

# Promoting DEI in Nursing Education: Beginning with a Diverse Nurse Educator Workforce

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## Background

Current barriers to achieving health equity start with increasing diversity and inclusion among students, faculty, staff, and leadership in nursing. Diversity, inclusion, and equality in nursing begin in classrooms and continue in exam rooms. Patients anticipate seeing nurses who look like them and understand their culture. Data from the National League of Nursing (NLN) faculty census survey indicates that racial/ethnic minority groups make up 10% of nursing faculty and even fewer leadership positions.



## Purpose

1. Examine current barriers to achieve equity in recruiting, promoting, and retaining diverse faculty in nursing education.
2. Recognize the need to create equitable and inclusive environments in nursing academia.
3. Interpret the correlation of how a diverse environment of care and learning will translate into more open acceptance of diverse patient populations.

## Methods

Literature review on higher education established that underrepresented minorities in primarily White institutions can be disadvantaged in that they often feel alone and isolated, experience emotional distress, experience implicit bias and micro/macro aggressions, receive less support for their research or teaching endeavors, and experience more challenges to achieving promotion and/or tenure.

Percent Diverse Nursing Faculty Compared to Diverse Nursing Student Enrollments by State, 2016<sup>1</sup>

State	Percent Diverse Faculty	Percent Diverse Students	State	Percent Diverse Faculty	Percent Diverse Students	State	Percent Diverse Faculty	Percent Diverse Students	State	Percent Diverse Faculty	Percent Diverse Students
AL	15.6%	24.0%	IL	20.1%	31.3%	MT	4.6%	10.6%	RI	6.6%	17.7%
AK	14.3%	30.5%	IN	6.2%	16.0%	NE	2.8%	13.7%	SC	14.7%	19.3%
AZ	20.2%	41.2%	IA	2.9%	10.7%	NV	20.2%	48.6%	SD	6.2%	10.9%
AR	10.9%	16.7%	KS	6.7%	14.0%	NH	1.4%	11.0%	TN	11.4%	18.2%
CA	30.6%	59.9%	KY	9.4%	12.5%	NJ	16.7%	41.6%	TX	23.2%	47.3%
CO	6.7%	20.1%	LA	22.8%	32.9%	NM	21.4%	53.6%	UT	13.4%	25.5%
CT	7.0%	20.8%	ME	3.1%	6.1%	NY	16.9%	34.5%	VT	3.9%	9.6%
DE	12.5%	17.6%	MD	24.7%	39.4%	NC	21.3%	24.1%	VA	13.1%	23.3%
DC	21.9%	32.3%	MA	10.3%	33.1%	ND	1.1%	11.8%	WA	14.8%	28.4%
FL	30.4%	45.2%	MI	12.9%	15.8%	OH	9.7%	12.9%	WV	3.3%	8.2%
GA	20.0%	39.8%	MN	11.4%	26.8%	OK	11.3%	26.1%	WI	9.2%	16.6%
HI	34.8%	77.7%	MS	17.1%	27.2%	OR	15.3%	25.6%	WY	8.0%	6.3%
ID	5.9%	13.5%	MO	8.4%	15.2%	PA	8.3%	18.0%			

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) recognizes that it is essential for nursing leaders in nursing academia to acknowledge the need to identify and remove barriers related to recruitment, hiring, and retaining minority nursing faculty. Institutions of learning must put systems in place to foster growth and leadership development. Develop a strategic plan focusing on promoting diversity and inclusion in the recruitment, promotion, and retention of diverse faculty. Marketing strategies should incorporate explicit language communicating a commitment to the diversity of its workforce.

## Findings

- Incorporating a well-defined diversity, equity, and inclusivity academic mission statement
- Integrate DEI concepts in nursing program curricula
- Create a diverse administrative Leadership structure
- Implement policies and procedures related to recruitment, admission, and progression of faculty and students
- Collect meaningful data to systematically review efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.
- Utilize marketing strategies that incorporate explicit language communicating a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Develop a diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plan
- Focus on promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in recruiting, promoting, and retaining diverse faculty
- Establish an office, representative, or task force that coordinates DEI initiatives on campus
- Form multicultural collaborative community partnerships



## Implications for Practice

As the population diversifies, enrollment of diverse students is steadily increasing, while faculty diversity is showing slow, gradual growth. However, statistics show that only a small percentage of nurses from various ethnic groups with advanced degrees pursue faculty careers. Faculty and students from various backgrounds should feel welcomed and supported in nursing education programs that include a curriculum designed to meet the needs of all populations.

## Conclusion

While significant strides have been made to increase diversity within the profession, current national demographics and projected changes indicate that continuous efforts must continue to attract faculty from all backgrounds. Promoting an environment that is welcoming and person-centered embraces and celebrates a diverse nursing workforce's uniqueness to the profession of nursing. Acknowledging the relationship between a diverse nursing workforce and providing quality, culturally competent patient care.

The current shortage of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the nurse workforce, student population, and faculty inhibit the capability of nursing to achieve quality care delivery for all. Thus, leading to adverse outcomes in population health care due to the deficit of a diverse workforce that knows how to create an inclusive environment of respect and humility.

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