



# Nursing Education Barriers Identification Survey

Fall, 2004

Sheila D. Keller, PhD  
Valerie B. Collins, BS  
Healthcare Research Group, LLC

Wanda Jones, MSN, RN  
Executive Director, Mississippi Office of Nursing Workforce



# *Table of Contents*

---

Introduction .....	3
Methodology .....	4
Student Survey Results .....	6
Student Barriers .....	16
Faculty Survey Results .....	17
Faculty Barriers .....	25
Conclusions .....	27
Recommendations .....	27
Appendix .....	25
Student Data-At-A-Glance .....	29
Faculty Data-At-A-Glance .....	33

## Introduction

---

The U.S. Department of Labor has identified nursing as the fastest growing occupation in terms of growth through 2012. Over one million new and replacement nurses will be needed to fill the healthcare needs of our nation over the next seven years. Yet, current demand for quality nurses far outstrips the supply; and increased future needs will only exacerbate the crisis. In 2002, the Health and Resources and Services Administration estimated that over 30 states were experiencing nursing shortages, and the shortfall would grow to over 44 states by the year 2020. Mississippi is one of the 30 states experiencing a nursing shortage with a vacancy rate of 7.7%. The Mississippi Office of Nursing Workforce (ONW) has begun developing and implementing strategies to decrease the current and future nursing shortage by partnering with nursing schools, policy makers, healthcare facilities and other stakeholders.

In 2002, The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) and (ONW) entered a partnership to enhance the nursing workforce and career opportunities for nurses within the state of Mississippi. This project was linked throughout all of the Workforce Investment Areas across the state.

The initial partnership (**Phase I**) included a project to study the barriers to nursing education. This project was administered by ONW with funds from the MDA to identify and study potential barriers linked with nursing education. The principal investigation and administration of the **Nursing Education Barriers Survey** was provided by Healthcare Research Group, LLC, an independent healthcare consulting firm based in Mississippi. Surveillance began in Fall 2002, and the instruments were administered to students and faculty in December of that year.

**Phase II** of the Barriers to Nursing Education project began in the Fall of 2003, when a Barriers Task Force was established to develop strategies to ameliorate the barriers identified in **Phase I**. Task force members were solicited from various stakeholders such as Deans and Directors of schools of nursing, hospital CEO's, and leaders from the Mississippi Department of Education, the Rural Health Association, Mississippi Hospital Association, Mississippi Board of Nursing, Mississippi Nurses' Association, Mississippi State Board of Institutions of Higher Learning, and the State board for Community and Junior Colleges.

The Barriers Task Force created four work groups who met over the 2003-2004 fiscal year and made recommendations on ways to reduce the barriers identified in the **Phase I** survey. The four sub-groups formed were entitled:

- Financial
- Life Demands
- Student Preparation
- Retention/Attrition

Based on recommendations made from the Barriers Task Force, the Barriers to Nursing Education Project was expanded to include data from the allied health sector. **Phase III** of the project began in the fall of 2004, when along with the addition of an allied health survey, the Nursing Education Barriers Survey was repeated. Findings of the Nursing Education Barriers Survey are detailed in the current report. Findings from the Allied Health Barriers Survey may be found under separate cover.

This current report is concise and gives a clear description of the findings that will be helpful for directing future initiatives through collaboration and partnerships with the goal of overall improvement and success within the field of nursing. The report will also serve as a guide for

agencies, workforce investment areas, and other organizations that encounter individuals making career decisions for the first time or those seeking a career change.

In addition to this overall Nursing Education Barriers Study report, each nursing school received an individualized report outlining findings from the study. Those reports will be useful to the Mississippi nursing workforce collectively, and each school of nursing individually as the state responds to the demands of the nursing shortfall.

## *Methods*

---

The Nursing Education Barriers Survey was developed in 2002 through an extensive review of extant literature in conjunction with focus group interviews with Deans and Directors of Associate Degree and Baccalaureate nursing programs in Mississippi. Comments and potential questions were solicited from a sample of nursing school faculty, nursing students, and practicing RN's in Mississippi. Additionally, content validity was verified through expert review.

Based on extensive discussions, comments, and reviews, two individual surveys were created, one for nursing faculty (Faculty Survey) and another for nursing students (Student Survey) currently enrolled in the programs. Each survey focused on several key areas, including basic demographic information and faculty and student perceptions on a range of relevant topics. Key areas of interest included level of educational preparedness and skills, preparedness upon entry into nursing school, recommendation of courses and skills needed prior to entry into nursing school, current job related activities, barriers to successful completion of nursing school, and plans to remain in the local area.

The current report contains a comprehensive look into the overall nursing education barriers identified by faculty and students in Mississippi. Although substantial, the sample for this study was one of convenience and did not include all nursing faculty and students in the state of Mississippi. Therefore, generalizing the findings to nursing faculty and students from other states may be limited.

## Data Collection

---

Data for the Nursing Education Barriers Survey were collected during the Fall school semester of 2004 (November 2004-December 2004). The survey was based on a sample ( $n=3,020$ ) of all nursing school students from the state's twenty-one nursing programs. The Schools of Nursing in Mississippi are listed in Figure 1 below including two that have both Associate Degree and Baccalaureate nursing programs.

---

### Associate Degree Schools of Nursing

Alcorn State University  
Copiah-Lincoln Community College  
East Central Community College  
Hinds Community College  
Holmes Community College  
    (Grenada Campus)  
    (Ridgeland Campus)  
Itawamba Community College  
Jones County Junior College  
Meridian Community College  
MS Delta Community College  
MS Gulf Coast Community College  
    (Jackson Campus)  
    (Jefferson Davis Campus)  
    (Perkinston Campus)  
Mississippi University for Women  
Northeast MS Community College  
Northwest MS Community College  
Pearl River Community College  
Southwest MS Community College

### Baccalaureate Schools of Nursing

Alcorn State University  
Delta State University  
Mississippi College  
Mississippi University for Women  
University of Mississippi Medical Center  
University of Southern Mississippi  
William Carey College

---

*Figure 1.*

All 21 nursing programs participated in the survey (100% response rate). Of the total nursing student population in Mississippi, 3,020 (70%) participated in the survey, which represented an increase of 750 students from the 2002 survey. Three-hundred fifteen nursing education faculty participated (69%), an increase of 43 from the 2002 survey. Of the 3,020 respondents, 71% were in Associate Degree Nursing programs, 22% were in Baccalaureate programs, 4% were in LPN-RN Track nursing, and 2% were in RN-BSN nursing programs. The response rate is similar to the proportion of students in Associate degree and Baccalaureate programs in the state.

# Student Survey Results

Nursing Education Barriers  
Identification Survey

## Student Demographics

Three-thousand twenty ( $n=3,020$ ) Associate and Baccalaureate degree nursing students participated in the survey. Demographic findings from this survey are detailed below.

### Gender

- 2,567 (85.3%) female students
- 440 (14.6%) male students

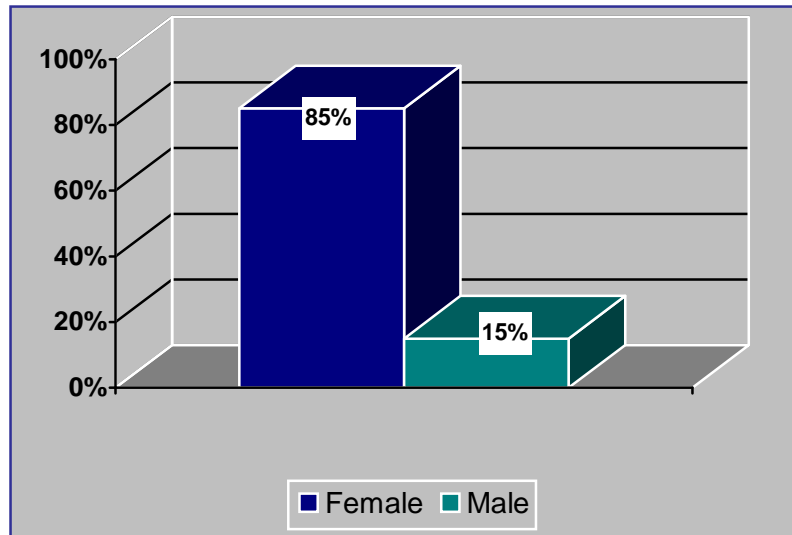


Figure 2

### Ethnicity

- 80.4% ( $n=2,412$ ) of students reported Caucasian ethnicity.
- 17.5% ( $n=525$ ) of student reported African American ethnicity.
- 2.0% ( $n=62$ ) of students reported other ethnic origins including Native American, Hispanic, and Asian.

