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News



**National League
for Nursing**

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NURSE FACULTY SUPPLY CONTINUES TO FALL SHORT NLN's 2006 Faculty Census Survey Shows Increased Vacancy Rates

July 24, 2006 – New York, NY– The problem of nurse faculty vacancies in the United States continues to grow even as the numbers of full- and part-time educators grow, according to new research by the National League for Nursing. The estimated number of budgeted, unfilled, full-time positions nationwide in 2006 is 1,390. This represents a 7.9 percent vacancy rate in baccalaureate and higher degree programs, an increase of 32 percent since 2002; and a 5.6 percent vacancy rate in associate degree programs, an increase of 10 percent in the same period.

The data in *Nurse Educators 2006: A Report of the Faculty Census Survey of RN and Graduate Programs* reveal several trends, three of which are especially critical: the increasing percentage of part-time faculty, the aging of the faculty population, and the large number of nurse faculty who are not prepared at the doctoral level.

Increase in Part-Time Faculty The estimated number of part-time baccalaureate faculty has grown 72.5 percent since 2002. Nationwide, the mean number of faculty members per institution had grown to 14.9 full-time and 12.1 part-time faculty in 2006 from 12.3 and 7.4 in 2002. The majority of baccalaureate and higher degree programs and almost half of associate degree programs reported hiring part-timers as their primary strategy to compensate for unfilled, budgeted, full-time positions. While this approach allows for greater flexibility, often part-time faculty are not an integral part of the design, implementation, and evaluation of the overall program. And, because they typically hold other positions, they are not as available to students as

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full-time faculty are, and frequently have conflicts between the time commitments required by their teaching and other positions.

Aging of the Faculty Population Programs in the study indicated that almost two thirds of all full-time nurse faculty members were 45 to 60 years old and likely to retire in the next five to 15 years. A mean of 1.4 full-time faculty left their positions in 2006; nearly one quarter of these were due to retirement. It is an open question where schools of nursing will find replacements for these experienced individuals.

Inadequate Preparation of Nurse Faculty Data show that nurse faculty are less well-credentialed in 2006 than they were four years earlier. More than 56 percent of full-time baccalaureate and higher degree program faculty do not hold earned doctorates; fewer than 10 percent of full-time faculty in associate degree and diploma programs hold any credential higher than the master's degree.

This compilation of findings from the NLN census of nurse faculty in all types of nursing programs is an invaluable planning resource. Explained NLN CEO Dr. Ruth Corcoran, "*Nurse Educators 2006* has an enormous amount of information critical to dealing with the ongoing shortage of academic nurse educators. Its discussion and recommendations are sure to help meet the challenge of preparing the nursing workforce to meet the needs of diverse populations in an ever-changing health care environment."

Editors and reporters: For a review copy of *Nurse Educators 2006* and/or interview opportunities, please contact Karen R. Klestzick at 212-812-0376, kklestzick@nlm.org.

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Dedicated to excellence in nursing education, the National League for Nursing is the premier organization for nurse faculty and leaders in nursing education offering faculty development, networking opportunities, testing and assessment, nursing research grants, and public policy initiatives to its 18,000 individual and 1100 institutional members.