2019–2020
ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS
In Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing

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HIGHLIGHTS

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS AND RESPONSE RATE

➢ The findings in this report are based on responses from 933 of the 1,029 institutions in the United States and its territories with baccalaureate and graduate-degree programs that were surveyed in fall 2019. The overall response rate was 90.7 percent (Table 1a).

ENROLLMENT (FALL 2019) AND GRADUATIONS (AUGUST 1, 2018 TO JULY 31, 2019)

➢ A total of 237,544 students were enrolled in generic (entry-level) baccalaureate nursing education programs. RN-to-baccalaureate enrollment totaled 135,802 (Table 8).

➢ Enrollment at the master’s, doctoral (research-focused), and doctor of nursing practice (DNP) levels totaled 146,403; 4,568; and 36,069, respectively (Table 8).

➢ Generic (entry-level) baccalaureate graduates totaled 78,394 and RN-to-baccalaureate totaled 66,265. Master’s, doctoral (research-focused), and doctor of nursing practice (DNP) levels totaled 49,895; 804; and 7,944, respectively (Table 8).

➢ Males accounted for 12.7 percent of all baccalaureate graduates (generic and RN-to-baccalaureate). The percentage of men graduating from master’s, doctoral (research-focused), and doctor of nursing practice (DNP) programs was 11.8, 9.8, and 13.1, respectively (Table 9).

➢ 35.3 percent of undergraduate enrollees and 35.4, 33.6, and 36 percent of enrollees in master’s, research-focused doctoral programs, and DNP programs were from racial and ethnic minorities, respectively (Table 10).

Enrollment (Fall 2019) Diversity in Undergraduate and Master’s Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity of Enrollment in Undergraduate Programs</th>
<th>Diversity of Enrollment in Master’s Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black of African American</td>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am. Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64.7%</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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TWO-YEAR COMPARISONS IN ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS (BASED ON DATA FROM SCHOOLS REPORTING IN BOTH 2018 AND 2019)

Percent Change in Enrollment and Graduations in Schools Reporting in Both 2018 and 2019.

- Enrollment of generic (entry-level) baccalaureate students increased by 5.1 percent (11,377 students, Table 12). The increase was 3.6, 2.1, 5.9, and 12.4 percent in the North Atlantic, Midwest, South, and West, respectively (Table 14). Generic (entry-level) baccalaureate graduates increased by 4.5 percent (3,371 graduates, Table 13). Despite this increase, 67,785 qualified applications were not offered admission to generic baccalaureate programs mostly due to insufficient clinical sites and insufficient numbers of faculty (Tables 41 and 42).

- RN-to-baccalaureate enrollment decreased by 3.8 percent (5,349 students) and graduations decreased by 1.2 percent (779 graduates, Tables 12 and 13).

- Master’s-level students increased by 2.4 percent (3,468 students) and graduations increased by 6.8 percent (3,175 graduates, Tables 12 and 13).

- Enrollment in doctoral (research-focused) programs decreased by 2.4 percent (114 students) and graduations increased 1.0 percent (8 graduates, Tables 12 and 13).

- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs experienced an enrollment increase of 10.3 percent (3,352 students) and graduations increased by 12.6 percent (891 graduates, Tables 12 and 13).
FIVE-YEAR TRENDS IN ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS (BASED ON DATA FROM SCHOOLS REPORTING EACH YEAR SINCE 2015)

Five-Year Trends in Enrollments and Graduations by Type of Degree (2015–2019).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEGREE</th>
<th>PER YEAR*</th>
<th>(p value)</th>
<th>PER YEAR*</th>
<th>(p value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generic Bacc.</td>
<td>6,703</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>3,247</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN-to-Bacc.</td>
<td>-60</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,509</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>9,203</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>2,804</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral (Research)</td>
<td>-110</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNP</td>
<td>3,469</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Bold values indicate a statistically significant (p<0.05) average change per year.

- The number of generic (entry-level) baccalaureate students increased by 19.7 percent in the past five years from 189,563 in 2015 to 226,820 in 2019. There was an overall average increase of 9,203 (p=0.001) students per year (Table 21). Graduates also increased from 2015 to 2019 by 13.5 percent. Although the dramatic rise in enrollments and the increase in graduations over the past five years are encouraging, many more baccalaureate-prepared nurses will be needed to meet the healthcare needs of the population.

- The number of master’s enrollees increased by 22.7 percent in 2015-2019. Graduations also increased by 36.5 percent in 2015-2019 (Table 23).

- At the doctoral (research-focused) level, enrollment decreased by 8.8 percent over the past five years. Graduations increased by 13.5 percent between 2015 and 2019 (Table 24).

- The number of DNP enrollees increased by 63.9 percent in 2015-2019. Graduations also increased by 93.6 percent in 2015-2019 (Table 25).

MASTER’S PROGRAMS

- In fall 2019 there were 1,029 institutions with baccalaureate and/or graduate programs in nursing in the United States and its territories. Nationwide, 618 (60.1%) institutions offered master’s programs; of these, 393 (63.6%) offered master’s-level NP programs and 68 (11.0%) offered master’s-level CNS programs. The AACN database contains data on 588 (95.1%) institutions with master’s programs, 380 (96.7%) schools with master’s-level NP programs, and 67 (99.4%) institutions with CNS programs (Table 1b).

MASTER’S-LEVEL ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS BY MAJOR AREA OF STUDY

- NP majors accounted for 61.7 percent (90,401 students) of master’s enrollees, and 56.3 percent of master’s graduates (N=28,071). CNS majors comprised 0.6 (N=836) and 0.6 (N=314) percent of master’s enrollees and graduates, respectively (Table 26).
Administration comprised 13 percent of master’s enrollees, followed by education (12.3%), generalist (3.1%), informatics (2.4%), clinical nurse leader (1.9%), and nurse anesthesia (1.4%) majors. Administration graduates accounted for 15.7 percent of master’s graduates, followed by education (12.9%), generalist (3.9%), clinical nurse leader (2.8%), informatics (2.2%), and nurse anesthesia (1.9%) majors (Table 26).

