
Nursing Education Barriers Identification Survey

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The United States is currently experiencing a nursing shortage that is also reflected in the State of Mississippi. The national registered nurse vacancy rate is approximately 17%, while Mississippi's is currently 10%. As indicated by the high vacancy rates, the demand for qualified nurses is great. Career opportunities in the field of nursing are plentiful and rewarding. The average starting salary for a nurse is \$16.00 per hour with a vast majority of facilities offering a variety of benefits. These benefits include health insurance, dental insurance, disability and life insurance, and attractive retirement plans. Yet, national school of nursing attrition rates remain high. As more career opportunities become available for young men and women, qualified nursing school applicants may continue to decline.

The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) and the Mississippi Office of Nursing Workforce (ONW) entered a partnership in 2002 for the enhancement of the nursing workforce and career opportunities within the state of Mississippi. The initial partnership included a project to study the barriers to nursing education. This project was linked to all six of the Workforce Investment Areas across the state.

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 Study 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.

This Nursing Education Barriers Study will be useful for the Mississippi nursing workforce as well as each individual school of nursing in the state. The report will also serve as a guide for agencies, workforce investment areas, and other organizations that come in contact with individuals making career decisions for the first time or those seeking a career change. The information contained in this 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 development of the Nursing Education Barriers Survey was accomplished through an extensive review of the literature in conjunction with focus group interviews with Deans and Directors of Associate and Baccalaureate Degree nursing programs in Mississippi. Comments and potential questions were solicited from a sample of current nursing school faculty, current nursing students, and currently practicing RN's in Mississippi. Additionally, content validity was verified through expert review.

Based on extensive discussions, comments, and reviews, two surveys were created. One survey was developed for faculty of the nursing schools and the other was created for students currently enrolled in the programs. The surveys will be referred to as the *Faculty Survey* and the *Student Survey* respectively, throughout the remainder of this report.

The *Faculty Survey* focused on several key areas of interest. These areas targeted information such as the preparedness and skills of current students, courses and skills recommended prior to entry into nursing school, current faculty job issues (i.e., responsibilities, shortages, etc.), current time spent on teaching and clinical duties, and barriers to successful completion of nursing school.

The *Student Survey* contained questions similar to questions in the faculty survey. Some of the key areas of interest targeted by the *Student Survey* included the rate of preparedness and skills upon entry into nursing school, recommendation of courses and skills needed prior to entry into nursing school, study and clinical time, current job related activities, plans for remaining in local area, and barriers to successful completion of nursing school.

This report contains a comprehensive look into the overall perceptions of nursing education barriers of both the faculty and students in Mississippi.

Data for the Nursing Education Barriers Survey were collected during the Fall school semester of 2002 (November 2002-December 2002). The survey was based on a convenience sample of all nursing school students in the state of Mississippi. There are twenty-one nursing programs in the state including two which house both Associate and Baccalaureate Nursing Degree programs. Each Mississippi school of nursing is described in Figure 1 below. The location of each of the Associate Degree Nursing programs and the Baccalaureate Nursing programs in the state of Mississippi are indicated in the accompanying map of public health districts (Figure 2).

Mississippi Schools of Nursing	
Associate Degree Schools of Nursing	Baccalaureate Degree Schools of Nursing
Alcorn State University Copiah-Lincoln Community College East Central Community College Hinds Community College Holmes Community College Itawamba Community College Jones County Junior College Meridian Community College MS Delta Community College MS Gulf Coast Community College (Jackson Campus) MS Gulf Coast Community College (Jefferson Davis Campus) Mississippi University for Women Northeast MS Community College Northwest MS Community College Pear River Community College Southwest MS Community College	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, 2,270 (75%) participated in the survey, and 272 (70%) nursing education faculty in the state participated in the survey. Of the 2,270 respondents, 76% were in Associate Degree Nursing programs, 20% were in Baccalaureate Degree Nursing programs, 2% were in LPN-RN Track nursing, and 2% were in RN-BSN nursing programs. The response rate was directly proportional to the types of nursing programs in the state, approximately 66% Associate Degree Programs and 33% Baccalaureate degree programs.

The results presented in this report are based on data analyzed from this sample of students and faculty. This report is divided into separate sections, one for the student survey analysis and one for the faculty survey analysis.

Map

Student Survey Results

Nursing Education Barriers
Identification Survey

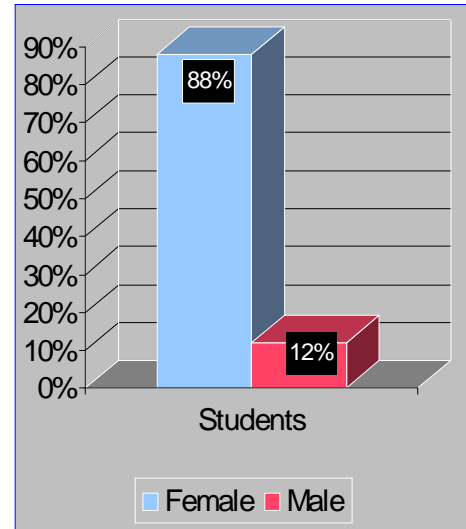
Student Response-Demographics

GENDER

Of the study participants:

