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A Faculty Mentorship Program: Supporting, Engaging, and Retaining New Faculty

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Susan Lynch is currently the Chair, Undergraduate Nursing Programs at Quinnipiac University and Assistant Professor of Nursing. Dr. Lynch received her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from the University of Connecticut, her Masters of Science in Nursing from Quinnipiac University, her Diploma in Nursing from St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center School of Nursing, and her Bachelors of Arts in Sociology from the University of Hartford. She has been a full time faculty member in nursing education for the past three years teaching in both the undergraduate and the graduate programs. Prior to being a full time faculty member, Dr. Lynch was adjunct for Quinnipiac University as a clinical site visitor and in the classroom while maintaining her clinical practice in adult primary care. Her nursing experience spans twenty years and includes practice as an internal medicine and neurology APRN, an ED nurse manager, and a staff nurse in the ED and ICU. She is a member of Connecticut Nurse Practitioners Association, Sigma Theta Tau International, president of the Tau Rho chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, co- chair of the AACN Practice Leadership Network Conference Planning Committee and a member of the AACN Practice Leadership Network Steering Committee.

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TITLE: A Faculty Mentorship Program: Supporting, Engaging, and Retaining New Faculty

ABSTRACT: Schools need to foster growth and retention of new faculty, often content experts with minimal formal academic experience. Compounding factors include inadequate numbers of seasoned faculty due to retirements, burnout, or low salaries. This session will describe a unique evidence-based faculty mentorship program that supports, engages, and retains new faculty.

KEY WORDS: faculty mentor, coach, faculty retention

PRESENTATION TOPIC THEMES: faculty development

TARGET AUDIENCE: New and Intermediate

TYPE OF PRESENTATION: Best Practice Presentation

OBJECTIVES: Participants will:

- Gain an understanding of the faculty shortage and its impact on academic resources and the environment.
- Describe unique strategies to mentor, coach, and retain new faculty.
- Develop specific approaches for use in their own academic departments/schools.

DESCRIPTION OF SESSION: (300-500 words)

Mentoring is recognized as an effective way to integrate and retain new faculty.¹ Effective mentoring programs are valued as an essential aspect of a school's organizational culture in which experienced faculty mentors are dedicated to guiding newly hired faculty toward excellence. The complexity of the academic work environment and faculty workload concerns call for creative strategies to provide adequate structure and time to address the initial and ongoing learning needs of new faculty.

Schools of nursing are presented with particular challenges related to orienting new faculty. An insufficient number of qualified nursing faculty to prepare nursing students for professional practice is of national and international concern.² Literature reveals that nurses tend to pursue faculty roles later in their careers and that retirements are occurring at increasingly accelerated rates.^{3,4} Position vacancies are compounded by salaries that are not competitively aligned with clinical positions. The faculty shortage has been identified as a major reason contributing to baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs denying admission in 2014 to 68,938 qualified applicants citing an insufficient number of faculty along with other factors such as clinical sites, classroom space, clinical preceptors and budget constraints.⁵

Another layer of intricacy that needs consideration is the rapid and continuing change in the mix of faculty teaching in doctoral-level programs.⁶ The emergence of the practice doctorate (DNP) has resulted in faculty with DNPs surpassing those with PhDs. Doctoral prepared research faculty focus on knowledge generation and doctoral level practice faculty focus on application of knowledge.⁷ Appropriate support is needed for each type of doctoral faculty as they assume faculty roles.

An overview of our unique evidence-based faculty development infrastructure that supports new faculty to navigate the academic milieu will be presented. Orientation provides initial and ongoing mentoring and coaching support as new faculty move from novice to expert as teachers, scholars, and leaders. The program is also designed to develop expert faculty as leaders, mentors, and coaches to welcome, socialize, and support new faculty of the future. Outcomes from a three year period of this program's effectiveness in supporting, engaging, and retaining faculty, as well as challenges encountered, will be discussed. Also, faculty support provided in relation to their specific doctoral-level of preparation (DNP, PhD, EdD) will be addressed.

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