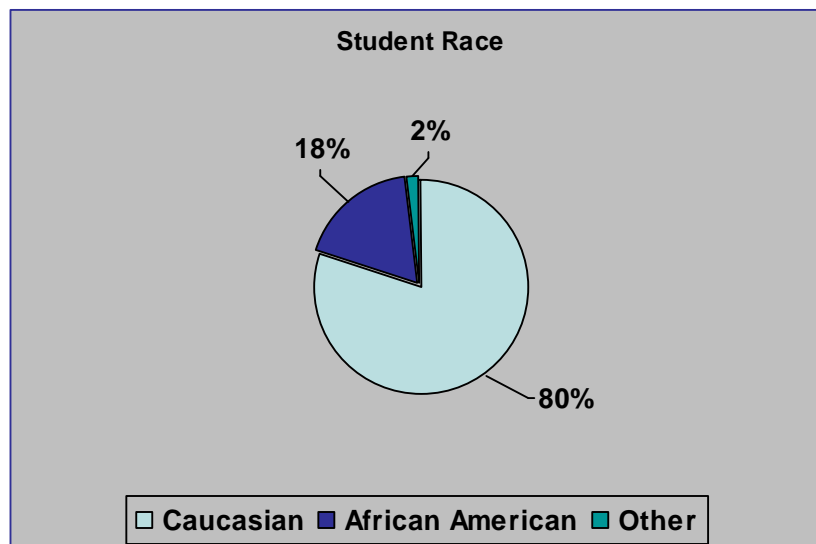


Figure 3

## Student Demographics

### Age

Student ages ranged from 17-69 years.

- 64% ( $n=1,681$ ) of the students reported being in the 20-29 year age group.

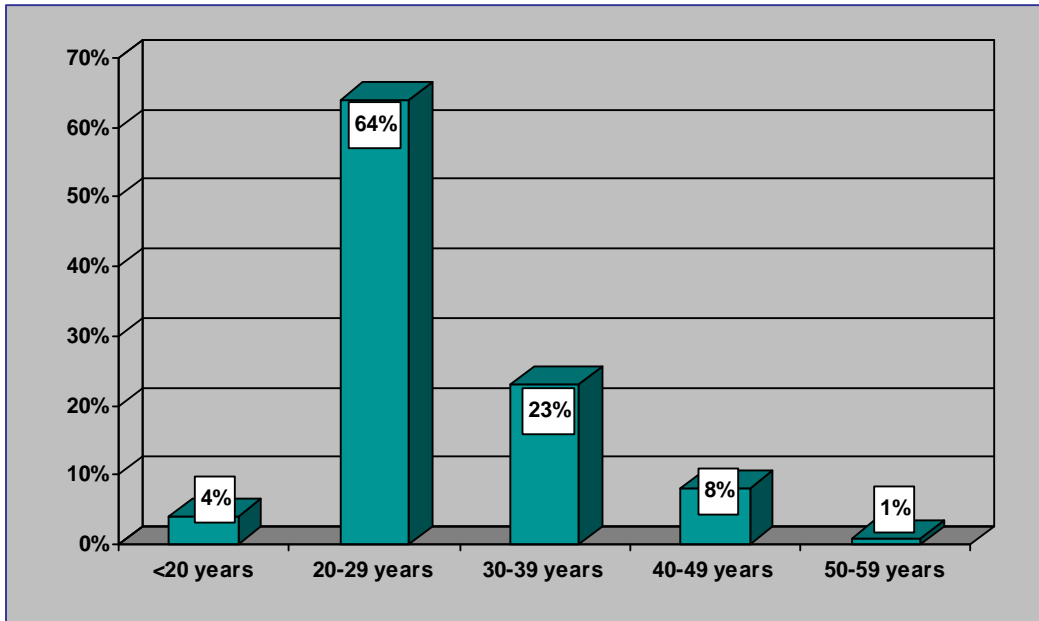


Figure 4

### Marital Status

Figure 5 compares the marital status of students in the Associate degree program to the marital status of students in the Baccalaureate programs. Associate degree program had a higher number of students who are married (50%) than did Baccalaureate programs (28%).

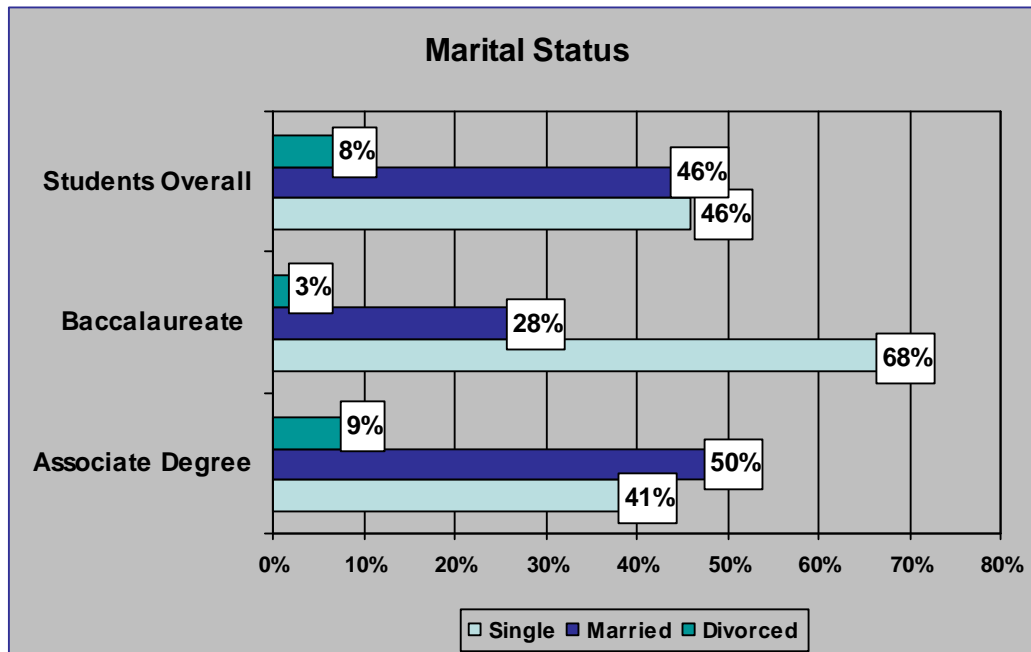


Figure 5

## Student Demographics

### Number of Children

Students in Associate degree programs reported higher numbers of children (56%) than Baccalaureate program students (22%). **Figure 6** compares the number of students with children among Associate and Baccalaureate students.