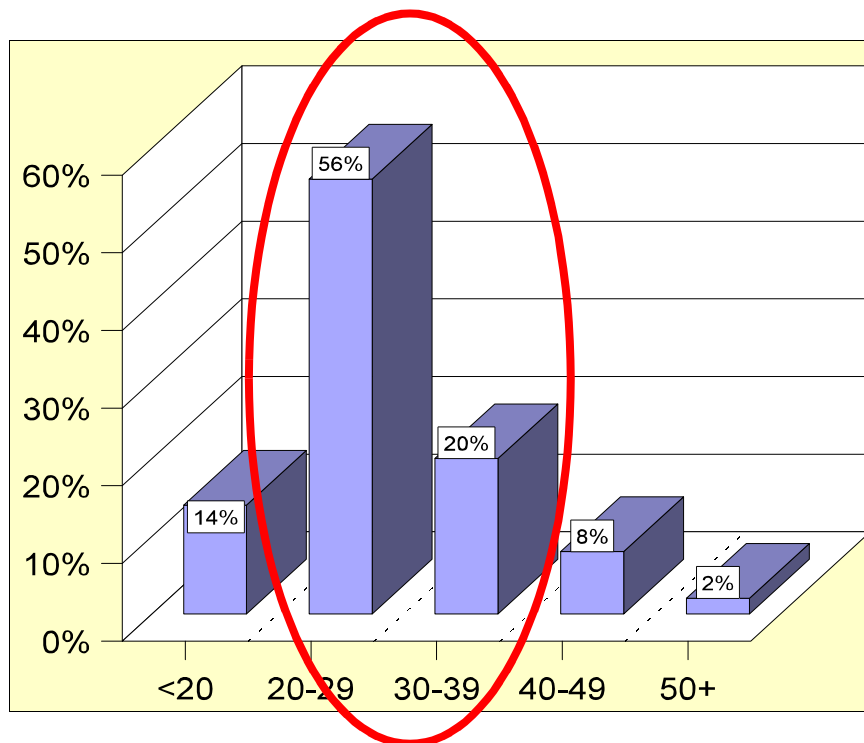
- ? 1,993 (88%) female students
- ? 275 (12%) male students

Diversity of gender in Mississippi nursing students exceeded the distribution of Mississippi RNs of whom 8.9% are male.



AGE

- ? Largest proportion (56%) of the students were in the 20-29 age group.
- ? 76% of nursing student participants were age 20-39 years of age.
- ? Age of nursing students ranged from age 18 to 62 years.

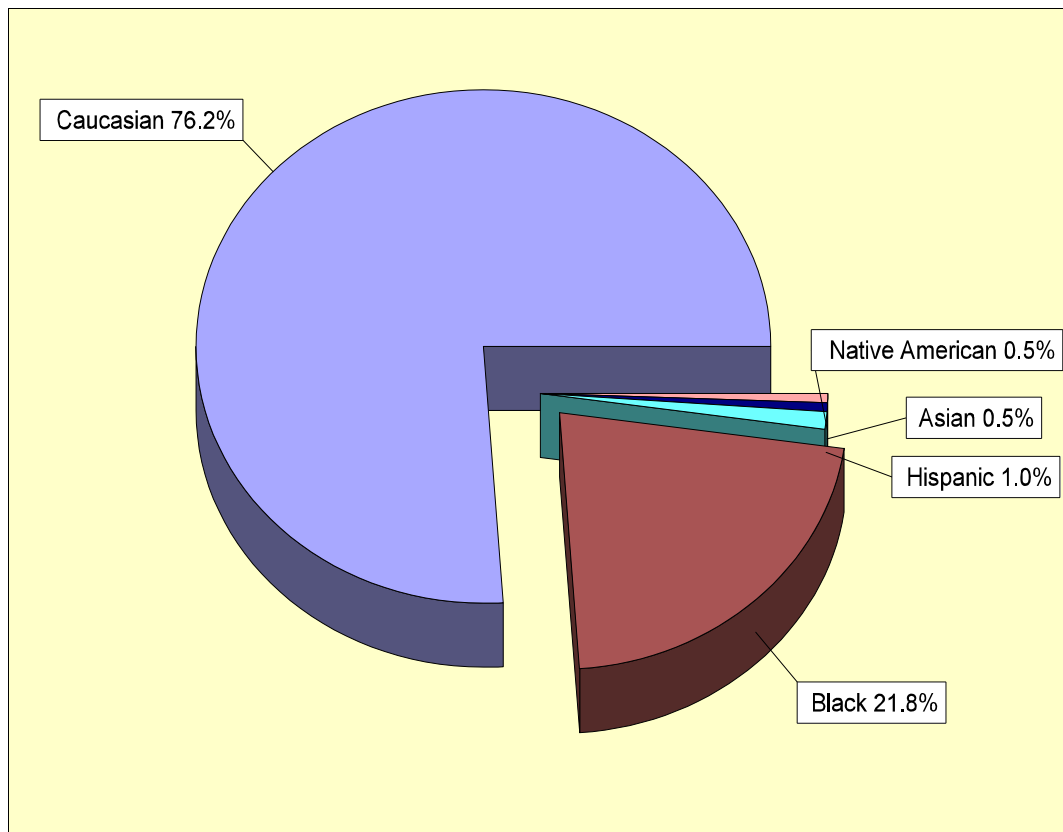


Student Response-Demographics

RACE

- ? 76.2% (n=1,724) of participants were Caucasian
- ? 21.8% (n=489) African American

- ? Diversity of ethnicity in the nursing student participants is reflective of the ethnic distribution of the general population in Mississippi.
 - ? Current ethnic distribution of the Mississippi RN includes 85.8% Caucasian and 12.5% African American
(Mississippi Board of Nursing).



