

# The Nurse Educator Doctoral Grant (NEDG) Program- Promoting Doctoral Degree Completion in Maryland

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# Nurse Support Program (NSP) II



# Objectives

- Examine the issues associated with the limited supply of doctorally-prepared nurse educators in the U.S.
- Describe a Maryland initiative to address the issues
- Review the 7-year outcomes of the Nurse Educator Doctoral Grant program
- Propose recommendations for NEDG program improvement

# The Problem

- One third of current faculty will retire by 2025
  - 44% of whom hold research-focused doctorates (Fang & Kesten, 2017).
- Lack of replacements
  - National nurse faculty vacancy rate is 7.9%.
  - 90.7% vacant positions require/prefer a doctoral degree. (AACN, 2019)
- Choosing an academic career that requires a doctoral degree may be negatively influenced by financial circumstances (Jones-Schenk et al, 2017)
  - Number of students graduating in debt is mounting (AACN, 2017a; AACN, 2017b).
- “Time and money” are greatest barriers to doctoral degree completion for employed nursing faculty in Maryland
  - (D. Seigart, MDAC Committee #8 presentation, 9/23/11).

# Background-Nurse Support Programs (NSP)

NSP I (2001)- increase number of registered nurses (RNs)

NSP II (2005) – expand Maryland’s capacity for nursing education and increase number of faculty

Administered by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)

Funded through the Health Services Cost Review Commission with pooled assessments totaling up to 0.1 % of hospital regulated gross patient revenue

**Goals: to increase nursing graduates and mitigate barriers to nursing education through institutional and faculty focused initiatives.**

Outcomes: New nurse graduates, RNs completing advanced degrees for a faculty pipeline and recruiting/retaining nurse faculty

# NSP II: Nursing Workforce Interventions

- **NSP II Competitive Institutional Grants for Nursing Programs and Hospital Partners**
  - Goals:
    - Expand enrollments to graduate new nurses
    - Create a pipeline for faculty preparation
    - Support seamless academic progression in nursing
- **NSP II Statewide Initiative Grants for Individual Faculty**
  - Goals:
    - Prepare nurses to teach
    - Support new faculty in transition to educator role
    - Expedite doctoral degree completion
    - Recognize excellence in the specialty practice of nursing education

# Nurse Educator Doctoral Grants for Practice and Dissertation Research (NEDG)

- Began in 2012
- Provides grants to current nursing faculty enrolled in doctoral study, who are within 2 years of degree completion.
- Recent doctoral degree graduates are also eligible.
- Funds may be used for:
  - Tuition and other educational costs
  - Student loan repayment
  - Course release time
  - Research assistance
  - Other educational costs related to expediting degree completion



# NEDG Nomination and Application Process

- Nomination form & support letter from dean, director, or chair;
- Current curriculum vitae for each faculty being nominated;
- Program name, degree sought, curriculum plan, graduation date, title of scholarly work;
- Letter of commitment to continue teaching from nominated faculty;
- Original certified transcripts;
- Detailed budget describing financial need and justification for requested funds. Repayment of student loans/tuition are top priority for funding.

# NEDG Guidelines 2013-2019

- Maximum award = \$30,000 per nominee
- Distributed to the employing institution for release to nominee for specific degree-related expenditures
- Awardees expectation
  - Continued progress towards degree completion/degree conferral
  - Ongoing employment as a faculty member in good standing
  - Submission of a copy of final scholarly work, and citations of published work for posting on the NSP II website  
[www.nursesupport.org](http://www.nursesupport.org)

# Purpose of Our Study

- To examine NEDG outcomes from 2013-2019
  - Awardee sociodemographic profiles
  - Degree type
  - Retention in faculty role
  - Others
- Is the NEDG producing its desired outcomes?

