

University of Minnesota School of Nursing
Minnesota Colleagues in Caring
Executive Summary: Nursing Faculty Survey
April 2002

In the fall of 2000, a survey was sent out to full-time faculty members in schools of nursing in Minnesota to obtain information on work satisfiers and dissatisfiers affecting their productivity and satisfaction. The intent was to use this information to shape the development and implementation of recruitment and retention strategies for nursing faculty. Full-time faculty in programs awarding licensed practical, associate and baccalaureate degrees received the surveys.

The instrument that was used for this survey was adapted from one that had been recently used in evaluating productivity and morale within the Medical School of the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus. The premise of the framework is that faculty morale and productivity are affected by interaction among three types of factors - individual, institutional and leadership. Of the 548 nursing faculty members sent the survey, 298 were able to be included in data analysis.

The respondents were, on average, 50.5 years old, female (96%), and white (97%). More than half of the respondents taught in baccalaureate or higher degree programs (56%). Approximately 82% would choose nursing again as a profession, with 63% indicating they would choose to work in their current college or university; only 9% would not choose a faculty career again. Ninety-seven percent (98%) indicated that they were committed to their careers, with almost the same number (97%) committed to the profession. However, only 44% had confidence in the direction nursing was taking.

Across the three types of nursing programs, there were surprising similarities. These included the faculty member's commitment to nursing as a career; the sense of having input into their roles and time; clarity about how one's work and goals fit within the school's vision and goals; the role of the dean and senior faculty in keeping the vision visible; the confidence that faculty have in the profession, their college and their department; the sense that their opinions are routinely solicited and incorporated; that there are adequate communication systems; and, finally, the shared sense that compensation is not fair for the work that is done. What differed among faculty in the three schools related mostly to the conduct of research, with baccalaureate and graduate program faculty more likely to be involved in research, feel more driven to conduct it, perceive greater rewards and resources, etc. Another interesting difference among the schools was that, in the LPN programs, faculty were more likely to have a clear picture of their goals, a well-defined plan for achieving them, and a belief that their school or department had a commonly held vision.

Regarding institutional support, a majority (80%) felt that there were effective communication systems in place; that they received constructive feedback from colleagues (71%); and that there was a supportive network in their departments (55%). Faculty offered several suggestions as to what would most facilitate them in their roles of research, teaching, and scholarly activities, e.g., providing support while gaining new skills (in research, teaching, scholarly activities); provide salary increases for teaching achievements; providing adequate support staff; helping with skills training in certain areas.

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**Report from the Faculty Survey
April 2002**

BACKGROUND

Purpose In the fall of 2000, a survey was sent out to full-time faculty members in schools of nursing in Minnesota to obtain information on work satisfiers and dissatisfiers affecting their productivity and satisfaction. The intent was to use this information to shape the development and implementation of recruitment and retention strategies for nursing faculty. Full-time faculty in programs awarding licensed practical, associate and baccalaureate degrees received the surveys.

This project was coordinated through Minnesota Colleagues in Caring, in conjunction with the University of Minnesota School of Nursing. The impetus for the project arose out of concern by nursing leaders in the state that, while a severe shortage of clinically practicing nurses is anticipated if not already existing, an equally severe shortage of qualified faculty is on the horizon. Actions must be taken now to assure an adequate supply of faculty for conducting research, educating students and serving as clinical role models, and providing service.

Objectives The objectives of the survey were to:

- Identify the status of individual, institutional and leadership factors known to affect faculty morale and productivity
- Determine the strategies that faculty perceive are needed to support their work
- Determine whether the strategies differ among faculty
- Develop recommendations for promoting faculty recruitment and retention.

Framework The framework for the survey was based on work that had been done by Carole Bland and William Bergquist on faculty vitality. They assert that faculty morale and productivity are a result of the interplay among three types of factors, i.e., individual, institutional and leadership. Table 1 reflects examples of each of the types of factors.