Marital Status

- ? Students from Associate programs show higher numbers of married students than Baccalaureate programs.
 - ? 48% (n= 819) of students from Associate programs report being married
 - ? 22% (n=99) of students from Baccalaureate programs report being married

	Associate Programs	Baccalaureate Programs
Single	42%	73%
Married	48%	22%
Divorced	9%	4%
Widowed	1%	0%

Number of Children

- ? 50% (n=1,136) of nursing student respondents reported having no children.
- ? Of those with children, 30% reported having 2 or more children.
- ? Associate program students reported having more children than Baccalaureate program students.
 - ? **55%** of Associate program students reported having 1 or more children.
 - ? **20%** of Baccalaureate program students reported having 1 or more children.

	Associate Programs	Baccalaureate Programs
No Children	43%	81%
1 child	21%	10%
2 children	22%	6%
3 or more children	12%	3%

Student Response-Residency & Occupation

Current Mississippi Resident

- ? 95% (n=2,158) of nursing student respondents reported permanent residence in Mississippi.
- ? 5% (n=106) reported out-of-state residence
 - ? Alabama (n=12)
 - ? Arkansas (n=3)
 - ? California (n=1)
 - ? Florida (n=5)
 - ? Georgia (n=1)
 - ? Kentucky (n=1)
 - ? Louisiana (n=58)
 - ? Tennessee (n=24)
 - ? Texas (n=1)

Prior Occupation

- ? 42% of nursing student respondents reported having no prior occupation.
- ? Of the 58% who reported a prior occupation, 24% of those reported a previous healthcare occupation (i.e., LPN, CNA, EMT, laboratory personnel, medical records, EKG tech's, respiratory therapist, social work, etc.).
- ? Other occupations included:
 - ? retail/sales
 - ? food service
 - ? craft skills & trades
 - ? factory personnel
 - ? firefighters
 - ? military
 - ? casino
 - ? farmer
 - ? pastor
- ? Data indicated many students are pursuing nursing as a second career.

Student Response-Plans to Remain in Local Area

Student plans to remain in local area to work after nursing school.