# Methods

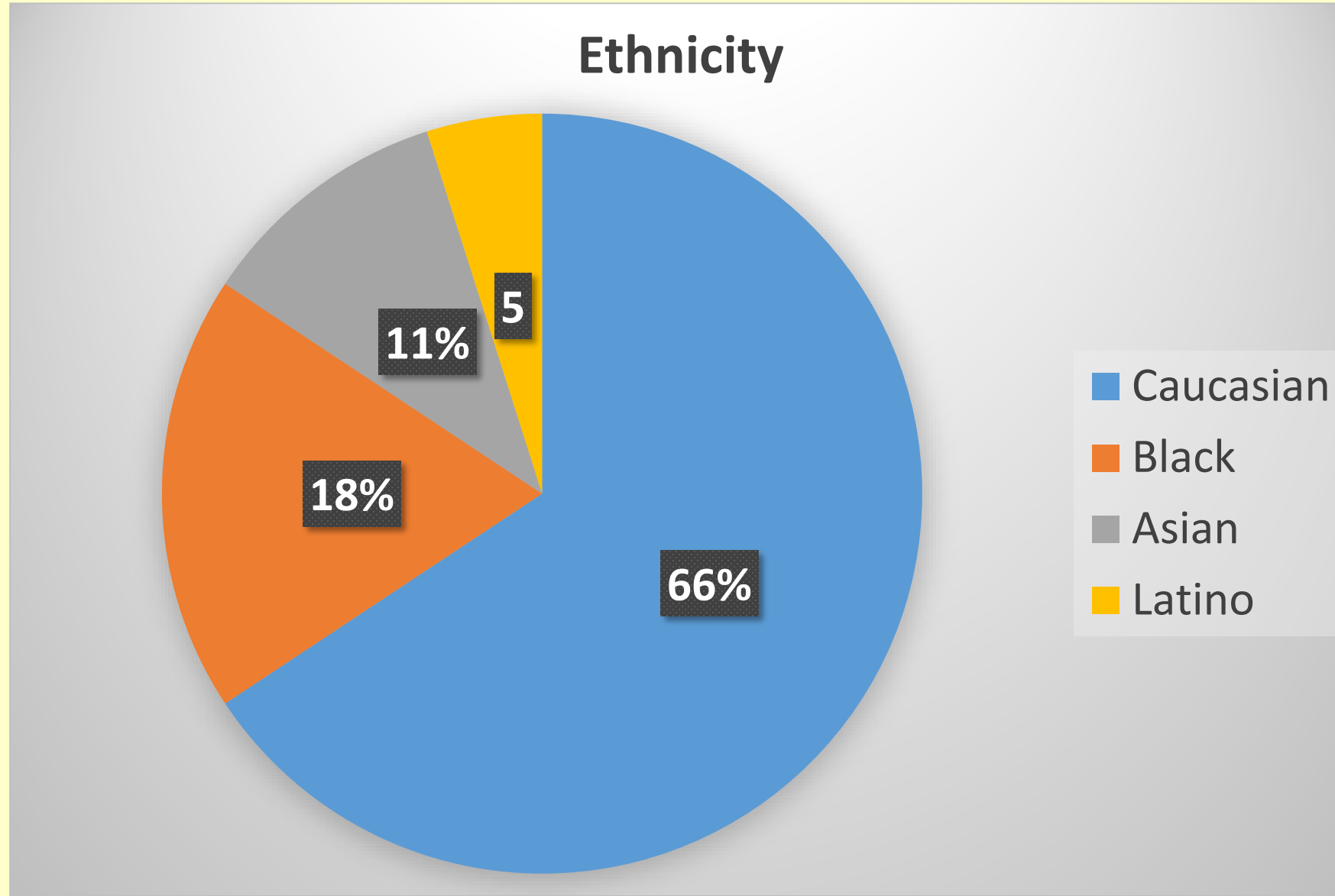
- 20-item online survey sent to all NEDG recipients
  - 65% response rate
- Review of secondary data collected by MHEC
- Data included:
  - Gender
  - Ethnicity
  - Birth generation
  - Employer type and region
  - Type of doctoral degree sought/completed
  - Years expected to work as faculty
  - Student debt load when NEDG was received
  - Areas for which NEDG funding was used
  - Personal impact of the NEDG grant

# Results

- \$2.82 million was awarded to 114 nurse faculty from 77% of Maryland's nursing programs (13 universities and 10 community colleges) to support doctoral degree completion.
- 110 doctoral degrees have been awarded over the past 7 years, a 95% completion rate;
- 88% retention rate of NEDG recipients in educator positions in Maryland

# Demographics – NEDG Recipients

- 92.2% female
- 7.8% male



# NEDG Distribution and Retention FY13-19

FISCAL YEAR	# OF RECIPIENTS	AWARD AMOUNT	# LOST IN COHORT	RETENTION RATE
2013	16	\$330,000	3	81%
2014	10	\$270,000	3	70%
2015	25	\$655,000	5	80%
2016	15	\$350,000	0	100%
2017	19	\$440,000	0	100%
2018	13	\$305,000	0	100%
2019	16	\$470,000	0	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>\$2,820,000</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>88.77 %</b>

