Deep Dive Discussion

AACN’s Doctoral Education Conference
January 31, 2020
Feasibility, Sustainability, and the PhD Pipeline

• Background
  o Diversity in programs and institutions
  o Student needs and cohort sizes will influence recruitment and retention strategies

• Key Points for Small Group Discussion
  o Institutional Characteristics
    ▪ Characteristics of the institution affect programming needs
    ▪ May use PhD students as TA’s
    ▪ PhD students often have need for help with writing skills
    ▪ Senior faculty should mentor newer faculty
    ▪ Consider offering a dissertation boot camp
    ▪ Offer student-student tips and pearls

  o PhD Programming
    ▪ Format: online, F-T-F, hybrid, environment optional
      • Need increased discussion for hybrid and alternative models
      • May have synchronous online meetings with on-campus intensives
    ▪ Who is admitted?
      • Do we match by focus area or methodology (each have pros and cons)
      • Need to support student passion rather than faculty interests
    ▪ Can we consider European apprenticeship model?
    ▪ Need to rethink courses that are sacred cows
    ▪ Can we try methodology-based teaching (similar to case based teaching used by medicine)
    ▪ Embrace students interested in non-research goals (academe, public policy, etc) because these areas also need researchers to advance profession
    ▪ Mentored research in various methodologies and then move to interdisciplinary research
    ▪ May need to emphasize grant-writing
    ▪ Dissemination should be included in the program (consider a 3 chapter/portfolio model)

  o Role of Institutional Agreements
    ▪ Need mentors
    ▪ Low participation in this due to barriers (differing schedules, tuition rates. . )
Need enrollment equity between PhD in nursing and DNP programs (same pay for DNP courses with 20 students and a PhD course with 8 students)
Low interest because PhD graduates are needed to teach in more profitable programs (fear of brain drain)

Student-Centric Programming
- Barriers to f-t-f include travel time, rural locations
- Need to develop a sense of community among students
- If online, need strong IT support
- Need more research into effective practices
- What is role (& what could role be) of TA’s/grad assist
- PT vs FT impacts program design and stress is present for both types of student
  - Like the concept of offering counseling within nursing programs
- International students must be f-t-f and FT
- Students want flexibility of online but value f-t-f interactions
- Would like more data on compensating chair of dissertation committee

Future Needs
- Better question is what are the societal changes and needs?
  - Ex – geriatrics, world health, community service, climate change and the effect on health
- Need to use big data in association with other disciplines
- Reconsider consortium-based research – is individual research not consistent with current realities?
- What are the needs of the profession?
- Make PhD attainable – start creating a culture if inquiry in the BSN program
- Leadership succession and faculty mentoring is critical
- Need to accept that while scientists are extremely important, many PhD grads will not be working as scientists

Strategies to Consider

Institutional agreements
- Can obtain an MSN in home institution and, through an MOU, complete PhD elsewhere
  - Do not leave home institution

Interprofessional education
- Co-education for common courses

Badges
- Break program into ‘chunks’ (for example, nursing core, research core…)
  - Less intimidating to students
  - Gives them confidence to enter a PhD program
  - Provides a sense of accomplishment