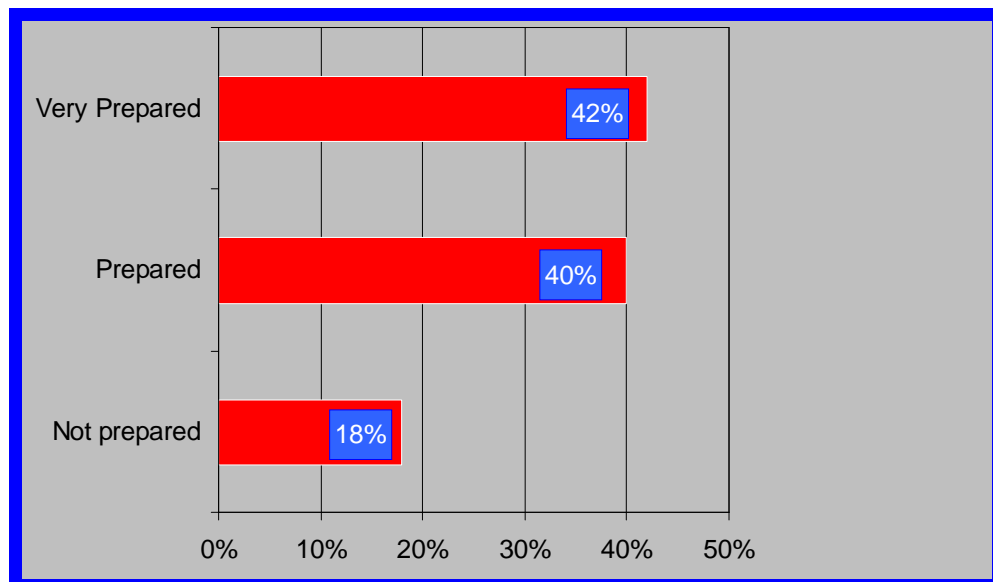
- ? 67% Yes
- ? 33% No

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

? Reasons to Leave: Poor Salary
Better Opportunities
Travel Nursing

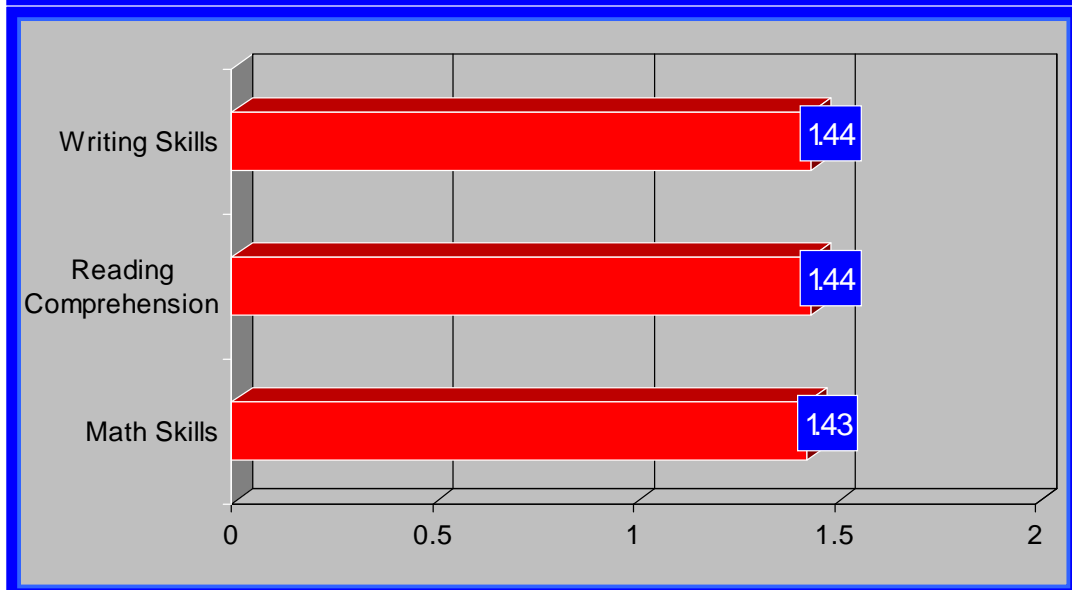
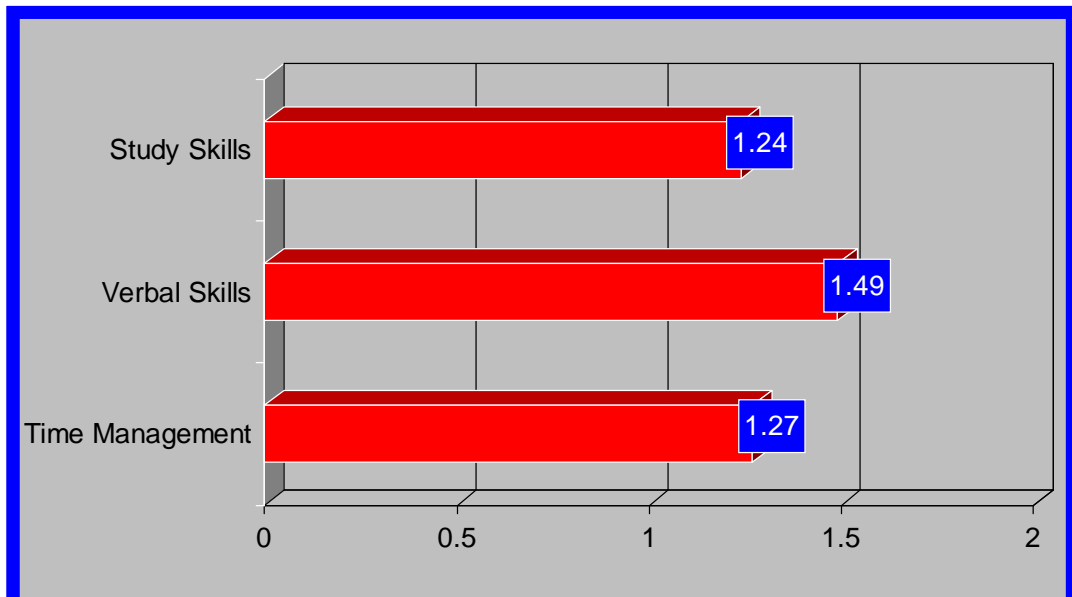
Student Response-Preparedness At Time Of Entry

- ? Student participants were asked to rate themselves as to how prepared for nursing school **OVERALL** they felt at time of entry into nursing school.
- ? 82% of student respondents felt prepared overall at entry into nursing school.



Student Response-Preparedness At Time Of Entry

- ? Students were asked to rate themselves on how prepared they thought they were at the point of entry into nursing school for each of the 6 skills found in the chart below. The students rated themselves on a scale of 0-2 (0=Below Average, 1=Average, 2=Above average). Below is the mean score for each of those skills.
- ? Students rated themselves most prepared in verbal skills (mean score of 1.49).
 - ? Students rated themselves least prepared in study skills (mean score of 1.24).



