U.S. Nursing Education, 2014

Education is not a static process. It evolves with newly discovered best-practices, technology, and innovation in the classroom. As our nation’s healthcare system transforms and more services are provided outside the hospital walls, nurses must be educated for these opportunities and challenges. A life-long learning approach is required for nurses to stay current, which includes higher levels of education and continual learning beyond the academic setting. Given the great need for registered nurses (RNs), including Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), and nurse faculty in a newly reformed healthcare system, it is crucial to maximize funding for professional nursing education and research.

In 2014, nursing schools in the United States enrolled 457,537 students in Baccalaureate and Graduate programs in nursing and produced 148,692 graduates across program levels (111,634 Baccalaureate and 37,058 Graduate).

**Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Student Diversity by Program Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baccalaureate</th>
<th>Master's</th>
<th>PhD</th>
<th>DNP</th>
<th>All Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minority*</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>320,074</td>
<td>113,788</td>
<td>5,290</td>
<td>18,352</td>
<td>457,537</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, there were 77,012 nursing students studying to become APRNs, including 70,324 Nurse Practitioners, 4,143 Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, 1,714 Clinical Nurse Specialists, and 931 Certified Nurse-Midwives.

Elevating the role of nursing science for healthcare advances is more critical than ever. As the nation works to ensure adequate nursing capacity in high need areas, nurses with research-focused doctorates (PhD) will be essential to creating the evidence that will inform and support contemporary nursing practice, improvements in patient care, and reductions in health disparities.
Understanding the Faculty Shortage

A shortage of faculty is a primary obstacle to expanding the nation’s nursing workforce and meeting care demand. In 2014, AACN reported that over a thousand qualified applicants were not offered admission to doctoral (1,844) programs due to a faculty shortage as well as other resource constraints. According to AACN’s Survey on Vacant Faculty Positions for Academic Year 2014-2015, most of the over 1,200 vacant faculty positions either require (57.5%) or prefer (32.1%) doctorally-prepared faculty members. Of the schools surveyed, approximately two-thirds report insufficient funding as one of the biggest obstacles to hiring additional faculty. The problem will exacerbate as many faculty reach retirement age in the next decade. According to AACN's report on 2014-2015 Salaries of Instructional and Administrative Nursing Faculty in Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing, the average ages of doctorally-prepared nurse faculty holding the ranks of professor, associate professor, and assistant professor were 62, 58, and 51 years, respectively. An increased focus and investment must be placed on educating more doctorally-prepared nurses for faculty positions.

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* Minority Enrollment includes African American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Hispanic or Latino, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.