# Degrees Sought by Year of NEDG Award

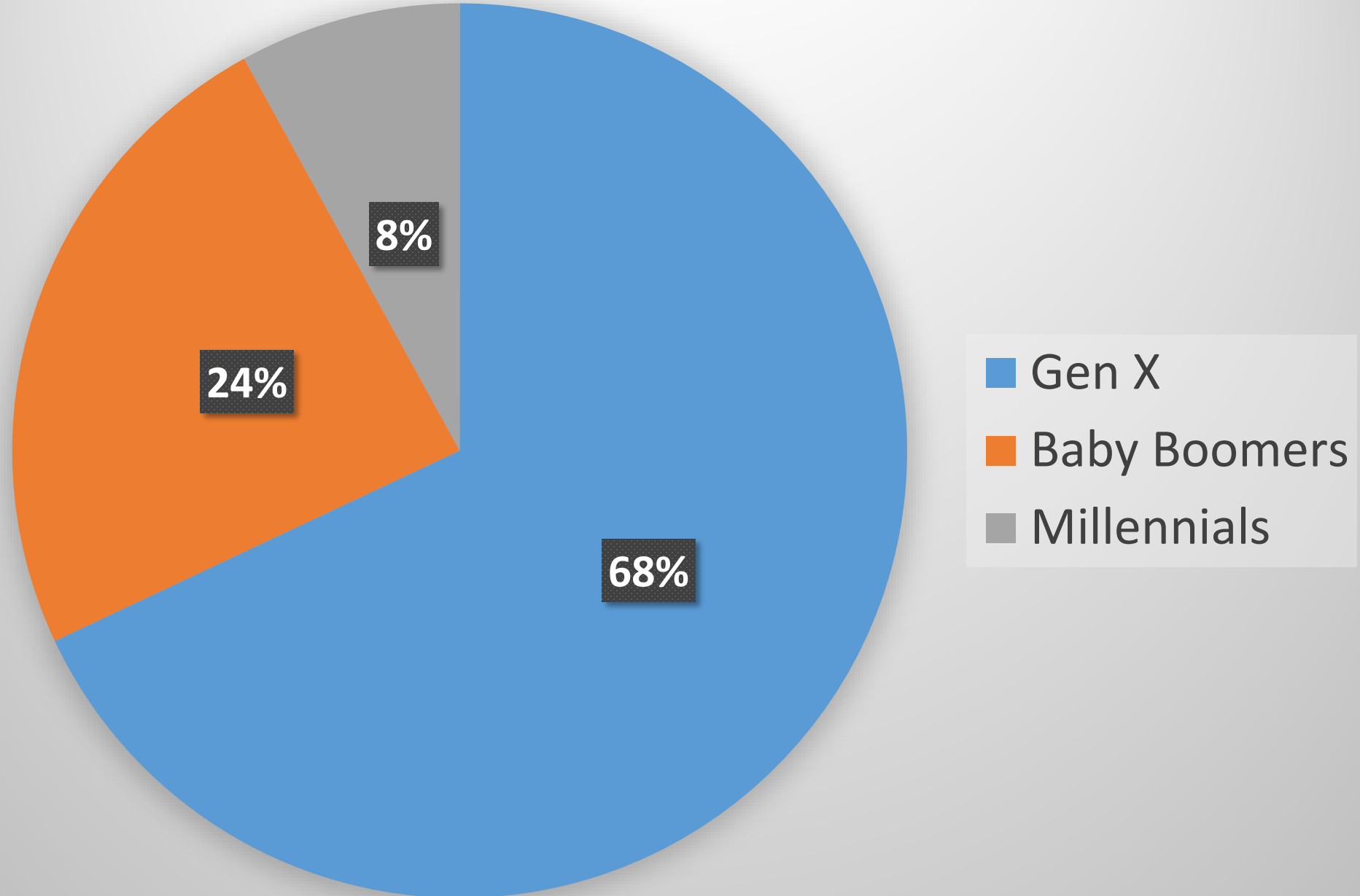
YEAR	DNP	PhD in Nursing	EdD	PhD Other	Total
2013	4	4	3	5	16
2014	6	4	0	0	10
2015	11	9	3	2	25
2016	5	7	3	0	15
2017	9	7	0	3	19
2018	6	4	3	0	13
2019	8	3	1	0	12
Total	49	38	13	10	110