INDIVIDUAL	INSTITUTION	LEADERSHIP
Adult development	Career development	Highly regarded, able scholar
Socialization	Clear, coordinating goals	Research/teaching oriented
Motivation	Emphasis on priority goals	Keeps goals visible
Content knowledge	Culture	Initiates structure
Research/teaching skills	Positive climate	Uses assertive participative style
Professional network	Assertive participative governance	Proactively brokers opportunities
Simultaneous projects	Decentralized organization	
Work time usage	Communication	
Orientation	Resources	
Autonomy, commitment	Size/age/diversity	
Morale	Rewards	
Work habits	Recruitment, selection	
Mentors	Brokered opportunity structure	
	Effective leadership	

Table 1: Components of a productive academic organization. From CJ Bland and Bergquist, W.H., *The Vitality of Senior Faculty Members: Snow on the Roof, Fire in the Furnace*, p. 40.

Drawing from the research that has been done on productive academic organizations and productive faculty, their premise is that a productive organization is achieved by having well-prepared individuals in a supportive environment with effective leadership providing a vision, resources and rewards. While this may seem obvious, much of the earlier work on productivity focused exclusively on the characteristics of the individual faculty member.

THE SURVEY

Survey The instrument that was used for this survey was adapted from one that Bland had recently used in evaluating productivity and morale within the Medical School of the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus. Modifications to that tool included refining language to facilitate use by faculty in the three levels of nursing educational programs; eliminating some of the data elements applying to a medical school but not a community nursing school; and adding questions related to scholarship as a professional activity. This tool was chosen because it provided a more professional orientation to the work experience of faculty, as contrasted with some studies that had used tools targeted toward hourly workers, or those engaged in the trades.

Process An initial letter was sent out to deans and directors of schools of nursing in the state, inviting them to participate in the study and provide lists of faculty members who were on full-time appointments. Follow-up phone calls were made to elicit support for the study and to answer questions. The Data Collection and Support Services (DCSS) of the Division of Epidemiology at the University of Minnesota coordinated the obtaining of the lists of full-time faculty, the distribution and collection of surveys, and the mailing of reminder letters and postcards.

The names of 581 faculty were submitted as being full-time faculty. Of these, after extensive review by DCSS, 548 were deemed eligible (the others were found to be retired, not in a faculty position, etc.). Of the 548 sent the survey, 347 responded (63.3%). However, in answer to a question in the survey to assure that full-time faculty were indeed the respondents [“What kind of appointment do you hold as a faculty member?-- full-time (75% or more); part-time (less than 75%)”], only 298 individuals responded “full-time.” Thus, the final number used for analysis of the data was 298 (54%).

Respondents The demographics of the faculty who responded are presented here:

LPN	74 (24.8%)
AD	55 (18.5%)
BA/Graduate	166 (55.7%)
Missing	3 (1.0%)

Table 2: Number of faculty responding from each of the types of programs

As might be expected, the vast majority of respondents were female – 285 (95.6%), with 11 males responding (3.7%), and 2 (0.7%) with missing data.

Equally expected, but no less disheartening, was the racial or ethnic background of the respondents: Chicano/Latino/Hispanic = 1; American Indian/Alaska Native = 1; Asian/Pacific Islander = 2; White = 290; Other = 2; missing = 2.

The mean age of the faculty responding was 50.5 years of age. Demographics of the faculty are reflected in the graphs (a separate document).

ANALYSIS

Responses to the questions were structured using a 5-point Likert scale. Given the small response size for certain categories, the Strongly Agree and Agree responses were combined, as were those indicating Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

Data were analyzed in three ways:

- (1) collectively for faculty in all 3 types of programs;
- (2) faculty by type of program; and
- (3) where there were more than 10 respondents from an individual school, faculty responses according to individual school.

For the most part, descriptive statistics were used. However, for analysis of faculty responses by type of program, Chi Squares were determined.

