Title:
Perceptions Regarding the Effect of Doctoral Teaching on Faculty Ability to Maintain a Program of Scholarship

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Purpose: The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify perceptions among faculty members teaching in DNP and PhD programs about the effects of their involvement in doctoral education, barriers and facilitators to scholarly productivity, and faculty characteristics related to success in maintaining an ongoing program of scholarship.

Framework: The significance of this study was supported by findings of the IOM report on The Future of Nursing that recommends doubling the number of doctorally prepared nurses by 2020.

Methods: Participants participated in two focus groups, one conducted at a national research conference (N=13) and one conducted at a conference for DNP faculty (N=17) in the fall of 2012. Data were recorded, transcribed, and content analyzed.

Findings: Demographic data from 24 participants indicated that 95% teach full-time. A majority (43.5%) are age 51-60 and none were under the age of 41. Nearly 48% had a PhD degree while 43.5% have a DNP degree, and nearly 46% teach in a PhD program, while over 75% teach in a DNP program.

Themes that emerged from content analysis of the focus groups included the demands of teaching, including the quantity and nature of “invisible” work, and faster rhythms of academic life in recent years; the importance of institutional structure and climate, which includes subthemes of
the mission of the school, expectations related to boundary-setting, and roles of junior versus senior faculty; and self, institutional, and disciplinary sustainability, which includes the personal costs to faculty of teaching doctoral students, issues related to work-life balance, characteristics of unsuccessful faculty, characteristics and strategies related to success, and issues related to scholarship and stewardship of the discipline.

Conclusions and implications: Characteristics of successful faculty members were identified. The findings indicate that workload expectations for doctoral nursing faculty have implications for recruitment and retention of doctoral faculty.