A Comprehensive Needs Assessment to Gauge the Impact and Extent of the Nursing Faculty Shortage

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Session Objectives

- Describe the impetus for a comprehensive needs assessment in addressing the nurse faculty shortage
- Integrate preliminary findings in light of current challenges
- Discuss current efforts in addressing the shortage in your country or region
Overview

- Background
- Methodology
- Findings
  - Quantitative
  - Qualitative
- Next steps
Background

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

1. Economic migration contributing to a “brain drain” for many countries (Nardi & Gyurko, 2013).
Background

- In the United States, the lack of experienced nurses in specific specialty areas and the later age nurses enter graduate schools contributes to the nurse faculty shortage (AACN, 2015).

- The Eastern Shore-Western Shore Faculty Initiative (ES-WSFI) created a needs assessment to identify issues related to the clinical nurse faculty shortage in Maryland, U.S.A.
Unique Regional Challenges

- Rural, urban and suburban
- Different levels of student preparation
- Lack of diverse faculty
- Insufficient faculty in specialty areas
A Multidimensional Needs Assessment-Method

- University IRB approval
- Mixed method approach
- Finding participating schools
  - Gathering demographic and quantitative data
  - Identifying administrators for interviews
  - Inviting faculty participation in focus groups
A Multidimensional Needs Assessment-Method

- **Quantitative methods:**
  Online, password-protected surveys

- **Qualitative methods**
  - Interviews with administrators responsible for staffing
  - Focus groups of faculty with interest in the shortage and staffing solutions
Respondents' Primary Program

- Doctoral
- Master's
- Associate's
- Baccalaureate
Difficult to *Recruit* Faculty from Underrepresented Groups

- **Undergraduate**
  - 75% Strongly Agree/Agree
  - 25% Strongly Disagree/Disagree

- **Graduate**
  - 80% Strongly Agree/Agree
  - 10% Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Faculty Focus Groups Findings

- All participating colleges identified an ongoing nursing shortage.

- For two schools, financial constraints and lack of faculty were attributed to upper level administrative decisions.
Faculty Focus Group Findings-2

- Insufficient PT/clinical faculty
- Difficult to recruit faculty from under-represented groups
- Mental health, OB, Peds, WH, & LTC most challenging clinical specialties to staff

- Top 3 strategies to address faculty shortage
  - Hiring more PT
  - “Capping” enrollments
  - Using simulations
Faculty Focus Group Themes/Exemplars

The faculty shortage was reflected in teaching overload, larger clinical group size, lack of timely mentoring for new faculty and shortages.

- “Our group of faculty take overloads something crazy, to the point of intimidating”
- “Everybody is stretched really, really thin”
The faculty shortage indirectly impacts faculty’s ability to mentor, engage in scholarship and meet increasingly stringent promotion requirements.

– “We have fewer people to conduct peer evaluations.”

– “We have four to five open positions at any given time—we are constantly serving on search committees.”
Faculty Focus Group
Themes/Exemplars

Difficulties in recruiting sufficient faculty:
- Poor response to search committees
- Rural environment
- Salary
- Lack of qualified faculty

“Applicants may have been educationally qualified, but their CV didn't support what this current university administration wanted.”
Strategies for Faculty Recruitment

All faculty are involved in varied ways:

• “I keep an eye out in hospitals for good teaching candidates and approach them.”

• “If I see a dynamic preceptor, I’ll tell them they should do a guest lecture, this plants the seed.”

• “Here we like to grow our own”.

• “Facebook”

• “Connections-word of mouth”
Effects of Faculty Shortage

Low morale:

- “All tired and burned out.”
- “People are frustrated; not sure if it’s the financial situation or the faculty shortage.”
- “We spend a lot of time on nonteaching activities.”
Administrator Interview Themes

Experiencing the nurse faculty shortage:

• “I spend a lot of time orienting and mentoring new faculty. They are trying to learn new content and a new role.”

• “Faculty searches take a lot of time and effort. Once the new folks are here, they need a lot of support.”

• “PhD prepared faculty are extremely hard to find.”
Administrator Interview Themes

Approaches to recruiting faculty:

- Outreach to alumni
- Word of mouth/connections
- “Grow our own”
- Paid advertising
Administrator Interview Themes

Barriers to recruitment efforts:

- Insufficient pay
- Negative view of academia as a career choice
- Lack of PhD pipeline
Administrator Interviews - Retention Strategies

University-wide mentorship programs pairing new faculty w/faculty in another discipline

Nursing specific approaches

- Incentives in place for seasoned faculty
- Increased salaries for experienced faculty
- Release time or reduced workloads to provide time for mentorship
- Support for research/research assistants
Dissemination of Findings

• Report to joint meeting of participating schools
• Maryland Action Coalition Annual Summit
• Maryland Nurses Association Annual Convention
• Maryland Nurses Association Education Summit meeting
Next Steps

- Creation of a statewide database of available/interested clinicians and schools with open positions
  - Grant submission pending

- Continued dialogue both regionally and across the State

- Publication of findings
Thank you to participating schools!

**Associate Degree**
- Carroll County Community College
- Hagerstown
- Hartford Community College
- Anne Arundel Community College
- Baltimore County Community College

**BS and higher**
- Morgan
- Notre Dame
- Stevenson
- Washington Adventist
- Frostburg
- Towson
- University of Maryland
References