FINDINGS

(1) Faculty Responses from all 3 types of programs: (n=298)

A significant part of the survey tool asked faculty to respond to questions related to 5 role components: research, scholarly activities (e.g., presentations, consulting, writing), teaching, patient care and administration.

Questions such as:

- *I have adequate time to conduct research; ...teach; ...engage in scholarly activities;... provide patient care;...fulfill an administrative role*
- *I have excellent opportunities in research; ...teaching...etc*
- *I feel appreciated and valued for my work in research; ...teaching...etc*
- *I have sufficient resources for research; ...teaching...etc*

For many of the questions, there was great variability in how many faculty responded, or indicated “Not Applicable.” In general, faculty tended to answer the questions related to teaching and scholarly activity, and not as frequently to questions about research, patient care or administration, suggesting perhaps that they were less involved in these activities. Presented below are responses from faculty related to the 5 role types; beneath each table is the range of faculty responding to some of the questions related to the individual roles.

In regard to **conducting research:**

Nature of question	(%) who agreed or strongly agreed*
I feel up-to-date	(51%)
I'm internally driven	(46%)
Rewards for research	(40%)
Dean supportive	(33%)
Faculty have skills	(33%)
High expectation	(30%)
Adequate resources	(12%)
I have adequate time	(8%)

* # of faculty responding to these questions ranged from 221 to 284

In regard to **scholarly work:**

Nature of question	(%) who agreed or strongly agreed*
Faculty skilled	(56%)
Many colleagues participate	(56%)
Rewards	(45%)
Adequate space	(43%)
Appreciated	(43%)
Excellent opportunities	(36%)
Adequate resources	(26%)
Uninterrupted time	(20%)

* # of faculty responding to these questions ranged from 248 to 288

In regard to **teaching:**

Nature of question	(%) who agreed or strongly agreed*
Driven	(96%)
Expectations	(92%)
Provide quality education	(90%)
Up to date	(90%)
Faculty with skills	(83%)
Dean very supportive	(80%)
Valued	(78%)
Adequate time	(78%)

*# of faculty responding to these questions ranged from 292-295

In regard to **patient care:**

Nature of question	(%) who agreed or strongly agreed*
Up to date	(71%)
Driven	(60%)
Provide quality patient care	(55%)
Faculty with skills	(51%)
Expectations	(48%)
Valued	(39%)
Dean supportive	(38%)
Patient care	(30%)

* # of faculty responding to these questions ranged from 151 to 283

In regard to **administration:**

Nature of question	(%) who agreed or strongly agreed*
Dean supportive	(37%)
Valued	(31%)
Driven	(30%)
Rewards	(28%)
Good opportunities	(27%)
Up to date	(27%)
Adequate resources	(25%)
Adequate time	(22%)

* # of faculty responding to these questions ranged from 191-289

A number of questions were asked relative to the individual's own qualities which would affect productivity and morale, as well as characteristics of the institution and leadership in the school. The questions that were analyzed here relate to what can be described as those characteristics or elements that are program-neutral. In other words, these questions do not examine the faculty member's role, e.g., research, teaching, patient care, or the type of institution associated with providing a particular service, but rather the individuals, their environment, and the leadership of their schools. All percentages reflect faculty who agreed or strongly agreed with the statements.

Factors related to the Individual Faculty Member

I am highly committed to contributing to the success of my

Profession	97%
College/University	92%
Department	96%
Career	98%

I would like more opportunities to contribute to the leadership of my

Profession	64%
College/University	52%
Department	65%

Given my career stage, appropriate use is being made of my knowledge/experience in my:

Profession	75%
College/University	68%
Department	74%

I believe I am currently up-to-date in

Research skills	38%
Grant getting skills	22%
Education	83%
Computer skills	63%
Writing skills	70%
Administrative skills	41%

If I were to select a faculty career again, I would choose to be in

My current profession	82%
My current college	63%
Not choose faculty career	9%

I fully understand the expectations for promotion in the position I hold 73%

I have

A clear picture of where I want to be in my academic career in five to seven years	71%
A well-defined plan for achieving my academic career goals	60%

