



California Association of Colleges of Nursing

POSITION STATEMENT

SUPPORT FOR FULL ACADEMIC PRIVILEGES FOR DOCTORALLY PREPARED NURSE ACADEMICS

Revised 2015 (A. Berman)

Position:

The California Association of Colleges of Nursing (CACN) supports full academic privileges, including tenure, for faculty with doctoral degrees relevant to academic nursing. These doctorates include, among others, the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in nursing and related fields, the Doctor of Public Health (DrPH), and the Doctor of Education (EdD). Faculty progression in academic rank and securing of tenure should be linked to a candidate's achievement in institutional mission such as scholarship, success in teaching, and contributions to service, not only to the academic degree. All nursing faculty eligible for full privileges should receive the same mentoring and support from their program and the larger academic institution.

Rationale:

Nursing faculty are required to have advanced degrees and the shortage of these nurses limits the number of new nurses who can be educated. The deficit of nursing faculty has reached critical proportions as the current faculty workforce rapidly advances toward retirement and the pool of younger replacement faculty decreases (American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN], 2015). It is the case that nurses with doctoral degrees constitute the smallest of all categories of academic preparation. And of those, fewer than 50% have a doctorate in nursing (Institute of Medicine [IOM], 2011). That this is an issue is outlined in the 2011 IOM *Future of Nursing* recommendations.

Schools of nursing, with support from private & public funders, academic administrators & university trustees, & accrediting bodies, should double the number of nurses with a doctorate by 2020 to add to the cadre of nurse faculty & researchers, with attention to increasing diversity.

The IOM report avoids identifying the nature of the doctoral degree. The debate regarding the “right” doctoral degree for nurses has been robust since the EdD for nurse educators was established in 1924 followed by the first PhD in 1934. For decades, faculty PhDs were not in nursing, but in physiology, sociology, psychology, and other related subjects. Subsequently, many schools of nursing established professional doctorates such as the DNS, DNSc, and DSN, often because their parent universities would not permit the PhD to be granted by their graduate

divisions. Currently, many of those schools have converted those programs to PhD and offer graduates the opportunity to convert their degree to a PhD retroactively (Reid Ponte, Nicholas, 2015). Following approval of the DNP as the nursing “practice doctorate” by the AACN in 2004 and its differentiation from the “research doctorate” (PhD), doctorates for nursing faculty have solidified into several primary options: PhD, DNP, DrPH, and EdD. In the 2008 document listing aspirational goals for the preparation of nurse faculty, AACN broadly recommended the doctoral degree for faculty with primary teaching responsibilities at the baccalaureate and graduate levels.

California baccalaureate and higher degree nursing programs support the diversity of degrees and disciplines within doctoral preparation that are appropriate for nursing faculty. CACN supports continued work to assure that nursing faculty are prepared at the doctoral level and their academic opportunities expand. Only with better-educated faculty can the goal of the better-educated nurse be actualized.

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