



INCREASING MINORITY NURSING STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS THROUGH FACULTY MENTORSHIP

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The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) reported a total of 236,226 candidates tested and passed the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN®) examination in 2018, for a total of 73.1% U.S. and Internationally educated (NCSBN, 2018). While there were over 200,000 candidates tested; 76.2% were first-time test takers. The NCLEX-RN® pass rate serves as a key indicator of the achievement of a nursing program's academic goals and may be a vital component of state board approval and the accreditation process (Havrilla, Zbegner, & Victor, 2018). However, this data does not support challenges in the nursing profession when it comes to improving diversity. The first-time pass rate of non-minorities was (90.5%); the first-time pass rate for black graduates was (76.7%) and the first-time pass rates for Hispanics were the lowest at 60.0% (Phillips & Malone, 2014). The Institute of Medicine (IOM) suggests a more diverse nursing workforce would not only assist with improving health outcomes. It would also aid in the reduction of financial resources spent on health-related cost.

Schools of nursing that have a high population of minority students often have challenges in maintaining the passing level set by NCSBN. Unlike other populations, minority students are faced with additional challenges that can impede their matriculation in nursing programs. Some of the barriers minority student's face include lack of financial support, inadequate emotional and moral support, as well as insufficient academic advising, program mentoring, technical support, and professional socialization (Loftin, et al., 2012). In 2015, the undergraduate nursing program at Morgan State University (MSU) hired an NCLEX Tutor/Mentor/Coach to engage and improve the overall success for students in the program. Student mentor/coaches in pre-licensure programs provide students a more trusted advisement, emotional support and encouragement that may be lacking but is a necessity for minority nursing students.

Since the inception of a mentor/coach MSU's nursing program has seen an increase in undergraduate NCLEX RN® pass rates and alumni support. Nursing students engaged in mentoring partnerships develop increased academic confidence in their theory and clinical courses which is required for successful development in the profession. MSU's Nursing program director and mentor/coach participated in a summit sponsored by Campaign for Action, a national initiative of AARP Foundation, AARP, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; the Office of Minority Health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and the National Partnership for Action to End Health Disparities' mid-Atlantic Regional Health Equity Council. After attending the "Diversifying the Nursing Workforce: Mentoring for Student Retention and NCLEX Success at HBCUs" with the intent to lead the engagement of a statewide faculty mentor program with colleges and universities of minority-serving populations in Maryland. Mentoring programs provide opportunities for professional socialization and can become facilitators of success and achievement for diverse students (Loftin et al., 2012). Through mentoring programs minority-serving colleges and universities can reduce barriers that hinder success in this student population.