Scholarships/Grants

- ? 66% (n=1,496) of students reported receiving some type of grant and/or scholarship.
- ? Of those receiving monies, the leading grant/scholarship included:
 - ? Pell (69%, n=985)
 - ? Hospital scholarships (11%, n=159)
 - ? Workforce Investment Initiatives (n= 87 students)
 - ? Various school/foundation grants (20%, n=286)

School Policy

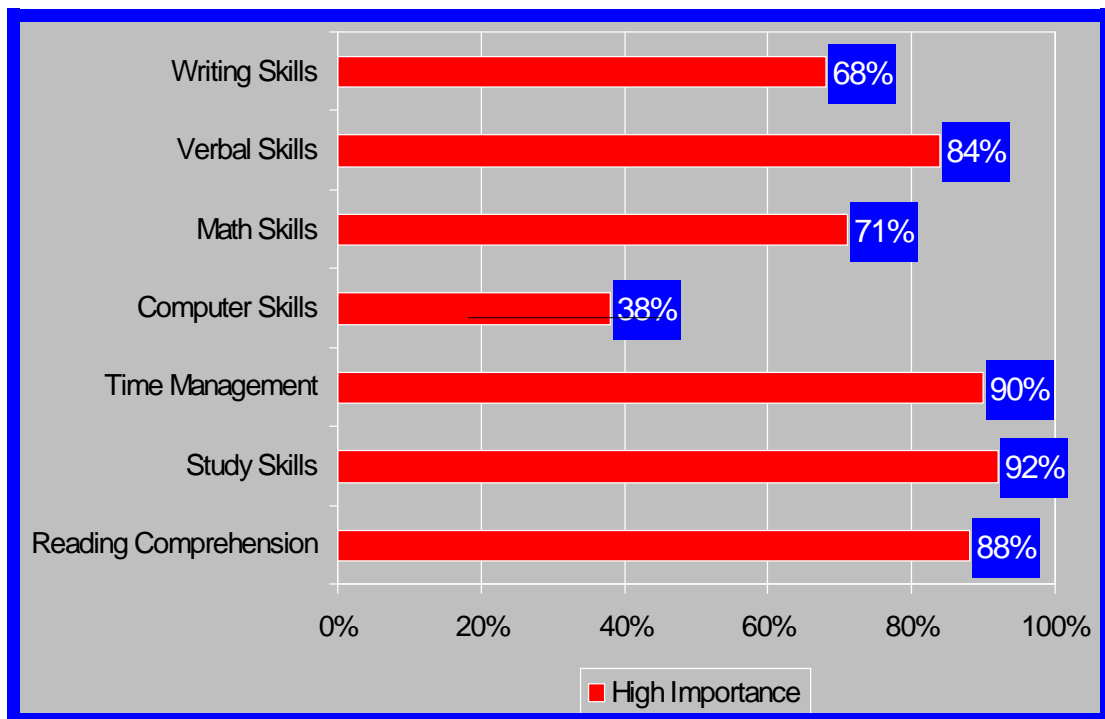
- ? *Does your school have a policy requiring students in nursing school to be enrolled full-time?*
 - ? Yes 78.6%
 - ? No 21.4%
- ? *Does your school require students to be registered at least 12 hrs. to live in the dorm/housing?*
 - ? Yes 77%
 - ? No 23%
- ? *Do you find transportation to school to be a problem for you?*
 - ? Yes 5.9%
 - ? No 94%
- ? *Do you find transportation to school related activities to be a problem for you?*
 - ? Yes 8.3%
 - ? No 91.7%
- ? *How much time do you spend on nursing school related activities (class time, studying, clinical, assignment preparation, etc.)?*
 - ? 15-25 hours 17 %
 - ? 26-30 hours 22 %
 - ? 31-35 hours 18 %
 - ? 36-40 hours 21 %
 - ? 41+ 21 %

Student Response-Student School Related Issues

- ? *Currently, does your school offer a pre-nursing/pre-entry course?*
- ? Yes 66.4%
 - ? No 33.6%
- ? *Students were asked to recommend courses to be offered before entry into nursing school. (**Ranked in order of recommendation**)*
- ? Study skills
 - ? Reading Comprehension
 - ? Nurse Mentor
 - ? Time Management
 - ? Math Refresher
 - ? Verbal Communication
 - ? Professional Writing
 - ? Computer Course
- ? *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**
 - gas money
 - repairs
 - car notes
 - ? **Housing**
 - rent
 - utilities
 - electric bill
 - ? **Daycare/childcare**
 - food
 - other dependent needs
 - ? **Bills**
 - ? **School related items**
 - books
 - extra classes
 - tuition
 - loan repayment

