

## **45th Biennial Convention (16-20 November 2019)**

### **Barriers to Nursing Faculty Scholarship Productivity in the Academic Setting**

**Margaret C. Slota, DNP, RN, FAAN**

Heather Bradford, MSN, CNM, ARNP, FACNM

Diana Burden, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC

*Department of Advanced Practice Nursing; School of Nursing & Health Studies,  
Georgetown University, Washington, DC, USA*

Participation in scholarship activity has been increasingly emphasized in health science related academic settings for both tenure track and non-tenure track nursing faculty. Scholarship is an essential foundation for the nursing discipline and an expectation in the academic setting for promotion in rank. In educational settings, expectations for nursing faculty often vary from faculty in other disciplines. Faculty with university ranked positions must meet requirements outlined in appointment and promotion policies. Nursing faculty also must meet scholarship expectations for practice, including certifications, licensure, and continuing education; these may not be as clearly defined or linked to promotion materials and expectations. While promotion expectations differ for tenure track versus non-tenure track ranked positions, both require some degree of scholarship productivity and dissemination. With the expansion of doctoral programs, especially DNP programs, nursing schools need to meet the accelerated demand for nurse educators while supporting faculty engagement in scholarly work. Increasing workloads due to high numbers of vacancies in academic settings also creates a barrier in recruitment of skilled educators and in enabling time for scholarship activities (Arian, Soleimani & Oghazian, 2018). Newer faculty find it challenging to establish a career scholarly trajectory with the required orientation to teaching and evaluation, less experience with research, writing, grant funding, and IRB applications, and limited knowledge in translating their findings into manuscripts suitable for peer-reviewed publications (Martin, 2016). In order for nursing programs to meet the demand for faculty, scholarship productivity must be facilitated and supported (Smeltzer, Sharts-Hopko, Cantrell, Heverly, Wise, Jenkinson, & Nthenge, 2014). However, a variety of significant barriers to faculty scholarship have been recognized in academic settings across the country. Lack of time and lack of mentoring relationships are often cited as key factors in scholarship productivity. Chung and Kowalski's (2012) nationwide sample of full-time faculty found that job satisfaction was significantly influenced by mentoring relationships, among other variables. However, implementation of mentoring best practices requires time and experienced faculty to establish. Determining perceived faculty barriers to scholarship is an important step in identifying and implementing practices which support productivity.

This cross-sectional, descriptive study employed an investigator-developed 20-question survey tool designed to explore sample characteristics and identify barriers to scholarship productivity among the non-tenure track full time and part time nursing faculty in a Carnegie classification R1 (Doctoral Universities - Very High Research Activity) university. The tool was developed based on literature which evaluated faculty barriers, with content review by internal senior faculty. The study was approved via

expedited review by the university IRB. The study aims were to identify perceived barriers to scholarship among non-tenure track faculty, compare faculty sample characteristics to perceived barriers, and identify potential solutions to promote faculty scholarship. The survey was distributed electronically to 226 adjunct, part-time and full-time nursing faculty, assessing demographics, academic responsibilities, and perceived barriers to scholarship productivity. Data was collected anonymously. Data analysis was completed using descriptive statistics in SPSS software. Fifty faculty completed the online survey (22% response rate). Of those, 48% were full-time faculty and 48% were part-time or adjunct faculty (2 did not identify status). Faculty were asked to rank potential barriers from 0 (no barrier) to 5 (most significant barrier).

The perceived barrier to scholarship productivity with the highest mean was *available time to engage in scholarly activities* (mean 3.7) and *lack of protected time to engage in scholarly activities* (mean 3.6). Difficulty maintaining *work/life balance* (mean 3.4) and *lack of funding mechanisms to support scholarship of teaching or application* (mean 3.4) were tied for the third ranked barriers. Faculty also identified substantial barriers as *mental energy required for role complexity – practice, teaching, service, scholarship* (mean 3.1) and *support for scholarship work outside peer-reviewed journals* (mean 3.0). With the exception of *lack of funding mechanisms* and *support for scholarship work outside peer-reviewed journals*, the other highly ranked barriers were categorized as workload and time-related barriers on the survey tool. Although 32 faculty scored *writing skills* at some level of potential barrier, the mean of 1.0 for this measure was the lowest ranked mean in the sample. Comparing the means of the top 5 rated barriers to the means of the bottom 5 rated barriers demonstrated a significant difference using a paired t test ( $t(48) = 11.87, p < .001$ .)

Suggested barriers for scholarship productivity among nursing faculty have included a lack of mentoring, lack of time, and lack of confidence in writing skills. Our data provides an expanded perspective of faculty challenges in completing scholarly work, especially for faculty not supported by research funding and protected time for research and writing. Implications for academic nursing departments and nursing faculty will be discussed. Initiatives to promote engagement in scholarly activities are recommended, with a focus on promoting and increasing scholarship productivity while maintaining work-life balance.

---

**Title:**

Barriers to Nursing Faculty Scholarship Productivity in the Academic Setting

**Keywords:**

Faculty scholarship, Research barriers and Workload

**References:**

1. American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). (2017). *Defining scholarship for academic nursing: A position statement*. (May 23, 2017).
2. Arian, M., Soleimani, M., & Oghazian, M.B. (2018). Job satisfaction and the factors affecting satisfaction in nurse educators: A systematic review. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, (38): 389-399.