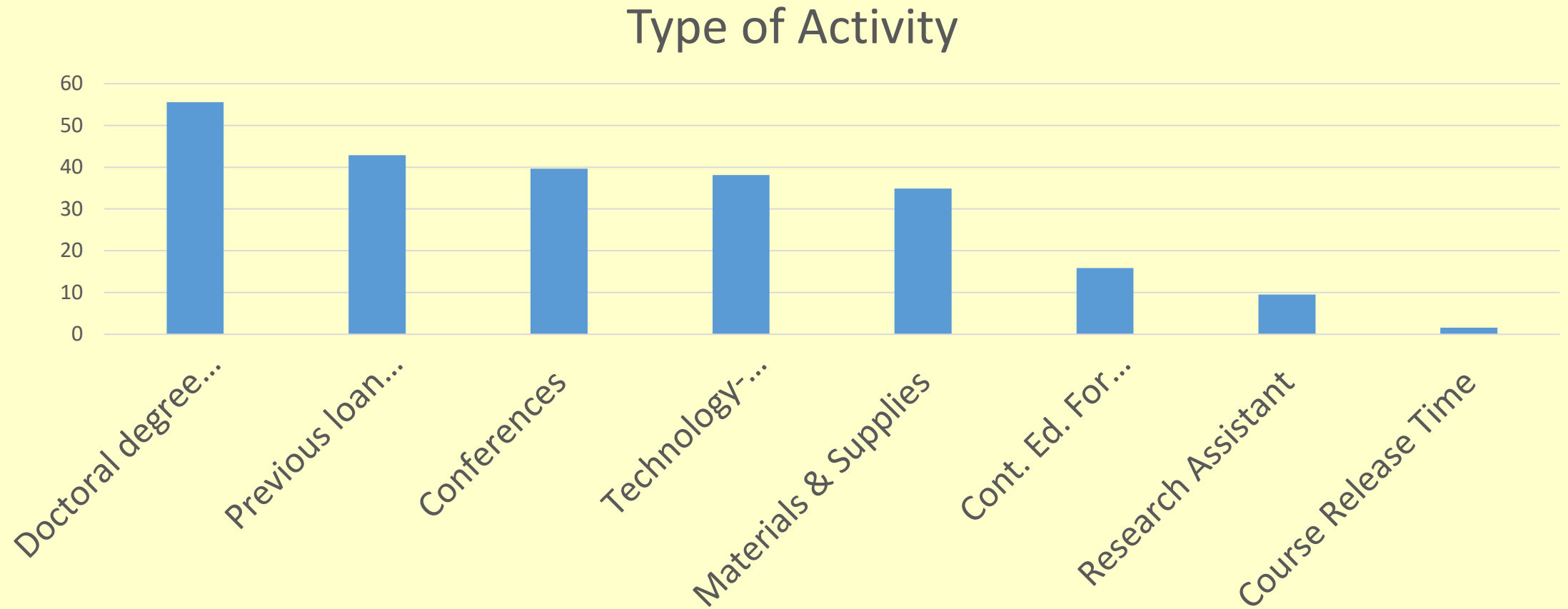
# Faculty Debt Load Upon Receipt of NEDG

<b>Student Loan Debt</b>	<b>% of NEDG Recipients</b>
\$10,000-\$19,999	12.7
\$20,000-\$49,999	22
\$50,000-74,999	15.87
\$75,000-\$99,999	11
\$100,000 – \$174,999	9
>\$175,000	5

# Age of NEDG Recipients



# How NEDG Awards Were Used



# Doctoral Projects

- Many focused on educational issues in nursing that inform best practices in both academia and clinical practice.
- Examples include
  - Use of simulation
  - Nurse faculty shortage
  - Efficacy of teaching modalities
  - Quality improvement - reducing medication errors
  - Mentoring models
  - Civility
  - Student retention

# Discussion

- Doctoral degree type and location
  - DNP vs PhD
  - Out-of- state vs in-state programs
- Faculty debt load
- Faculty salaries
- Age and intent to teach
- Diversity
- 77% program participation

# Discussion-Doctoral Degree Type and Location

- DNP is most popular degree choice
  - Consistent with national trends
  - Growing interest in the EdD and non-nursing PhD
  - PhD-prepared faculty are preferred over DNP-prepared faculty (Dreifuerst et al., 2016).
- 60% reported attending out of state programs
  - FY 2020 - 6 NEDG awards made; 4/6 out of state programs
  - No PhD in Nursing Education in Maryland
  - Online, for-profit programs perceived as “more do-able”; very expensive

## Solutions:

- NSP II Doctoral Education Summits to promote in-state doctoral degree programs; advance career without incurring additional debt.
- [www.LeadNursingForward.org](http://www.LeadNursingForward.org) web resource provides information on educational programs, differences in doctoral degrees, searchable by zip code, county, degree type.