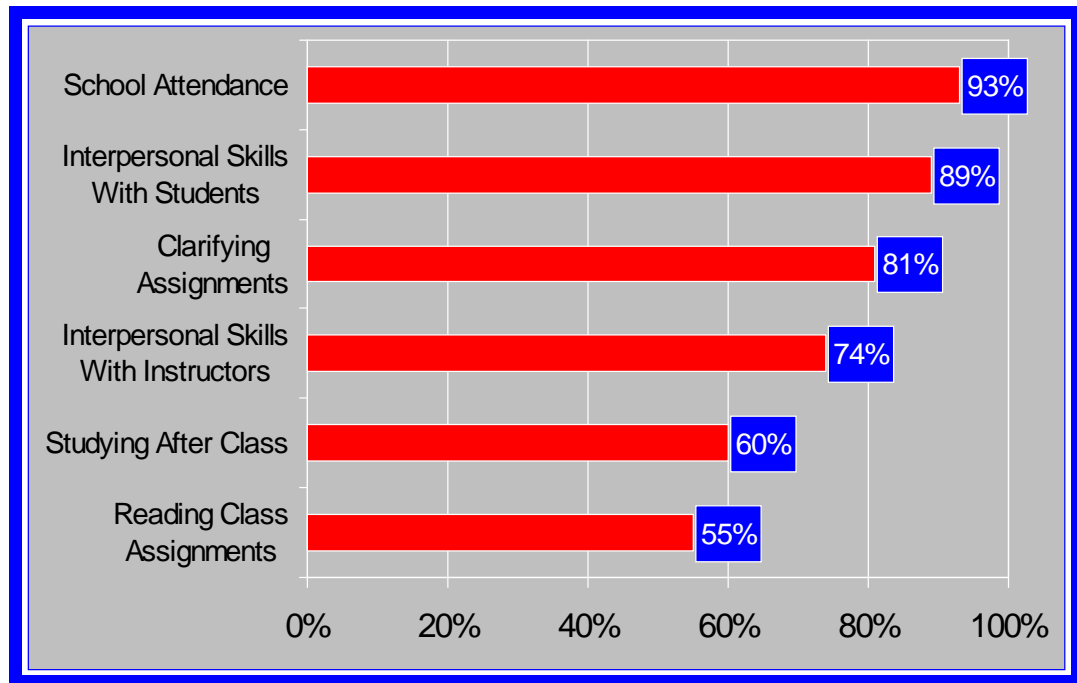
Student Response-Nursing School Success

- ? Students were asked to rate the following skills based on their perception of importance for successful completion of nursing school. The following chart reveals the percent of nursing students who felt these were of high importance to succeed.
- ? 92% of participants reported study skills to be of high importance to succeed in nursing school.
 - ? 90% of participants reported time management to be of high importance to succeed in nursing school.
 - ? 88% of participants reported reading comprehension to be of high importance to succeed in nursing school.



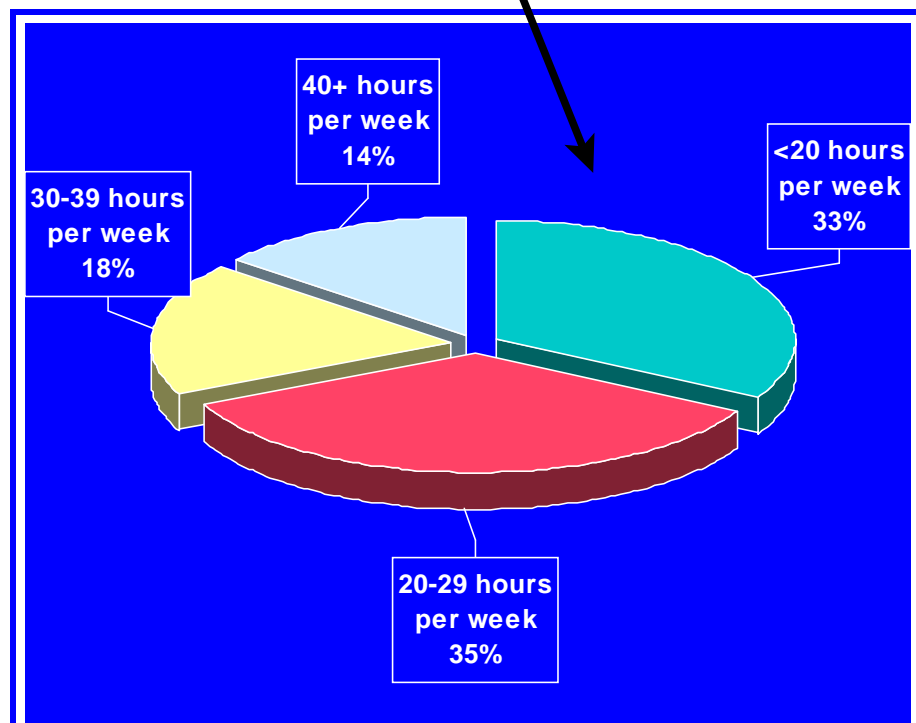
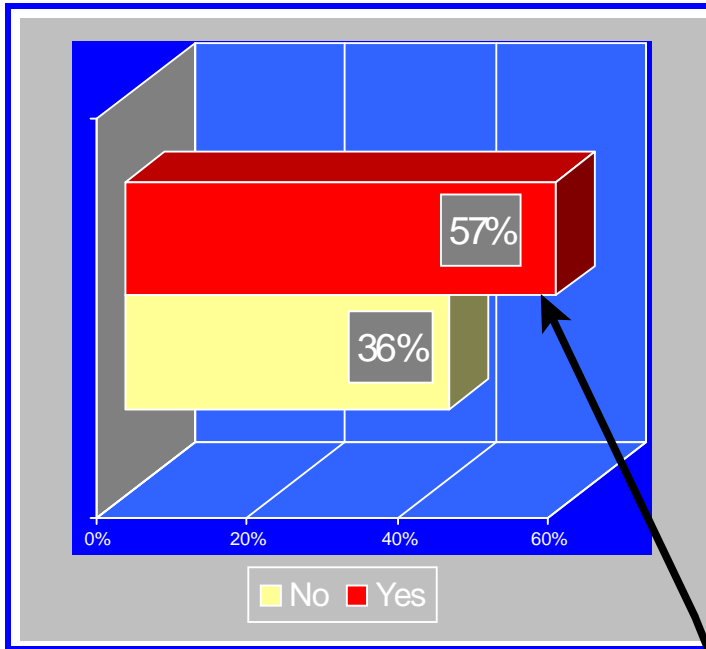
Student Response-Skill Rating

- ? Student participants were asked to rate themselves on various skills. These skills included:
- School Attendance
 - Interpersonal Skills With Other Students
 - Clarifying Assignments
 - Interpersonal Skills With Instructors
 - Studying After Class
 - Reading Class Assignments
- ? The percent of students who rated themselves **High** in each skill are represented below.



