administrators are focused on problem-solving r/t the outcomes of the nurse faculty shortage- rather than issues of faculty support and pedagogical excellence.

Implications/Conclusions:

- The nurse faculty shortage is taking its toll on nurse administrators.
- A multi-pronged approach is needed including: re-aligning role expectations with higher salaries and compensation (Daw, Seldomridge, Battistoni, & Belcher, 2018), providing financial support for doctoral degrees, expanding mentorship programs to promote retention, and focusing efforts on making a career as nursing faculty member an attractive option (DiFang & Keston, 2017).

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