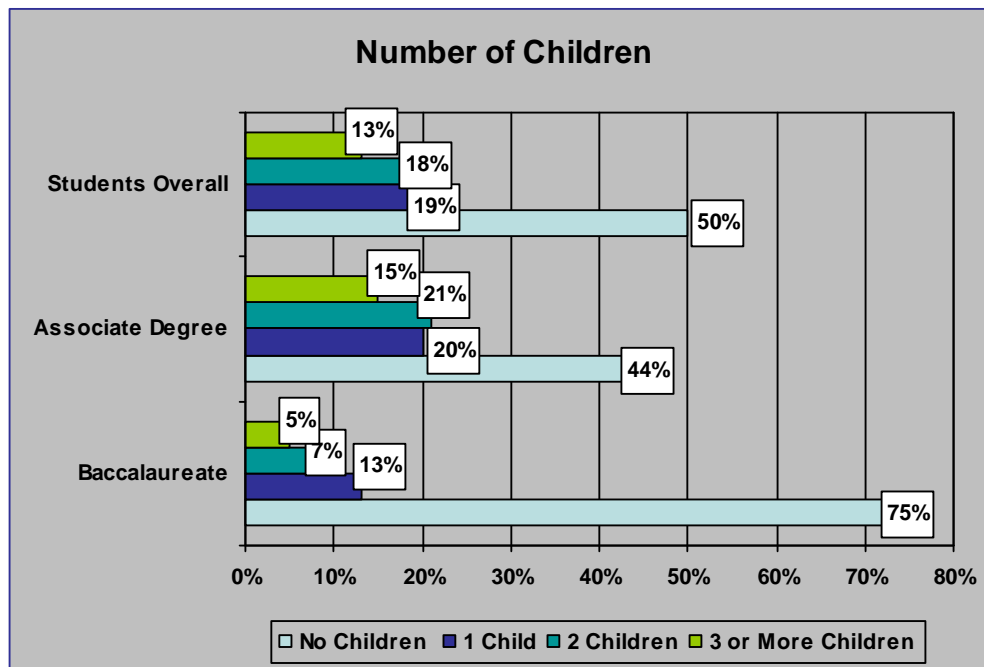


Figure 6

### Prior Occupation

Sixty-one (61%,  $n=1,862$ ) of nursing students reported having a prior occupation.

- Of those who reported having a prior occupation, 41% ( $n=757$ ) reported a previous healthcare occupation, including LPN ( $n=210$ ), CNA ( $n=65$ ), EMT/Paramedics ( $n=44$ ), Pharmacy technician ( $n=34$ ), Surgical technician ( $n=19$ ), Dental Hygiene ( $n=8$ ), and Clinical Laboratory Scientist ( $n=9$ ).

### Second Degree

Twenty-nine percent (29%) of students reported seeking nursing as a second degree. In addition to medical related degrees and certificates, leading prior degrees included Associate and Baccalaureate degrees in:

- Accounting
- Business Administration
- Teaching
- Computer Science
- Biology

## Student Response

### Current Job-Related Activities

Fifty-five percent (55%) of students reported currently working a job while attending nursing school. Sixty-seven percent (67%) reported working more than 20 hours per week. **Figure 7** identifies the number of hours students worked per week.

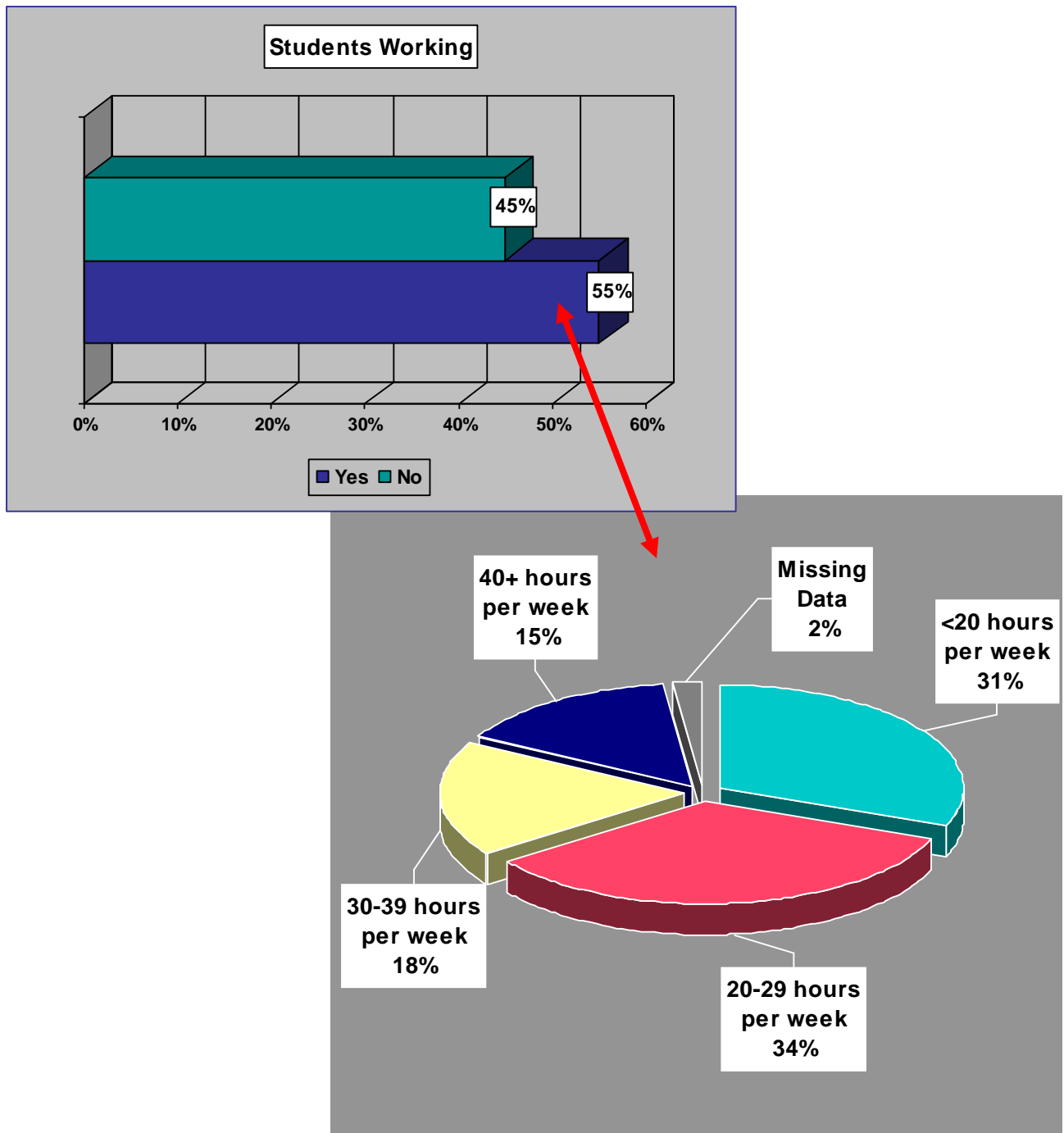


Figure 7

## Student Response

Participants were asked a variety of questions pertaining to students' preparation and success in nursing programs and courses. Those questions and responses follow.

Rate yourself on how well prepared you think you were upon entry into nursing school. Students reported a mean score of 3.28, indicating that students felt slightly above average in their preparation to enter nursing school.

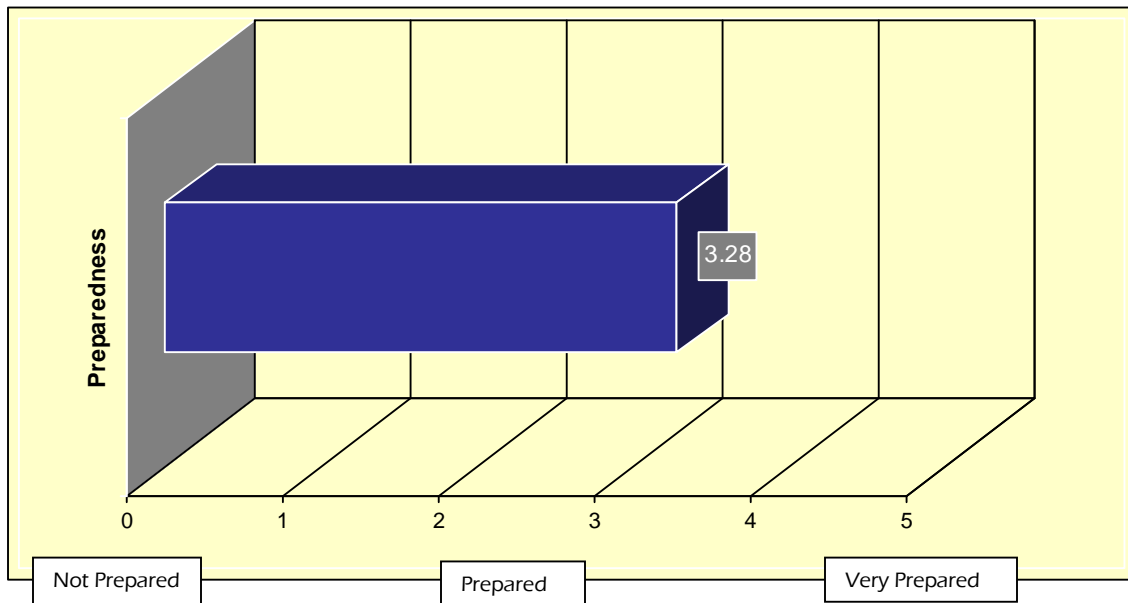


Figure 8

Rate yourself on how well your reading skills have prepared you for nursing school. A mean score of 3.64 indicates that students felt above average in their reading skills preparation.