# Discussion: Faculty Debt Load

## NEDG faculty participants compared to AACN Survey (2017)

- NSP II NEDG 14% owed > \$100K vs AACN 16% owed > \$100K
- Nationally 10% of students are retired, still in debt and having their Social Security garnished

## Solutions:

- Increase award amount of NEDG
- Expand eligibility guidelines and allowable expenses
- Promote attendance at in-state schools
- Publicize need to include debt repayment in application budget

# Discussion - Faculty Salaries

- Academic salaries can't compete with practice salaries (AACN, 2019)
  - 24% of NEDG recipients earned \$50,000-\$69,999
  - 43% of NEDG recipients earned \$70,000 to \$89,999
- Solutions:
  - Continue to lobby for competitive salaries
  - Explore joint appointments
  - Fund faculty retention initiatives



# Discussion - Age and Intent to Teach

- 30% Baby Boomers, retiring in next 10 years
- 60% from Gen X but only 40% expect to teach for 11-20 years
- <10% are Millennials
  
- Solutions:
  - Encourage advanced degrees at an earlier age
  - Promote teaching as a specialty practice
  - Foster teaching as a desirable career choice
    - Image building through [www.LeadNursingForward.org](http://www.LeadNursingForward.org)

# Discussion – Diversity and Program Representation

- 38% *ethnic* diversity among NEDG awardees but little *gender* diversity
- 7 nursing programs *without* NEDG nominees
- Solutions:
  - Encourage academic careers specifically among those from under-represented groups;
  - Provide mentorship and career guidance to promising undergraduates;
  - Promote leadership development;
  - Support those currently enrolled in doctoral study;
  - Develop publicity campaign featuring NEDG awardees from under-represented groups.

# Limitations

- Researcher-made survey
- 65% response rate-online survey; little is known about other 35%
- NEDG is for full-time faculty; part-time and adjunct faculty numbers are on the rise

# Recommendations and Conclusions

- NEDG is accomplishing its goals!
- Faculty have financial need that could be addressed by increasing the NEDG award maximum
- More publicity about NEDG is needed
- Expanding NEDG eligibility to include those pre-2012 or those with significant debt load even after an initial NEDG award would help retention
- Consideration of eligibility for part-time or other non-benefitted faculty positions

# Future Research

- Continue to track program outcomes as program changes are implemented
- Focus groups with NEDG recipients to explore their lived experiences as they completed higher degrees
- Exploration of factors leading to choice of degree type and program location
- Effectiveness of program publicity efforts

# Update on NSP II Program Evaluation 2019

- Fall 2019 Meetings
  - NSP II Staff
  - Maryland Deans and Directors of Nursing Programs
  - Maryland Action Coalition
  - Maryland Nurses Association
  - Maryland Organization of Nurse Leaders
  - Maryland Nurse Residency Collaborative
  - Maryland Board of Nursing
  - Maryland Workforce Center
  - Maryland Higher Education Commission
  - Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission
- Consensus to continue
  - NSP II Competitive Institutional Grants Initiatives
  - Revise Faculty Focused NSP II Statewide Initiatives

# NSP II Program Evaluation and Funding Renewal at HSCRC meeting 12/11/19

**Recommendation 2:** Establish a Workgroup to Recommend Updates to Statewide Initiatives MHEC will establish a workgroup to recommend revisions to all faculty-focused programs, which are part of the Statewide Initiatives. The workgroup will review the eligibility requirements for the GNF to align with the needs of nursing programs. As part of the evaluation, the Maryland Council of Deans and Directors recommended focusing on existing faculty retention measures through new or existing programs, increasing the limits on the NNFF and NEDG programs, as well as, addressing the barriers to course release time and eligible expenditures. In addition, they recommend developing a faculty mentoring program to support the GNF and full-time faculty across all 28 nursing programs to improve faculty retention in education settings.

<https://hscrc.state.md.us/Documents/December%202019%20Public%20Post-Meeting%20Materials.pdf>

# Proposed Revisions to NEDG Guidelines for FY21 (1/24/20)

- **Increase award amount**

- Up to \$60,000 per nominee based on the individual's demonstrated needs.

- **Grandfather previous degree recipients with outstanding loans**

- Faculty with existing student loan debt who were not eligible for NEDG in 2012 and who have taught in a Maryland nursing program for 10 years and continue in good standing
- Prior NEDG recipients who used their first NEDG award to pay down student loan but still have existing student loan debt

**Goal:** provide more support to Maryland nursing faculty with a track record of service; meet needs of mid-career faculty who had already completed doctoral degrees prior to the NEDG initiation.



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# Questions?

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