MASTER’S-LEVEL CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST ENROLLMENT (FALL 2019) AND GRADUATIONS (AUGUST 1, 2018 TO JULY 31, 2019) BY POPULATION FOCUS

- Fall 2019 enrollment in master’s-level and post-master’s clinical nurse specialist (CNS) programs totaled 903. Graduations/completions from these programs totaled 353 (Tables 28a and 29).

- Master’s Adult Gerontology (Wellness through Acute Care) comprised 81.2 percent of CNS enrollees, followed by Pediatric (Wellness through Acute Care (8.3%) and Neonatal (Wellness through Acute Care) (1.3%). The proportions for graduations of these three population foci were 85.4, 8, and 0.3 percent, for each (Table 28a).

- No national CNS-specific certification examination existed for 6.7 percent of master’s enrollees and 4.1 percent of master’s graduates for their respective population focus (Tables 28a and 28b).

POST-MASTER’S CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST (CNS) ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETIONS BY POPULATION FOCUS

- Adult Gerontology (Wellness through Acute Care) accounted for the largest percentage of post-master’s CNS enrollees (82.1%) and completions (87.2%, Table 29).

Master’s- and Post-Master’s Clinical Nurse Specialist Population Foci Comprising the Largest Percentage of Enrollees and Graduates.

Note: Information in this report concerning clinical nurse specialists is the result of an agreement between the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists. All clinical nurse specialist data are jointly owned by the two organizations.
MASTER’S-LEVEL NURSE PRACTITIONER ENROLLMENT (FALL 2019) AND GRADUATIONS (AUGUST 1, 2018 TO JULY 31, 2019) BY POPULATION FOCUS

- Fall 2019 enrollment in master’s-level and post-master’s nurse practitioner (NP) programs totaled 98,649; and Master’s-level NP enrollees comprised 91.6 percent of all master’s and post-master’s NP enrollees. (Tables 31a and 32).

- There were 31,239 master’s and post-master’s NP graduations/completions from August 1, 2018 to July 31, 2019; and master’s-level programs accounted for 89.9 percent of graduates (Tables 31a and 32).

- Master’s family (65%), psychiatric & mental health-across the lifespan (11.8%), adult gerontology acute care (9.1%), and adult gerontology primary care (7.2%) accounted for the largest percentages of the 90,401 master’s NP students (Table 31a).

POST-MASTER’S NURSE PRACTITIONER ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETIONS BY POPULATION FOCUS

- Of the 8,248 post-master’s NP students, 38.6 percent were enrolled in family NP programs, followed by psychiatric & mental health-across the lifespan (37.6%), adult gerontology acute care NP (12%), and adult gerontology primary care (6.4%). The proportions for completions of these four population foci were 39.8, 31.3, 13.9, and 8 percent, for each (Table 32).

Master’s-Level and Post-Master’s Nurse Practitioner Population Foci Comprising the Largest Percentages of Enrollees and Graduates.

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COMBINED NURSE PRACTITIONER/CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS

- There were 52 students and 20 graduates from master’s-level combined NP/CNS programs. Combined NP/CNS refers to those programs where the NP and CNS roles are included in the curriculum. Graduates are eligible to sit for one NP and one CNS national certification examination (Table 35).

ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS IN DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE (DNP) PROGRAMS BY MAJOR AREA OF STUDY

- For students and graduates entered in DNP programs at the post-baccalaureate level, NP majors accounted for the largest percent of enrollees (76.3%, 15,625 students) and graduates (76.7%, 2,805 graduates, Table 37).

- For students and graduates entered in DNP programs at the post-master’s level, leadership accounted for 34 percent of enrollees, followed by NP (26.9%), major area not specified (22.7), and administration/management DNP (4.8%). The proportions for graduations of these four majors were 28.4, 24.4, 26.7, and 6.5 percent, respectively (Table 37).

ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS IN NURSE PRACTITIONER-FOCUSED DNP PROGRAMS

- For students and graduates entered in NP-focused DNP programs at the post-baccalaureate level, family (56%), psychiatric & mental health-across the lifespan (11.8%), adult gerontology acute care (10.1%), and adult gerontology primary care (9.6%) NP population foci accounted for the largest percentages of the 15,625 students (Table 38).

- For students and graduates entered in NP-focused DNP programs at the post-master’s level, most students and graduates are in the category Previously Certified as NP (52.6%, 2,203 students; 75.2%, 787 graduates), which indicates that students and graduates already had an NP certification and will not seek a new NP certification in their DNP education (Table 38).
Key Indicators and Trends
Enrollment and Graduations in Nursing Programs
933 Schools

- Generic Baccalaureate Programs: 237,544
- RN to Baccalaureate Programs: 135,802
- Total Baccalaureate: 373,346
- Master’s: 144,659
- Doctoral (research-focused): 4,568
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP): 36,069

Enrollments: Fall 2019
Graduations: August 2018-July 2019

Qualified Applications Turned Away from Entry-Level Baccalaureate Nursing Programs: 2007-2019

Percentage Change in Enrollments in Entry-Level Baccalaureate Nursing Programs: 1998-2019
Racial/Ethnic Diversity in Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Education
Percentage of Graduates Who Are Minorities by Types of Nursing Programs: 2010-2019

Growth in Doctoral Nursing Programs: 2010-2019

Enrollments in Doctoral Programs: 2010-2019