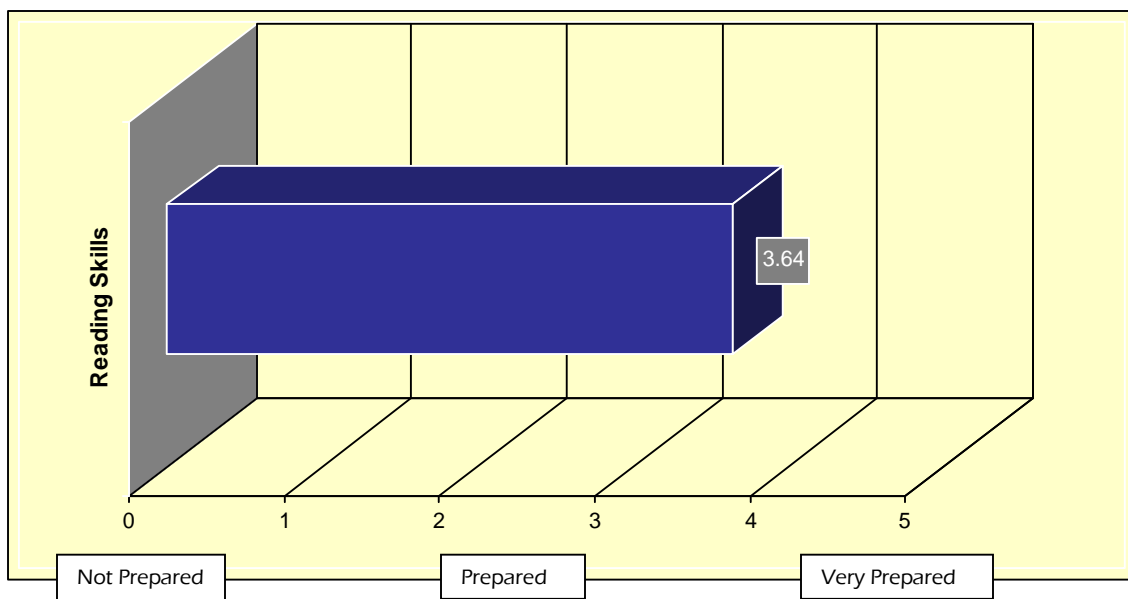


Figure 9

## Student Response

Rate yourself on how well prepared you think you were AT TIME OF ENTRY into nursing school in reading comprehension, study skills, time management, math skills, verbal communication and writing skills and science?

Mean scores above average indicate that students felt prepared at time of entry into nursing school for all areas.

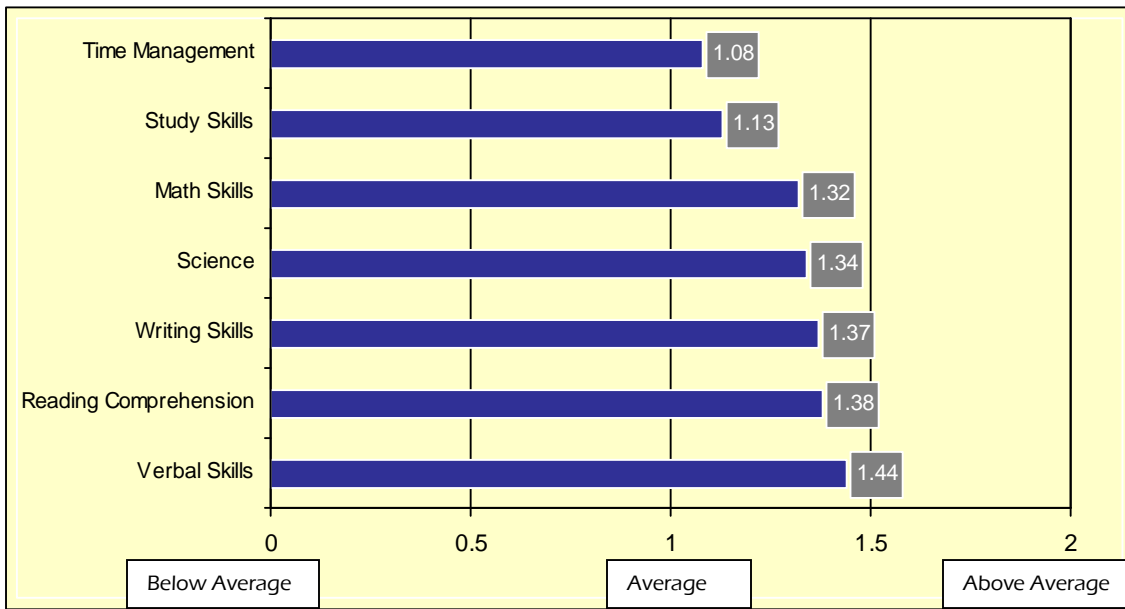


Figure 10

Rate yourself for each of the following: school attendance, clarifying assignments with instructors, reading class assignments, studying after class, interpersonal relationship skills between you and other students, and interpersonal relationship skills between you and your instructors.

Mean scores indicate students rated themselves above average in all areas.

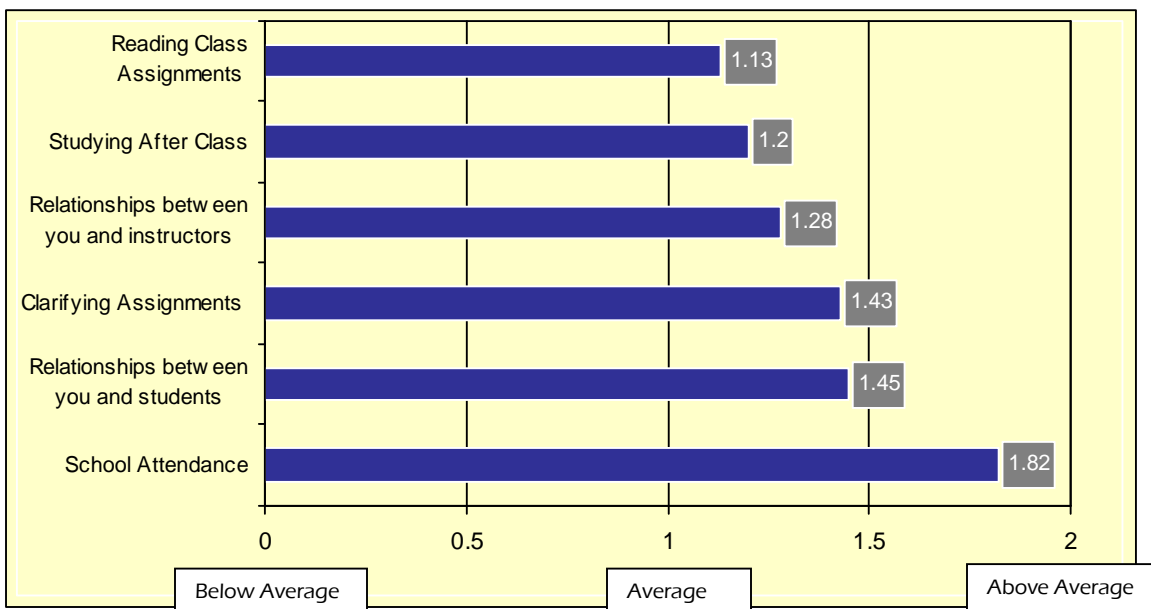


Figure 11

## Student Response

Knowing these are all important and necessary skills, rate the following courses/skills on how important you think they are to succeed in nursing school:

Study Skills, Time Management, Reading Comprehension, Verbal Skills, Computer Skills  
Writing Skills, Math Skills and Financial Skills.