Factors related to the Academic Institution or Environment

I have a well-developed network of colleagues with whom I discuss research projects, scholarly activity and education

Within my department	55%
Outside department but in college	30%
Outside college	47%

At least weekly, I have substantive uninterrupted conversations with important colleagues about research and education in my

Profession	28%
College/University	17%
Department	32%

I have a high degree of input into how I wish to spend my time as a faculty member within each of my faculty roles 42%

The reward system in my department or school of nursing matches the vision and goals 26%

My department or school of nursing has a communication system that allows me to be adequately informed in a timely fashion about major issues, important events and upcoming concerns 80%

As compared to others at this school, my compensation (that is, my salary and fringe benefits) is fair for the work I do 45%

Factors related to Leadership

My department or school of nursing has a commonly held vision for what we want to look like in the next five years 62%

It is clear to me how my work and goals are or can be related to the department or school of nursing's vision and goals 70%

The vision of my department or school is kept visible by my
Dean or director 60%
Senior faculty 51%

The person (e.g., dean, director of nursing) to whom I report is highly regarded for his/her

Research 32%
Teaching 48%
Patient care 20%
Administration 65%

I get constructive feedback, guidance and suggestions that help my efforts to perform my best from my

Other colleagues 71%
Colleagues in my specialty 66%
Dean 55%

My opinions are routinely solicited for important department or school of nursing decisions 65%

My opinions are seriously considered by leadership in the department or school of nursing when making important decisions 66%

It is expected that faculty will meaningfully and actively contribute to important decisions in my

College or university 73%
Department 77%

I have confidence in the current direction in which the following are headed:

Profession 44%
College or university 65%
Department 63%

(2) Findings according to type of nursing program

Chi Square analyses were performed to identify commonalities and differences among faculty responses in the three programs: licensed practical nursing, associate degree, and baccalaureate/graduate programs.

As might be expected, the vast majority of the significant findings were those associated with the conduct of research. Faculty in baccalaureate/graduate programs were more likely to:

- feel inclined to do research
- feel up-to-date in research, obtaining grants, and writing
- feel they have the necessary skills
- feel valued for conducting research
- sense opportunities for doing research
- perceive high expectations for conducting research
- feel pressures to obtain funded research and grants
- have a dean who is supportive of their doing research
- have a dean who is highly regarded for his/her own research program
- feel they have sufficient, well-equipped space for research as well as a sufficient number of colleagues for conducting research
- have a clear sense of the expectations for the ethical conduct of research
- perceive there are non-monetary rewards for conducting research.

Of interest, however, is that faculty in licensed practical nursing programs were more likely to have:

- a clear picture of where they wanted to be in their academic careers in 5-7 years
- a well-defined plan for achieving their academic career goals
- a belief that their department or school of nursing had a commonly held vision for what it wanted to look like in the next five years.

(3) Findings according to individual schools

For thirteen of the 55 schools, there were a total of ten or more faculty members who responded to the survey. For those institutions, individual analyses for each school were conducted. This cut-off was selected to preserve the anonymity of faculty respondents. (For this analysis, it was felt that the original number of 347 respondents could be used in determining which schools had 10 or more responses, thus allowing 2 more schools to receive individual analyses.)

Graphs were developed to reflect the differences in means among schools for the factors related to individual characteristics, institutional environment and leadership. These seemed to be the most interesting and would lend themselves to interventions.

