



## 2015-2016 Report on Nursing Doctoral Education in PA

There are currently 35 schools that offer DNP or PhD programs in Pennsylvania. In early 2016 a RedCap online survey of student enrollment, student characteristics and graduation was conducted. There were 20 DNP programs (75% response rate) and 7 PhD programs (71% response rate) that replied to the survey. Currently, the AACN recommendations are that the practice doctorate be the graduate degree for advanced nursing practice preparation (2004). The NONPF recommendation is that NP programs offer a seamless, integrated curriculum in a post-baccalaureate to DNP pathway for preparation as entry to the DNP NP curriculum. The DNP NP curriculum is not an add-on to the master's curriculum. NACNS endorses the doctor of nursing practice degree as entry to practice for clinical nurse specialists by 2030 (2015). Additionally, AANA endorsed the DNP as entry to practice for nurse anesthetists by 2025.

Currently in PA, there are 1,167 doctoral nursing students, 79% (926) of which are DNP and 21% (241) are PhD. There were 450 applications for DNP programs in PA with 298 DNP students that entered the program. 81% of applicants were accepted and of those that were accepted, 65% enrolled in DNP programs. The current targeted enrollment for PA is 512, which means that PA is enrolling 58% of the targeted number of students for which there is capacity (298/512). On average, DNP enrolled students are approximately 42.8 years of age with a range of 29.5-59.6. There are more females than males enrolled in the DNP programs across Pennsylvania (852 vs 111 respectively).

The total DNP enrollment for the 2015 period was 926 students. 177 were full-time and 739 were part time. There were 280 students that were post-BSN and 631 that were post-MSN. Overall, the average DNP student is a part-time, post-master's student. Thus, just 30% of students met the recommendations of the professional associations, that is were enrolled as BSN to DNP students.

Less than 1% of DNP students (5) were international, while 27% (248) were from the United States. 568 (61%) were from Pennsylvania. The current residency of DNP students includes 1 international student, 341 (37%) living in the United States, but not PA and 621 (67%) living in PA.

The average time in years to graduation for full-time DNP students is about 1.99 years. Alternately, for part time students, time to graduation is about 3.14 years. The total credit requirement for the program is 34.4 credits; 11 schools have an online program with 3 schools having onsite programs and 6 having online and onsite blended programs. The shorter time to graduation and the lower credit requirements is influenced by the higher number of post-master programs.

In terms of external support for students in DNP programs, 112 (12%) students receive some kind of external training funding. 76 students received scholarships, while 61 students receive clinical or



health system awards. 37 students received funding from HRSA or other federal support awards. Overall, 33% of students reportedly have some support for assistance for DNP programs.

257 DNP students graduated during the 2014-2015 school year. 29 students graduated with publications to their name and 54 (17%) left the program without completion. Within 6 months, 70 (29.5%) DNP graduates took positions in PA. 20 (8%) took roles in a faculty position, while 99 (42%) took clinical roles. 9 students (4%) went into a service role and 5 (2%) became involved in quality improvement. 3 (1%) took on post-doctoral positions and 3 (1%) took on leadership positions.

The total PhD enrollment for the 2015 period was 241 students. 106 were full-time and 135 were part-time. There were 215 students that were post-masters and 23 that were post-baccalaureate. 47 students entered PhD study in the fall of 2014 and there were 120 applicants. 51% of applicants were accepted and 92.75% enrolled in the program. The average targeted enrollment was 8.5 students. The average age of a PhD student was 40.78 years with the range being 25-57.75 years. 6% were males and 71% were females.

10% of PhD students were international, while 20% (48) were from the United States, not PA. 47% (111) were from Pennsylvania. The current residency of PhD students included 64 international students, 18 (8%) living in the United States, but not in PA and 102 (43%) living in PA.

The average time in years to graduation for full-time PhD students was about 4.25 years. Alternatively, for part-time students, time to graduation was about 6 years. The average total credit requirement for the program was 51.75 credits; no schools reporting in this survey had a strictly online program, 4 had an onsite program and 1 had a blended program.

In terms of external support for students in PhD programs, 27 (11%) students received some kind of external research funding. 12 students received T32 and F31 awards, while 16 and 20 students received research and teaching fellowships, respectively. 13 students received scholarships and 32 received external funding for dissertation.

41 PhD students graduated during the 2014-2015 school year, 25 graduated with publications to their name and 4 (9%) left the program without completion. Within 6 months of graduating, 20 (49%) PhD graduates took a faculty position and 3 took service positions. 6 individuals took post-doctoral positions and 2 took leadership positions. 17 (41%) graduates took jobs in Pennsylvania.

In summary, both DNP and PhD programs attracted a middle-aged, female population predominantly. Both DNP and PhD programs were predominantly part-time and post-masters. 41% of PhD graduates were subsequently employed in Pennsylvania, with 49% taking faculty



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positions. 29% of DNP graduates were subsequently employed in Pennsylvania, with 8% taking faculty positions.

Doctoral graduates are entering advanced practice, education or leadership mid-career. Education is prolonged due to the majority following a part-time education with few finding financial support for their programs. Unfortunately, just 29% of all doctoral graduates (87 of 298) took positions in PA after graduation (29,5% of DNP and 41% of PhD). It is unknown how many DNP or PhD prepared nurses entered PA after education in another state.

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