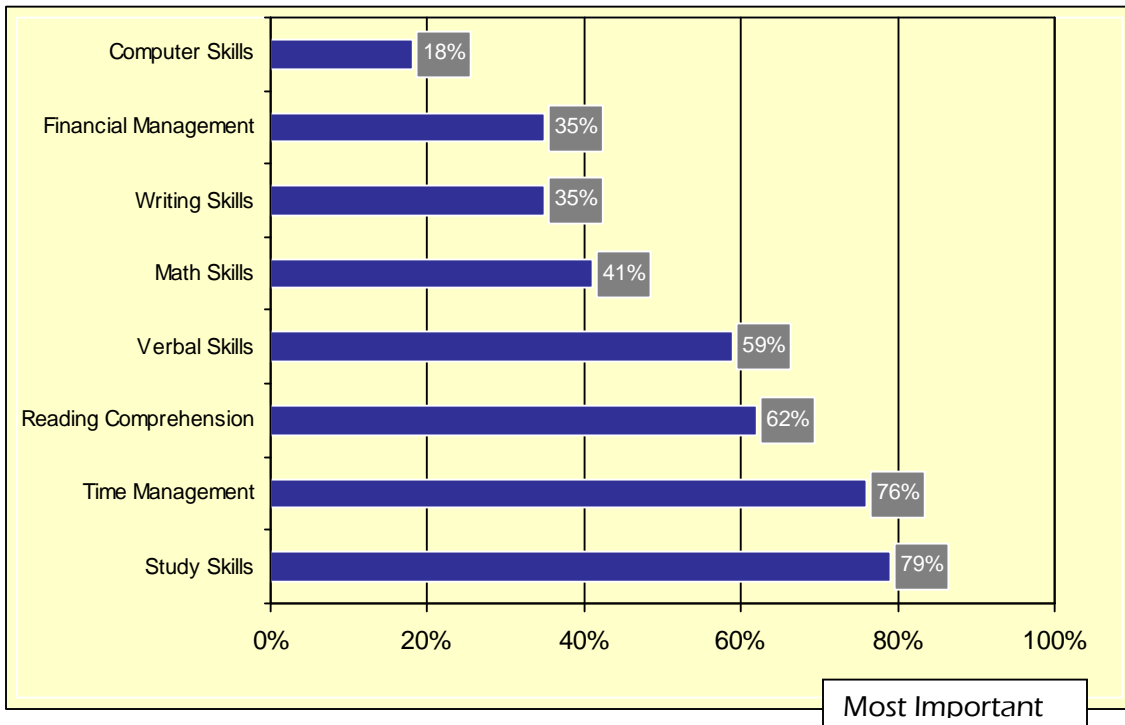


Figure 12

If you could recommend the following courses to be offered BEFORE entering nursing school, which would be of most importance?

Students ranked the skills in order of importance:

- 1) Study Skills
- 2) Nurse Mentoring
- 3) Time Management
- 4) Reading Comprehension
- 5) Math Skills
- 6) Verbal Skills
- 7) Professional Writing
- 8) Computer Skills

## Student Response

---

Participants were asked a variety of questions pertaining to grants and scholarships, school policy, and barriers to nursing school. Those questions and responses follow.

### Scholarships/Grants

Sixty-four percent (64%,  $n=1,941$ ) of students reported receiving some type of grant and/or scholarship.

Of those receiving monies, the leading grants/scholarships included:

- Scholastic (24.2%,  $n=467$ )
- Private Foundations (8.9%,  $n=171$ )
- Pell (47.6%,  $n=918$ )
- Hospital scholarships (10.2%,  $n=196$ )
- Other Corporate and Various Grants (5.5% ,  $n=166$ )  
Workforce Investment Initiatives ( $n= 106$ , 3.5%)

### School Policy

*Does your school have a policy requiring students in nursing school to be enrolled full-time?*

- Yes 73.5%
- No 26.2%

*Do you find transportation to school to be a problem for you?*

- Yes 5.8%
- No 94.2%

*Do you find transportation to school related activities to be a problem for you?*

- Yes 9.8%
- No 90.2%

*How much time do you spend weekly on nursing school related activities (class time, studying, clinical, assignment preparation, etc.)?*

- 15-25 hours 14.6 %
- 26-30 hours 22.9 %
- 31-35 hours 12.0 %
- 36-40 hours 18.3 %
- 41+ 32.2%

**What first attracted you to want to become a nurse? (Check all that apply)**

Desire to help people	55%
Availability of jobs	16%
Opportunities to advance	12%
Nursing Salary	11%
Wanted a challenging career	7%
Nursing shortage	4%
Loss of previous job	1%

## Student Response

---

*Do you plan to remain in local area to work after nursing school.*

- 68% Yes
- 32% No

? Reasons to Remain: Family  
Hometown  
Repay hospital scholarships  
Gain Experience

? Reasons to Leave: Poor Salary  
Better Opportunities  
Travel Nursing

*Do you plan to remain in Mississippi to work after nursing school.*

- 56% Yes
- 44% No

? Reasons to Leave:: Better paying salary  
Better opportunities  
Family out of state  
Military family  
Travel nursing  
Availability of jobs  
Further education

*If grant money was available for student use in paying ordinary expenses during nursing school, how would you use the money? (Ranked in order of importance)*

### Transportation (24%)

- gas money
- repairs
- car notes

### Education (24%)

- books
- clinical supplies
- uniforms
- extra classes
- tuition

### Housing (20%)

- rent
- utilities
- repairs

### Daycare/childcare (11%)

### Miscellaneous Bills (7%)

### Loan repayment (5%)

## *Barriers To Successful Completion of Nursing School*

---

Students were asked, "Indicate the 3 greatest issues currently in your life/school that may be a barrier to your successful completion of nursing school."

Respondents reported the top 3 barriers to be:

- 1) Lack of Financial Support
- 2) Family Issues/Unable to balance family, children and school
- 3) Unable to work and go to school

Other less important barriers included (in order of importance)

- Lack of Academic Preparation
- Lack of Instructor Support
- Health Problems
- Lack of Insurance
- Faculty Issues (lack of preparation, lack of concern for students, Lack of knowledge, lack of organization)
- Stress
- Full-time requirements

# Faculty Survey Results

Nursing Education Barriers  
Identification Survey

## Faculty Demographics

Three hundred fifteen ( $n=315$ ) Associate and Baccalaureate degree nursing faculty participated in the survey. Demographic findings from this survey are found below.

- 97% females
- 3% males

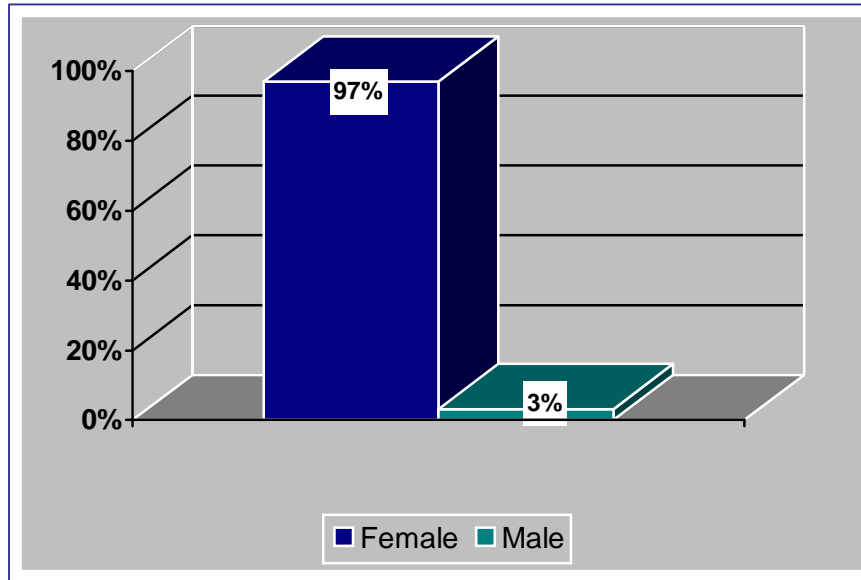


Figure 13

## Ethnicity

- 86% ( $n=271$ ) of faculty reported Caucasian ethnicity.
- 13% ( $n=41$ ) of faculty reported African American ethnicity.
- 1% ( $n=3$ ) of faculty reported other ethnic origins including Native American and Asian.

