

# Engagement Strategies to Improve Persistence and Retention of First-Generation and Underrepresented Nursing Students



## Introduction

The persistence of underrepresented students dropped dramatically from AY 21/22 to AY 22/23 (from 83% to 67%). Most of these students are also first generation, and we know that belonging is integral to persistence and student success. We also know that certain personal circumstances disproportionately lead to decreased URS persistence rates. Based on surveys, the climate of KSU's CON could improve regarding valuing individuals and a sense of belonging.

## Interventions

Flashes 101 with Peer Support Mentors

Belonging services

Student advisory committee

Targeted advising

## Goals

- AY 23/24 persistence rate of 75%
- Increased sense of belonging as reported by majority of underrepresented students

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### Flashes 101 Learning Objectives

Students will:

- work together to describe elements of a mutually supportive community and apply these to the course.
- work together to communicate their needs and locate resources and individuals to help meet them.
- work together to recognize their collective strengths and use these to advocate for themselves and others.
- be able to describe how their individual identities contribute to the Kent State University community.
- create a personal plan to support their health and well-being.

## Future Plans

Virtual Living Learning Community

Transition Program (High School - end of Freshman Year)

## Evaluation

- Persistence rates of URS as of 2/1/24
- Focus groups
- Student Surveys of Flashes 101/belonging

## References

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# diversity, equity, & inclusion

## American Association of Colleges of Nursing

### Diversity Leadership Institute: Capstone Presentations and Graduation

## Improving URS Persistence with Belonging and Empowerment Strategies

Taryn Burhanna, MSN, APRN, A-GNP-C

### Biography

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Taryn R. Burhanna is a lecturer at Kent State University College of Nursing in Kent, Ohio. This is her fifth year as nursing faculty at the college. Her nursing experience includes positions at the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals and Veteran's Affairs. She is also a nurse practitioner at AxxessPointe, CHC, a federally qualified healthcare center.

Mrs. Burhanna's focus in the classroom is on helping nursing students better understand the context of the communities they serve and how to advocate for vulnerable populations. In Spring 2021, Mrs. Burhanna coordinated over 300 nursing and public health student volunteers in COVID vaccination clinics over the course of 12 weeks, and that sparked a passion for engaging students in meaningful co-curricular activities to foster engagement. Attending AACN's DEI Leadership Institute has helped her design diverse engagement activities that include and support underrepresented students.

Mrs. Burhanna is a proud recipient of the Daisy Faculty Award (2022) and is a member of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners and Association of Community Health Nursing Educators.

### Contact Information

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