3. Chung, C. E. & Kowalski, S. (2012). Job stress, mentoring, psychological empowerment, and job satisfaction among nursing faculty. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 51(7), 381-88.
4. Cullen, D., Shieh, C., McLennon, S. M., Pike, C., Hartman, T., & Shah, H. (2017). Mentoring non-tenured track nursing faculty: A systematic review. *Nurse Educator*, 42(6), 290-294.
5. Fang, D. & Kesten, K. (2017). Retirement and succession of nursing faculty in 2016-2025. *Nursing Outlook*, 65(5), 633-42. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2017.03.003>.
6. Martin, L. (2016). Promoting nursing scholarship through faculty research talking circles. *Annals of Nursing and Practice*, 3(6): 1064.
7. Smeltzer, S. C., Sharts-Hopko, N. C., Cantrell, M. A., Heverly, M. S., Wise, N. J., Jenkinson, A., & Nthenge, S. (2014). Challenges to research productivity of doctoral program nursing faculty. *Nursing Outlook*, 62(4), 268-74.
8. Stuart, G. W. (2018). Faculty making the grade. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 34 (1): 1-2.

**Abstract Summary:**

Faculty scholarship activities are an expectation in the nursing academic setting. This study compared sample characteristics and explored identified barriers to scholarship productivity among non-tenure track nursing faculty. The highest perceived barrier to productivity was time to engage in scholarly work. Findings and implications for nursing programs will be discussed.

**Content Outline:**

I. Introduction: Barriers to Nursing Faculty Scholarship Productivity in the Academic Setting

1. Scholarly accomplishments are required or expected for nursing faculty in academic settings.
2. Many barriers exist which limit faculty scholarship work productivity.
3. A literature review revealed that a primary perceived barrier was lack of mentors to engage in scholarly work.

II. Research design

A. Study aims:

1. Identify perceived barriers to scholarship among non-tenure track faculty.
2. Compare faculty sample characteristics to perceived barriers.
3. Recommend potential solutions to promote faculty scholarship.

B. Study methods:

1. A cross-sectional, descriptive study employed an investigator-developed 20 question survey tool designed to compare sample characteristics and explore identified barriers to scholarship productivity among non-tenure track full time and part time nursing faculty in a Carnegie classification R1 (Doctoral Universities - Very High Research Activity) university.
2. The survey was distributed electronically to 226 adjunct, part-time and full-time nursing faculty.
3. Data was collected anonymously.

III. Results

#### A. Study Participants

1. Fifty faculty (22% response rate) completed the anonymous online survey.
2. Demographics of participants included part-time and full-time faculty from 2 nursing departments.
3. Majority of respondents live and teach remotely from campus.
4. Participants varied with respect to educational background, age, primary academic responsibilities, clinical practice workloads, and specialty foci.

#### B. Key findings:

1. Faculty ranked available time to engage in scholarly activity and protected time to engage in scholarly activities as the two highest perceived barriers to scholarship.
2. Faculty identified lack of funding mechanisms to support scholarship of teaching or application as another highly ranked barrier.
3. Interpersonal barriers such as confidence and writing skills were ranked as the lowest barriers.

#### IV. Implications of findings for academic nursing settings

1. Academic settings need to consider faculty workload to promote further scholarship activities.
2. Implementation of mentoring relationships to provide strategies to guide faculty in work-life balance and other strategies may be helpful in increasing scholarly productivity.

#### First Primary Presenting Author

##### ***Primary Presenting Author***

Margaret C. Slota, DNP, RN, FAAN

Georgetown University

Department of Advanced Practice Nursing; School of Nursing & Health Studies

Associate Professor; Director, DNP Graduate Studies; Director, PM-DNP Program

Washington DC

USA

**Author Summary:** Dr. Slota is the Director of DNP Graduate Studies and an Associate Professor at Georgetown University. Her experience includes positions as a critical care clinical nurse specialist, transport nurse, staff development educator, and administrative director of pediatric and neonatal critical care services. She has published frequently in refereed journals, written multiple book chapters, and three books, served as PI in funded and other research studies, and presented frequently at professional conferences.

#### Second Secondary Presenting Author

##### ***Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author***

Heather Bradford, MSN, CNM, ARNP, FACNM

Georgetown University

Department of Advanced Practice Nursing; School of Nursing & Health Studies

Assistant Program Director, NM/WHNP and WHNP Programs

Washington DC

USA

**Author Summary:** Heather is the Assistant Program Director for the Nurse-Midwifery/WHNP and WHNP Programs at Georgetown University. She has provided full-scope midwifery care for 17 years. She has advocated for advanced practice nurses at both the state and federal level. She became a Fellow of ACNM in 2011 and serves on the Fellows Board of Governors as Vice-Chair. She is the only CNM to be appointed to a state advisory committee regarding maternal and child health outcomes.

Third Secondary Presenting Author

***Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author***

Diana Burden, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC

Georgetown University

Department of Advanced Practice Nursing; School of Nursing & Health Studies

Clinical Placement Director, FNP track

Washington DC

USA

**Author Summary:** Dr. Burden was the Clinical Faculty Director for the FNP program at Georgetown University from 2014-2018, overseeing mentoring of over 50 Clinical Faculty Advisors and assisting with successful placements of over 200 students per semester. She has been a certified FNP since 2000 with time spent in Family Practice and Urgent Care settings. She has recently moved into a Clinic Medical Director position in a FQHC in Central Oregon.