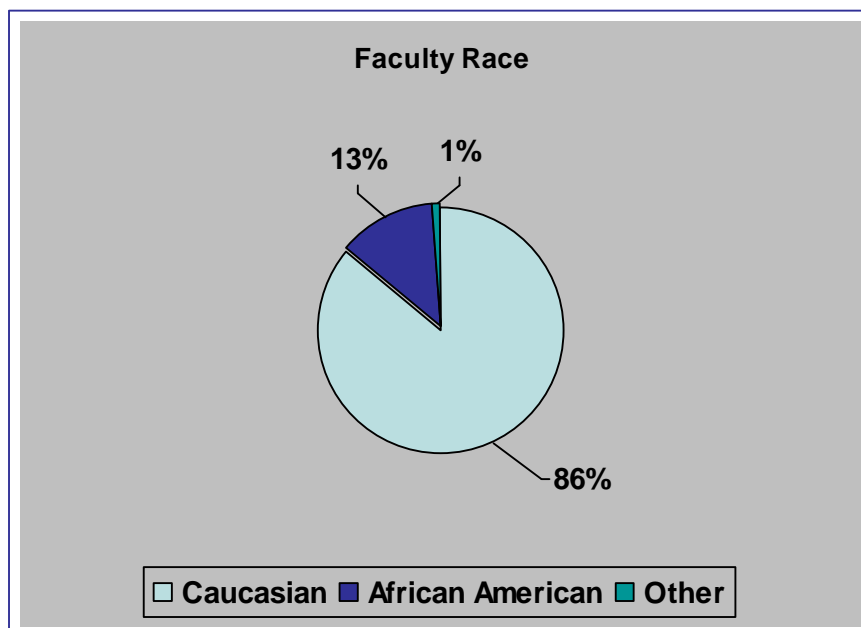


Figure 14

## Faculty Demographics

### Age

Faculty age groups are reported in Figure 15.

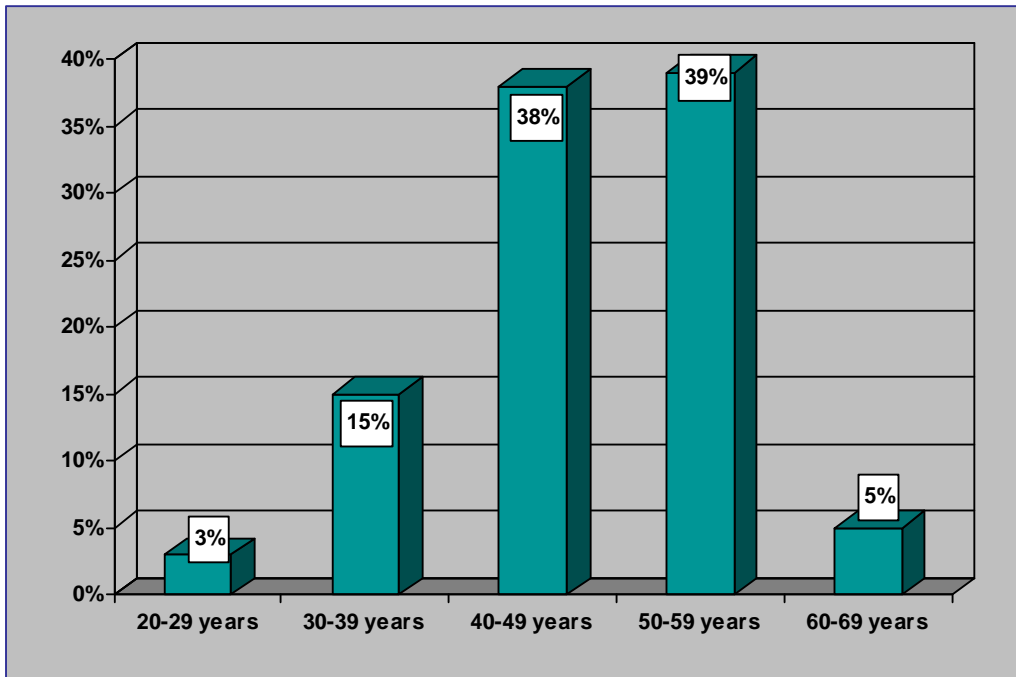


Figure 15

### Years of Teaching

Thirty-three percent ( $n=103$ ) of faculty have taught for over 15 years.

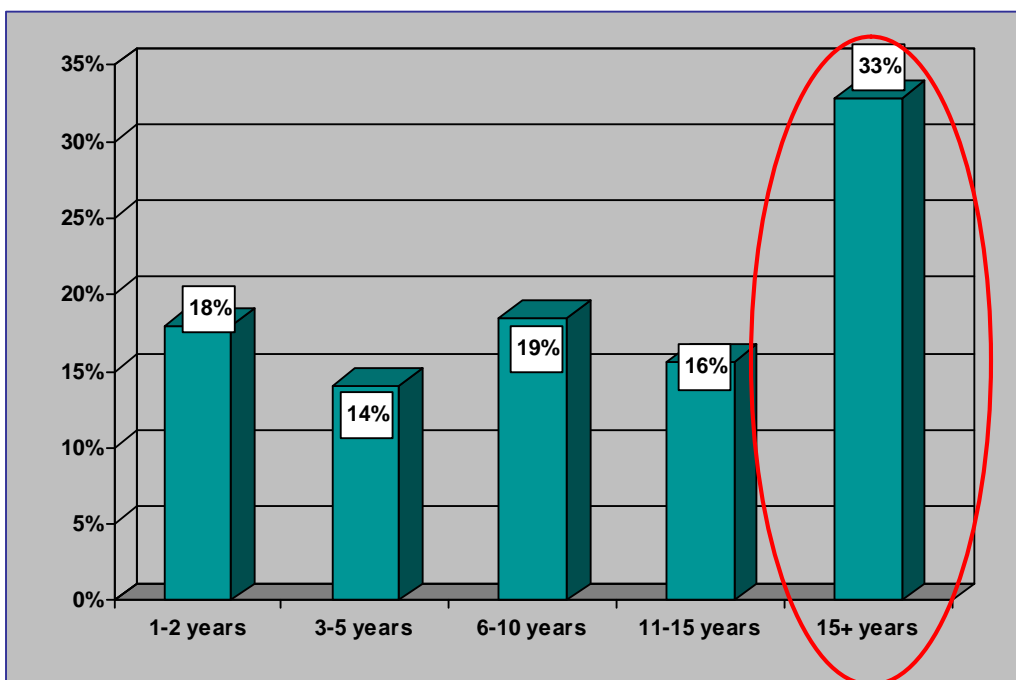


Figure 16

## Faculty Demographics

### Educational Level

Faculty educational levels are reported in Figure 17.

