

**Title:**

Seeking Tenure While Practicing Clinically: Finding Balance in Academia

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**Session Title:**

ACADEMIC SESSION: Strategies for Improving Academic Science

**Slot:**

AA 02: Saturday, April 13, 2013: 11:00 AM-12:15 PM

**Scheduled Time:**

11:40 AM

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**Keywords:**

clinical scholarship, workplace stress and Nursing faculty

**Abstract Text:**

**PURPOSE:** the purpose of this study was to assess the lived experience of academicians seeking tenure while teaching and practicing at the bedside. The purpose also sought to identify how a sense of balance was maintained in the workplace to create a healthy workplace environment throughout this process.

**DESIGN/SETTING:** A hermeneutic phenomenologic research method was used to interpret the lived experience of seeking tenure while teaching in a four year baccalaureate nursing program and at the same time practicing part-time at the bedside in a clinical setting in the Northeastern United States.

**PARTICIPANTS:** Six nursing faculty were interviewed while actively seeking tenure or within two years after seeking tenure.

**FINDINGS:** Four themes were identified. First, reasons for working as a practitioner validated a teaching philosophy rooted in clinical scholarship. Second, these academicians believed that current practice informs their teaching and gives them credibility and meaningful recognition in the classroom with their students. Third, the value placed on clinical scholarship by the academic institution depended largely on the tenure requirements, academic workloads and the benefit of the clinical practice to the academic institution. Fourth, techniques of finding a sense of balance and creating a healthy work environment were shared by many of the participants.

**CONCLUSIONS:** The process of tenure is a stressful time for faculty and even more stressful when the faculty try to balance the demands for academe with clinical scholarship. These participants felt that their clinical practice was only recognized or valued when it was of benefit to the academic institution. In many institutions, creativity, skilled communication and true collaboration must be utilized to develop strategies to enhance the tenure portfolio requirements and a healthy work environment.