The Nursing Faculty Shortage in Maryland: Findings of a Statewide Needs Assessment

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Purpose: The aim of the Eastern Shore-Western Shore Faculty Initiative (ES-WSFI) was to create a comprehensive needs assessment to identify common and unique issues related to the statewide shortage of undergraduate and graduate nursing faculty in Maryland. The lack of qualified nursing faculty is a leading factor in the shortage or registered nurses (Kowalski & Kelly, 2013). Robeznieks (2015) noted in the 2014-2015 academic year over half of all AACN member schools reported a total of 1,236 full-time vacancies. In 2015, among Maryland's twelve baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs alone, there were 35 faculty vacancies (AACN, 2016).

Background: The needs assessment provided a foundation for subsequent planning to address the nursing faculty shortage in regionally diverse nursing programs.

Method: In collaboration with 12 universities, colleges/community colleges, a mixed-methods approach comprised of web-based surveys, faculty focus-groups and interviews with deans/directors was undertaken over a two-year period. Faculty and administrators were invited to complete a needs assessment which included demographic and program information, their views on current approaches to address faculty staffing needs, identification of possible untapped resources, and potential solutions. A project-specific website was constructed to facilitate communication about the two-year project. The online survey, a 49 item, researcher constructed instrument, was available through a password-protected site to avoid duplicate submissions. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements using a Likert-type scale with options of “strongly disagree, disagree, unsure, agree, and strongly agree”. They were also asked to answer questions about which clinical specialties were most difficult to staff, the existence of organizational barriers to managing the faculty shortage, approaches to the faculty shortage that had already been tried, and what additional strategies they would consider.

Results: Faculty from twelve nursing programs, representing all geographic regions of the state, responded. In undergraduate programs the majority of respondents (53%) agreed/strongly agreed there were inadequate faculty for growth; 58% of respondents in graduate programs agreed there were inadequate part-time faculty for growth. Recruiting faculty from under-represented groups for both undergraduate and graduate teaching positions was identified as challenging by 90% and 87% of respondents respectively. Retaining faculty from under-represented groups was also viewed as difficult for both undergraduate (80%) and graduate faculty positions (56%). Strategies used by undergraduate programs to address the shortage of faculty included hiring more adjuncts, limiting enrollments, using simulations, and increasing clinical group size. At the graduate level, strategies that had been tried or might be considered included joint appointments between academic and health care organizations, “growing our own”, and delaying retirement. Organizational barriers reported by faculty at both levels included inadequate socialization and preparation of clinical faculty for their roles, need for further education in evaluating students, low salaries, and heavy teaching loads.

Implications/Conclusions: The nursing faculty shortage is affecting programs across Maryland in similar ways. Of particular concern is the difficulty in recruiting and retaining individuals from under-represented groups in nursing including those from racial and ethnic minorities and men. Current strategies of increasing clinical group size and limiting enrollments are short-term solutions at best. Increasing reliance on part-time faculty will require better preparation of clinicians-turned-educators to assure that quality instruction and oversight is provided. At the graduate level, when enrollments in master's and doctoral level programs are capped, the pipeline for future educators is likewise restricted. While this needs
assessment did not provide any clear-cut solutions, it did provide statewide data in a single place and opened dialogue across programs. Given this infrastructure, future initiatives can be implemented, maximizing efficiency and effectiveness in utilization of precious faculty resources while addressing the need for increasing capacity in all nursing education programs.

Title:
The Nursing Faculty Shortage in Maryland: Findings of a Statewide Needs Assessment

Keywords:
faculty vacancies, nursing faculty shortage and nursing shortage

References:


Abstract Summary:
The aim of this project was to explore common and unique issues related to the nursing faculty shortage in Maryland using a comprehensive needs assessment. Quantitative findings from twelve programs will be presented along with recommendations for future statewide initiatives.

Content Outline:
Content Outline-“The nursing faculty shortage in Maryland: Findings of a statewide needs assessment”

I. Introduction-Overview of the nursing faculty shortage

A. The national picture – characteristics and statistics

B. The State of Maryland – limited available data

II. Methods

A. Multi-method needs assessment

1. Faculty perspective
a) Online web-based survey

b) Focus groups conducted by non-nursing colleagues

2. Administrator perspective

a) Online web-based survey

b) Interviews conducted by nursing counterparts

B. Participant Recruitment

1. Geographic representation

2. Institution type

a) Level of student-AD, BS, MS, DNP, PhD

b) Public

c) Private

C. Results

1. Inadequate faculty to support program growth-undergraduate and graduate

2. Recruitment of individuals from underrepresented groups is challenging

3. Organizational issues—low salaries, heavy teaching loads, lack of preparation for teaching assignments

III. Conclusion – The nursing faculty shortage is affecting Maryland schools in similar ways

A. Heavy reliance on part-time and clinical faculty will require development of programs to prepare them

B. Specific strategies are needed to recruit/retain a more diverse faculty

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**Professional Experience:** 2012-present-author and co-PI, Toolkits to Teach Communication Skills in Psych/Mental Health Nursing; also co-PI of the Eastern Shore Faculty Academy and Mentoring Initiative Project, a collaborative with two other nursing programs to train part-time clinical faculty; Co-director of
Eastern Shore Western Shore Faculty Initiative needs assessment. All three projects funded by Maryland Higher Education Commission NSP-2. 2015-present Director of Graduate and Second Degree Nursing Programs & Professor of Nursing, Salisbury University, Salisbury, MD 1996-2015 Chair and Professor of Nursing, Salisbury University, Salisbury, MD-teaching undergraduates and graduate nursing students in classroom and clinical settings. Has won over $5M in extramural funding for various grant projects. Author or co-author of presentations and publications on development of psych/mental health toolkits. 2012 Recipient of the University System of Maryland Regents Award for Teaching Excellence

**Author Summary:** Dr. Seldomridge has taught undergraduate and graduate nursing students for over 30 years. She is co-founder of the Eastern Shore Faculty Academy and Mentorship Initiative, a multi-faceted approach to prepare expert nurses as clinical faculty, now in its 6th year of operation. Dr. Seldomridge is Co-PI with Dr. Webster on a Maryland Higher Education grant aimed at the development of toolkits to teach core psychiatric mental health nursing skills.

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**Professional Experience:** Dr. Jarosinski has been a nursing faculty member at Salisbury University, Maryland, U.S. since 2010 and prior to that faculty at University of N.C. Wilmington, since 2006. She currently teaches Psychiatric Mental Health and Community Health nursing in the undergraduate program, and Genetics in the Graduate program. She is co-director of the Eastern Shore Faculty Academy and Mentorship Initiative (ESFAMI), an educational program to prepare expert nurses as part-time faculty. She also co-directs the Eastern Shore Western Shore Faculty Initiative (ESWSFI), a comprehensive statewide needs assessment of the faculty shortage in Maryland. Her research foci include: clinical nurse education, nursing simulation, women and mental health and schizophrenia.

**Author Summary:** Dr. Jarosinski, SU Associate Professor of Nursing, is co-director of ESWSFI, a needs assessment, and, ESFAMI, a project to train expert nurses as nursing faculty. Research interests include: simulation, women/mental health, nursing education/faculty shortage. She is widely published on these subjects.

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Author Summary: Dr. Brown Reid has been teaching for the past nine years. She is one of the co-directors of the Eastern Shore Faculty Academy and Mentorship Initiative (ESFAMI) and the Eastern Shore-Western Shore Faculty Initiative needs assessment, both MHEC Nurse Support II grant-funded projects. For the past five years her focus has been on breast cancer, nursing education and the nursing faculty shortage.