Student Response-Current Job Related Activities

- ? 57% of nursing students reported working while going to school.
 - ? 43% of participants reported working **prior** to nursing school.
- ? Of those students who reported working, 67% reported working more than 20 hours per week.



Student Response-Barriers to Nursing Education

Students were given the opportunity to indicate three of the most important issues currently in their life or school that may be barriers to successfully completing their nursing education.

? **Top barriers in order of importance included:**

- ? 1) Lack of financial support
- ? 2) Family issues
- ? 3) Unable to balance family, children, & school
- ? 4) Unable to work and go to school

? ***Other important but less significant barriers included:***

- ? 5) Lack of academic preparation
- ? 6) Health problems
- ? 7) Lack of instructor support
- ? 8) Insurance issues

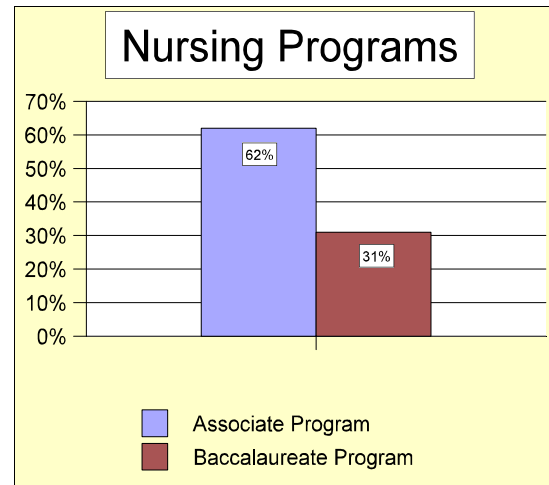
Faculty Survey Results

Nursing Education Barriers
Identification Survey

Faculty Response-Demographics

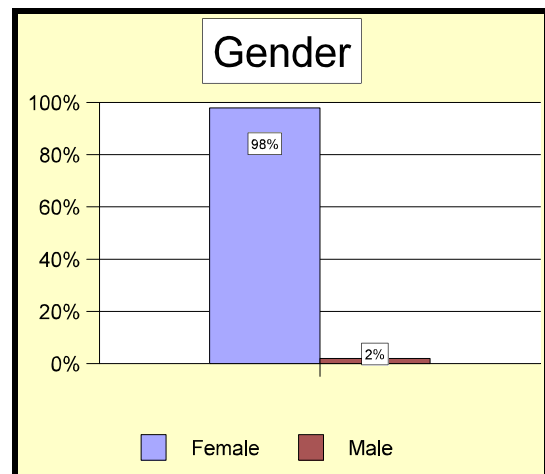
Nursing Programs

- ? 272 faculty participants
- ? 62% (n=168) Associate Degree programs
- ? 31% (n=83) Baccalaureate Degree programs
- ? 7% (n=21) RN-BSN/LPN RN Tracks



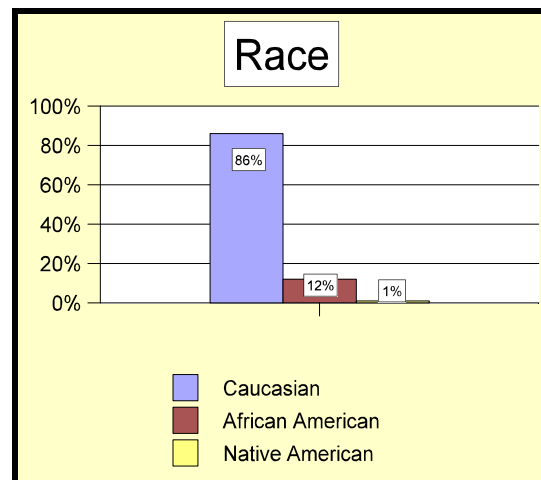
Gender

- ? 98% (n=263) Female
- ? 2% (n=5) Male



Race

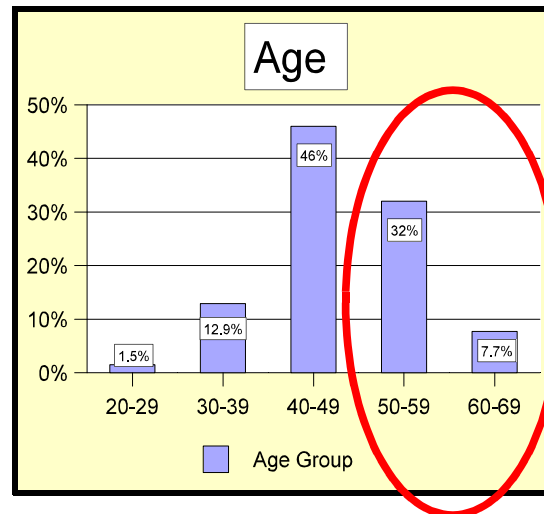
- ? 86% (n=235) Caucasian
- ? 12% (n=33) African American
- ? 1% (n=2) Native American