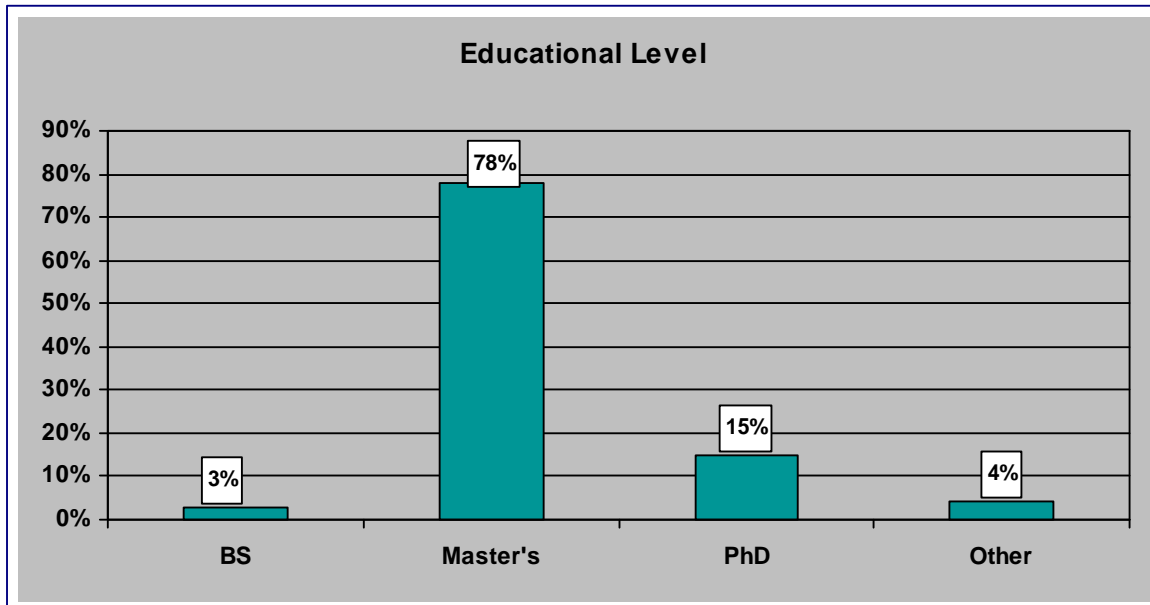


Figure 17

## Faculty Response

Rate the quality of students entering your nursing school today.

Forty-six percent (46%) of faculty reported student quality to be less than in previous years, and 17.5% reported student quality to be better than previous years.

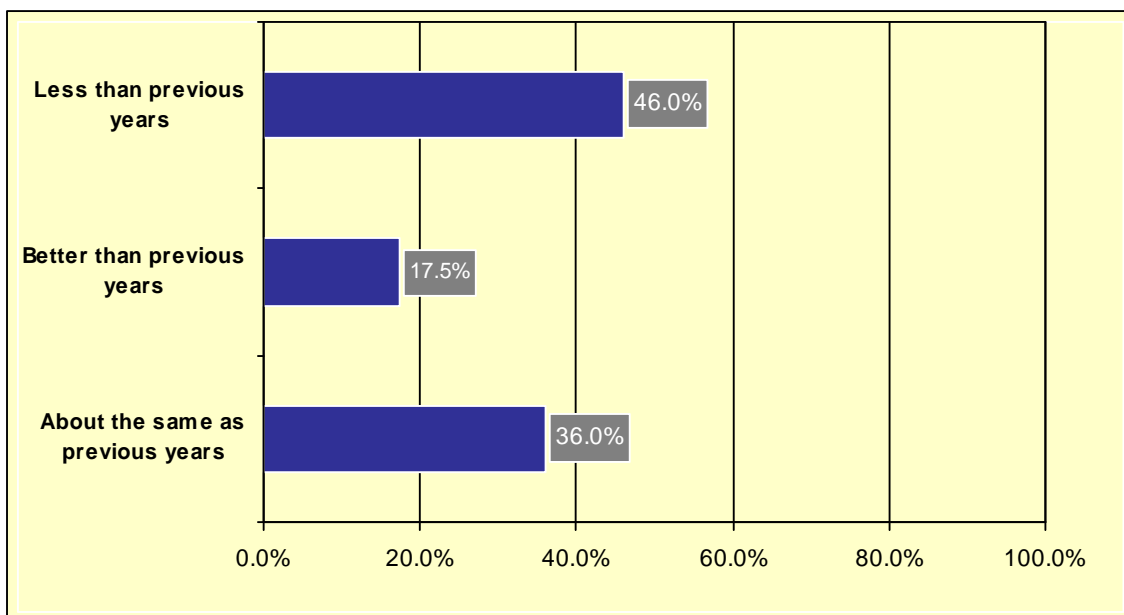


Figure 18

## Faculty Response

Faculty participants were asked a variety of questions pertaining to students' preparation and success in nursing programs and courses. Those questions and responses follow.

Rate your students on how well prepared you think they are to handle nursing school. Faculty reported a mean score of 2.99 indicating they feel students are prepared. As reported previously in **Figure 8**, student response indicated a mean score of 3.28, indicating students feel slightly above average in their preparation to enter nursing school.

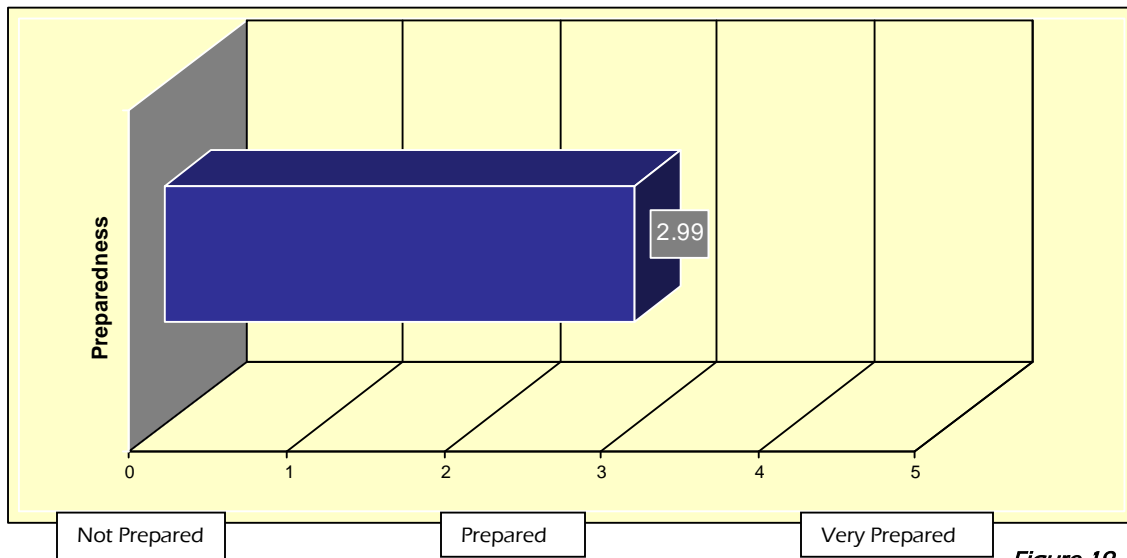
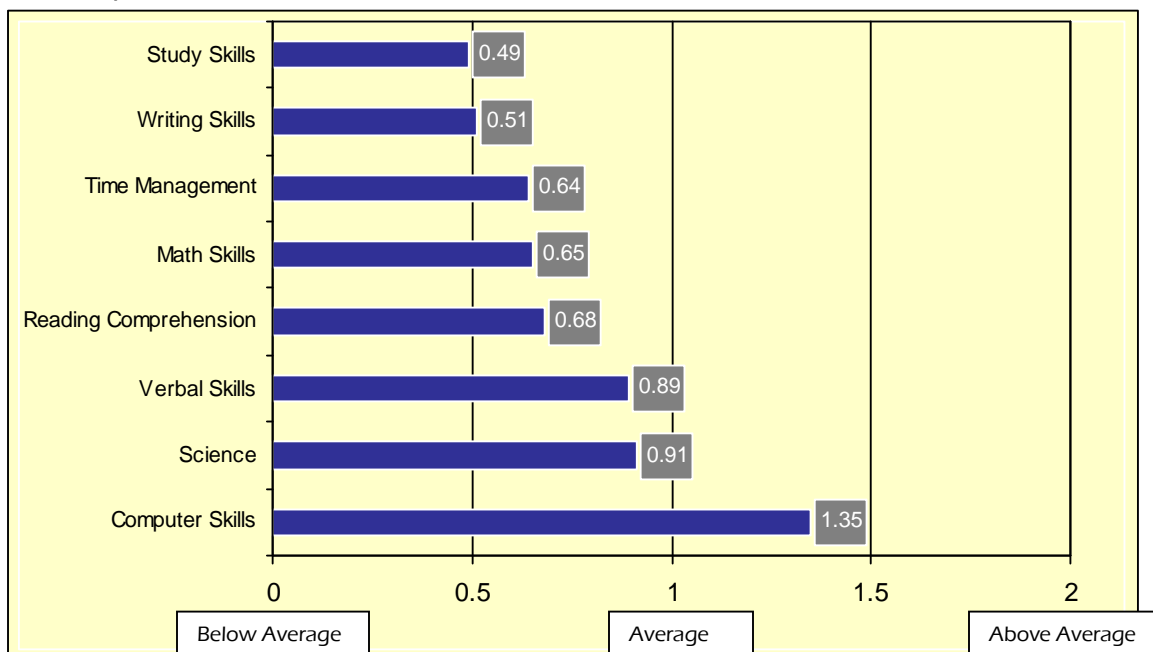


Figure 19

Rate your students entering nursing school on how well prepared you think they are in reading comprehension, study skills, time management, math skills, verbal communication and writing skills and science?