In the following section, data for each school will be included according to the number of responses for the school. In other words,

- (1) For schools with 10 or more responses, graphs will provide information on
 - a. the mean for the response across all schools
 - b. the mean across comparator schools offering similar programs
 - c. the mean for the individual institution

- (2) For schools with fewer than 10 responses, graphs indicate
 - a. the mean for the response across all schools
 - b. the mean across comparator schools offering similar programs

The graphs include data for several questions, grouped according to the following themes: Success, Leadership, Choice, Personal Goals, Decision Making, Clarity of Vision, Vision Kept Visible, Confidence, Criteria for Promotion, Faculty Contributions, Constructive Feedback, Communication, Compensation. The yellow page contains the complete wording of the questions as they appeared in the survey.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this survey suggest that nursing faculty in Minnesota are satisfied with being a member of the nursing profession (82%) with only 9% indicating they would not choose a faculty position again. A smaller number (63%) would choose again to work in their same institution. They have confidence in their school (65%) and department (63%) but not necessarily in the profession itself (44%). A majority (62%) feel that there is a commonly held vision in their schools, and 70% have a clear sense of how their work fits into the bigger picture. However, only 26% feel that rewards are commensurate with contributions they make toward achieving the vision and goal.

Nursing faculty feel that their opinions are routinely solicited (65%) and seriously considered (66%). Almost all of the faculty who responded (97%) said that they were highly committed to contributing to the success of the profession, as well as their college or university (92%), department (96%), and own career (98%).

Nursing faculty in Minnesota continue to be white, middle-aged and female. The disparity between the general population and the nursing profession is widening and requires extensive attention in a short timeframe.

There seemed to be supportive networks in most of the schools with good communication systems (80%), constructive feedback from other nursing colleagues (71%), and a well-developed network of colleagues with whom to discuss projects and research (55%).

When analyzing the findings according to the type of nursing programs, there were many similarities. There was consistency among faculty in their responses to questions about the teaching role, suggesting that teaching is a shared experience among all of the faculty, not a surprising finding. Other similarities included the faculty member's commitment to nursing as a career; the sense of having input into their roles and time; clarity about how one's work and goals fit within the school's vision and goals; the role of the dean and senior faculty in keeping the vision visible; the confidence that faculty have in the profession, their college and their

department; the sense that their opinions are routinely solicited and incorporated; that there are adequate communication systems; and, finally, the shared sense that compensation is not fair for the work that is done.

There were also significant differences among faculty, specifically related to the role, resources and responsibilities for conducting research. Faculty in baccalaureate and higher degree programs were predictably more involved in research, sensed they had better resources (although more are always desirable), felt better prepared, more driven, etc. With some questions, this also carried over to participating in scholarly activities.

Another notable area of difference was that in the LPN programs, faculty were more likely to have a clear picture of their goals, a well-defined plan for achieving them, and a belief that their school or department had a commonly held vision. This may be due to the fact that, in these organizations, there is a more singular focus and mission, or at least it is clear what's the priority – education. This can be contrasted with the challenges facing faculty in schools that have a tripartite mission of education, service and research.

In looking at the findings in the 13 individual schools, it is clear that the schools vary. Some of the schools had several mean scores above the overall mean, while a few schools were consistently below the overall mean.

NEXT STEPS

- (1) It is our hope that findings from this survey will spur discussion within schools of nursing about the general findings, as well as those specific to the type of program or individual school, if those data are available. Even without individual school data, faculty can share information about their perceptions about their own school, e.g., “how do we think we’re doing in this area?” or “what criteria would we use to measure our performance” or “what questions do we want to ask ourselves?”

To assist in this process, a Tool Kit is being distributed with the survey results to the deans and directors of the 55 nursing programs in the state. In this tool kit are aids to assist faculty and their leaders in assessing the individual commitment, institutional support and leadership characteristics; and in fostering discussion about ways to improve individual and organizational performance.

- (2) A proposal is being submitted to the National League for Nursing and Johnson & Johnson to determine their interest in funding a national survey of baccalaureate/higher degree and associate degree faculty. Using this survey as a pilot, appropriate revisions in the tool and methodology would enable the compilation of data on a national level, with examination of regional differences.
- (3) In collaboration with the Minnesota Association of Colleges of Nursing (MACN), and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), efforts are underway to bring faculty from baccalaureate/higher degree and associate degree programs to discuss issues of common concern, and identify strategies for improving faculty skills in identified areas.