



The Southern Regional Education Board's 2006 Annual Survey of Nursing Education Programs

*Summary and Interpretation of Florida Data Provided by the Florida Center for Nursing**
November 2006

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) surveyed 56 Florida colleges and universities preparing pre-licensure and advanced practice registered nurses to collect student and faculty data for the 2005-2006 academic year. Only 24 institutions (43%) responded. Florida's response rate was lower than the overall response rate of 55% achieved across all SREB states. Because many colleges and universities have more than one type of nursing education program, 41 nursing education programs in Florida are represented in these data: 12 associate's degree programs, 13 bachelor's degree programs, 11 master's degree programs, and 5 doctoral programs. **The following summary details findings for these responding Florida programs only.**

Program Capacity

Many of the undergraduate nursing programs providing data for this study reported turning away qualified applicants in academic year 2005-2006 due to lack of capacity. The most frequently cited factor prohibiting additional admissions was a lack of faculty, followed closely by a limited number of clinical sites. In contrast, graduate nursing programs represented in this study overwhelmingly reported that they *could* have admitted more students. The main reason given for not admitting more students was a lack of qualified applicants.

- Nine of 12 associate's degree programs reported turning away a total of 918 qualified applicants. Only two programs reported that they could have accepted more students. The single most cited factor prohibiting additional admissions was "lack of faculty," with "limited clinical sites" the second most prohibitive factor.
- Eleven of 13 baccalaureate programs reported turning away a total of 1,918 qualified applicants. Five programs reported that they could have accepted more students. Of the factors limiting admissions, "lack of faculty" was cited most frequently, followed by "limited clinical sites" and "lack of campus resources."
- Only one of 11 master's programs reported turning away a total of 44 qualified applicants. All of the programs reported that they could have accepted more students. Seven programs reported that lack of qualified applicants prohibited admitting more students.
- None of the five doctoral programs in this study reported turning away qualified applicants, and four of them reported that they could have admitted more students. Four programs reported that lack of qualified applicants resulted in fewer admissions.

Diversity in Nursing Education

Responding programs reported a diverse student body in terms of racial/ethnic composition when compared to the current population of registered nurses in Florida. The state can expect to have a



more diverse nursing workforce in the future, if these admissions trends continue and if they are representative of trends in all nursing programs in the state. Undergraduate programs reported a higher proportion of racial/ethnic minorities than did graduate degree programs. Doctoral programs had far fewer minority students.

- Associate degree programs reported that only 46% of students enrolled during the 2005-2006 academic year were white and not Hispanic. Hispanic (all races) and black students made up 25% and 23%, respectively, of enrolled students.
- Bachelor's degree programs reported that 51% of students enrolled were white and not Hispanic. Black and Hispanic students made up 23% and 20%, respectively, of enrolled students.
- Master's programs reported that 58% of students were white and not Hispanic, 17% were black, and 15% were Hispanic.
- Doctoral programs reported that 68% of students were white and not Hispanic, 18% were black, and 7% were Hispanic.

Bachelor's and master's degree programs responding to this survey reported having a comparatively diverse student body in terms of gender as well. In general, more advanced degree programs contained proportionately more male students. However, few men were enrolled as doctoral students in the programs contributing data to this study.

- Associate degree program students: 7% male
- Bachelor's degree program students: 12% male
- Master's degree program students: 14% male
- Doctoral degree program students: 7% male

These findings suggest that the state's future nurse faculty population – fed by graduate degree programs – will continue to be much less diverse than the student body it serves. Although it is encouraging that men are better represented at the bachelor's and master's degree levels, they remain poorly represented at the highest level of nursing education.

Preparing Graduate Students to Teach

Although most of the master's and doctoral programs responding to this study offer courses, curricula, or tracks designed to prepare graduates for the nurse faculty role, few students completed these courses. Many nurse faculty members may choose this role without formal preparation for teaching through course work. However, foregoing available courses or tracks in nursing education likely signals the choice of service over education for most graduate students in nursing.

- Only 3% of the 377 graduates of master's degree programs in academic year 2005-2006 were "prepared to teach" by their coursework.
- More surprisingly, only 24% of the 21 graduates of doctoral programs had completed training in preparation for a teaching role.



Faculty Positions and Faculty Profile

The responding schools added 92 new faculty positions in academic year 2005-2006, an increase of more than 12% over the number of positions in academic year 2004-2005. Faculty vacancy rates in the responding schools were not extremely high when compared with RN vacancy rates in many service settings. This suggests that the inability to *fund* enough new faculty positions may be as much of a problem right now as the inability to *fill* faculty positions when it comes to turning away qualified applicants.

- 42 of 549 budgeted full-time faculty positions were unfilled during academic year 2005-2006, a vacancy rate of 7.6%.
- Only 4 of 303 budgeted part-time faculty positions were unfilled, a vacancy rate of only 1.3%.

Like other SREB states, the responding programs in Florida reported that their nurse faculty is overwhelmingly female, white, and holds a master's degree in nursing. Florida's proportion of part-time faculty (39.7% of all faculty) is slightly higher than the overall average (35%) among responding schools in all SREB states. Responding schools in Florida reported a broad range of specialty areas for their full-time faculty. About 21% of full-time faculty specialized in adult care, 14% in acute care, and 9% in education.

Faculty Retirements and Resignations

Responding schools (N=24) reported that 8 faculty members retired in academic year 2005-2006. Six of these eight were over the age of 60. At the same time, five schools reported that retirees had *returned* to work during the past year. Seven faculty members in total returned, all of them to part-time work. Over the next three academic years, responding schools expect to lose another 20 faculty members to retirement.

The schools reported that 31 faculty members had resigned during academic year 2005-2006. Reasons for resignation were varied, but "salary" topped the list of known reasons ("other" was cited as a reason for the largest number of persons resigning). Former faculty members were reportedly planning to work or currently working in a variety of settings, most prominent among them "clinical settings" and "teaching out-of-state." Only five resignations were expected by responding schools for academic year 2006-2007.

* The conclusions and implications drawn from these data are those of the Florida Center for Nursing. The Southern Regional Education Board publishes only summary statistics for each state and does not draw conclusions from the data in its report of state-by-state statistics available on the web.