Mean scores of faculty responses indicate below average scores in all areas except computer skills with a mean score of 1.35.



## Faculty Response

---

Rank the following courses/skills on how important you think they are to succeed in nursing school.

**Faculty** ranked the courses/skills in the following order:

- 1) Reading Comprehension
- 2) Study Skills
- 3) Time Management
- 4) Verbal Skills
- 5) Math Skills
- 6) Writing Skills
- 7) Computer Skills
- 8) Financial Skills

**Students** ranked the courses/skills in the following order:

- 1) Study Skills
- 2) Time Management
- 3) Reading Comprehension
- 4) Verbal Skills
- 5) Math Skills
- 6) Writing Skills
- 7) Financial Skills
- 8) Computer Skills

If you could recommend the following courses to be offered before entering nursing school, which would be of most importance?

**Faculty** ranked the skills in order of importance to be:

- 1) Reading Comprehension
- 2) Study Skills
- 3) Time Management
- 4) Math Skills
- 5) Nurse Mentoring
- 6) Verbal Skills
- 7) Professional Writing
- 8) Computer Skills

**Students** ranked the skills in order of importance to be:

- 1) Study Skills
- 2) Nurse Mentoring
- 3) Time Management
- 4) Reading Comprehension
- 5) Math Skills
- 6) Verbal Skills
- 7) Professional Writing
- 8) Computer Skills

## ***Faculty Response***

---

***Does your school have a policy requiring students in nursing school to be enrolled full-time?***

Yes 61.5%  
No 38.2%

***Does your school offer a pre-nursing/pre-entry course?***

Yes 28.4%  
No 71.6%

***Is this course required or optional?***

Required 53.7%  
Optional 45.1%

***Approximately how many hours per week are spent on program responsibilities, committee work, advising, teaching, and clinical responsibilities?***

- 45.5% of the faculty reported spending up to 40 hours per week on faculty responsibilities.
- 54.4% of the faculty participants reported spending greater than over 40 hours per week on faculty responsibilities.
  - 22.6% of those are over 55 hours per week.

***Do you think your nursing school is under pressure to accept students who do not meet entry requirements in order to raise the quantity of students allowed in the nursing school program?***

Yes 45.7%  
No 54.3%

***Is your school experiencing a nursing faculty shortage?***

Yes 52%  
No 48%

***What barriers prevent your school from filling nursing faculty/educator positions? (Ranked in order of importance)***

- Salaries not competitive
- No funds available to pay faculty
- Lack of qualified applicant
- Positions frozen
- Location of nursing school

## *Faculty Response*

---

*If grant money was available for student use in paying ordinary expenses during nursing school, how would you use the money? (Ranked in order of importance)*

### **Education (33%)**

- books
- clinical supplies
- uniforms
- extra classes
- tuition

### **Daycare/childcare (20%)**

### **Housing (19%)**

- rent
- utilities
- repairs

### **Transportation (12%)**

- gas money
- repairs
- car notes

### **Loan repayment (7%)**

### **Miscellaneous Bills (6%)**

## ***Faculty - Barriers To Successful Completion of Nursing School***

---

Faculty were given the opportunity to indicate barriers to successful completion of nursing education. The responses were grouped into student, faculty and nursing profession concerns.

### **Professional Image Barriers**

Poor professional image of nursing  
Profession not attractive to bright young people  
Respect for nurses  
Lack of student knowledge about the profession and its requirements  
Other career opportunities not as difficult

### **Faculty Perceptions of Student Barriers**

Lack of academic preparation and basic skills (i.e., comprehension, reading, math, study skills, time management, application and analysis skills, deductive reasoning)

Job responsibilities while in school

Working too many or full-time hours to support family or keep family insurance  
Lack of quality study time

Family responsibilities

Inability to balance school with family  
Child care responsibilities  
Lack of family support system  
Lack of quality study time

Shortage of role models in clinical setting

Student attitude

Lack of dedication, values, motivation, accountability and responsibility  
Sense of entitlement  
Laziness

Financial issues and responsibilities

Scholarships and funding issues

Difficulty for non-traditional students

Vast amount of information to learn in short time

High stress levels

---

## Faculty Perceptions of Faculty Barriers

### Faculty Issues

- Lack of faculty positions
- Availability of qualified faculty
- Lack of funding for faculty
- Non-competitive salaries for faculty
- Faculty overload, burnout
- Lack of resources for SON to operate
- Faculty to student ratio too high in programs and in clinicals
- Tenure and promotion requirements

### Faculty Attitudes

- Lack of faculty motivation
- Faculty rigidity
- Lack of creativity in developing learning situations
- "User-unfriendly" environment
- Old models of clinical education-restrictive
- Faculty not open to changes in growing healthcare trends
- Instructors overbearing with students (clinical)

### Academics (Nursing Program)

- Access- size of programs, unavailability of student slots
- Admission requirements/issues
  - Academic requirements of nursing schools
  - Full time enrollment requirement
  - Entrance requirements too low leading to student failure
  - Selecting students to meet certain quotas (i.e., males)
  - Need to pass a certain quantity of students rather than quality
  - Lowering acceptance standards
- Rigor of nursing program
- Program too structured
- Program needs to be longer
- Lack of pre-nursing courses

### Facilities

- Not enough BSN programs
- Equipment
- Facilities lacking enough classroom space
- Limited available clinical facilities
- Less than adequate clinical sites
- Lack of new technologies

## *Conclusions*

---

Findings from this survey revealed issues related to student and faculty that could contribute to a student's lack of success in nursing schools. These issues include but are not limited to:

### Student Work/Family Issues

- Percentage of student time spent working
- Childcare/Daycare issues due to large number of students with children
- Financial constraints –having to work while in school to support family and/or keep family insurance

### Preparedness Factor

- Differences in student and faculty perception in preparedness
- Pre-nursing assessment
- Pre-nursing education
- Faculty development
- Lack of student basic skills

## *Recommendations for Future Research*

---

Explore student work issues

Study to explore employer's perceptions of entry-level nursing preparedness.

Study the impact of implementation of barrier related support system on graduation rates

Study the impact of implementation of pre-nursing testing and intervention on graduation rates

Study the impact of providing financial/psychosocial counseling, provisions for childcare, etc., on graduation rates

Study the impact related to faculty education and innovative teaching/learning strategies on graduation rates

Study the impact of student participation in a nurse mentorship program on graduation rates

Explore issues surrounding disparities between faculty and student perceptions of student preparedness

Education/service disparity of new nursing graduate expectations

# APPENDIX

Faculty and Student Data-At-A-Glance

For more information contact:

Mississippi Office of Nursing Workforce  
P.O. Box 1909  
Madison, MS 39130-1909  
601-368-3321  
[www.monw.org](http://www.monw.org)

Healthcare Research Group, LLC  
P.O. Box 55583  
Jackson, MS 39296  
601-919-0114 OF  
[www.hrgllc.com](http://www.hrgllc.com)