Faculty Response-Demographics

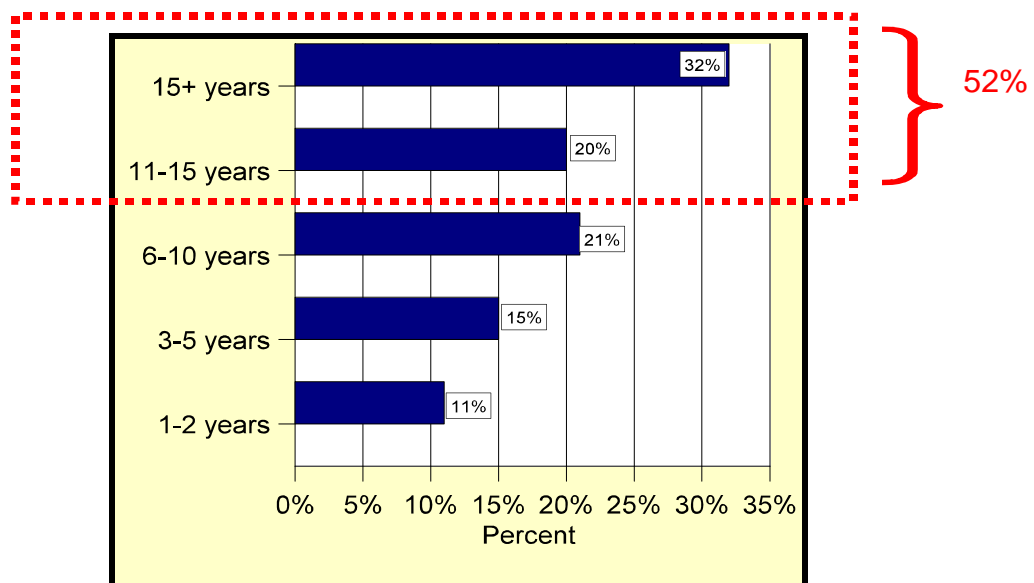
Age

- ? Age of faculty ranged from the 20-29 age group to the 60-69 age group.
- ? 40% of faculty are age 50 and older.
- ? 40% of faculty are in the 40-49 age group.



Years of Teaching

- ? Mississippi nursing faculty are highly educated, trained, and have many years of experience as indicated by 52% of the participating faculty having taught for over 11 years.
 - ? 32% of the faculty have taught nursing for 15+ years.
 - ? 52% of respondents in *Associate* programs have taught nursing for over 11 years.
 - ? 50% of respondents in *Baccalaureate* programs have taught nursing for over 11 years.



Faculty Response-Current Nursing Students

? *Rate current nursing students on how well you think they are prepared to handle nursing school.*

- ? Prepared 18%
- ? Slightly Prepared 57%
- ? Not prepared 25%

? *The quality of students entering nursing school today is:*

- ? Better than previous years 6%
- ? About the same as previous years 28%
- ? Less than previous years 66%

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

- ? Yes 62.4%
- ? No 38%

? *Does your school require students to be registered at least 12 hrs. to live in the dorm/housing?*

- ? Yes 77.4%
- ? No 22.6%

? *Currently, does your school offer a pre-nursing/pre-entry course?*

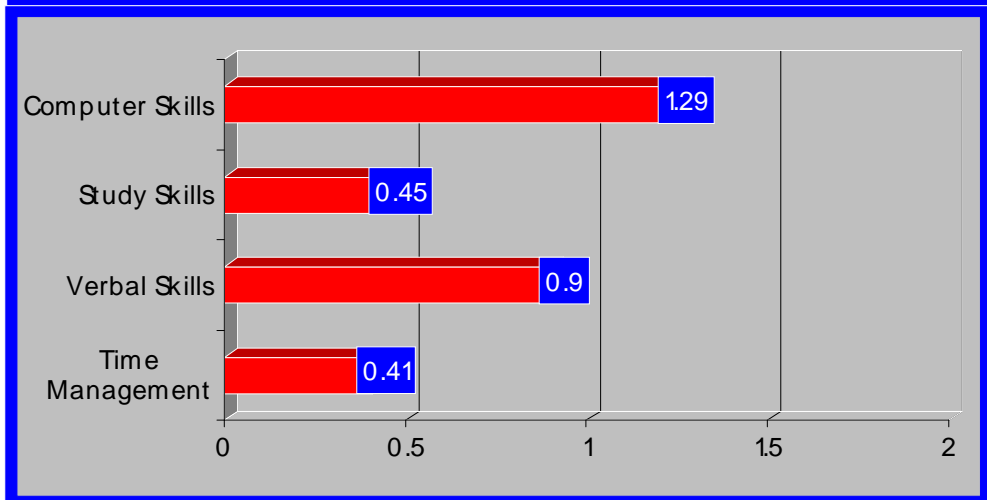
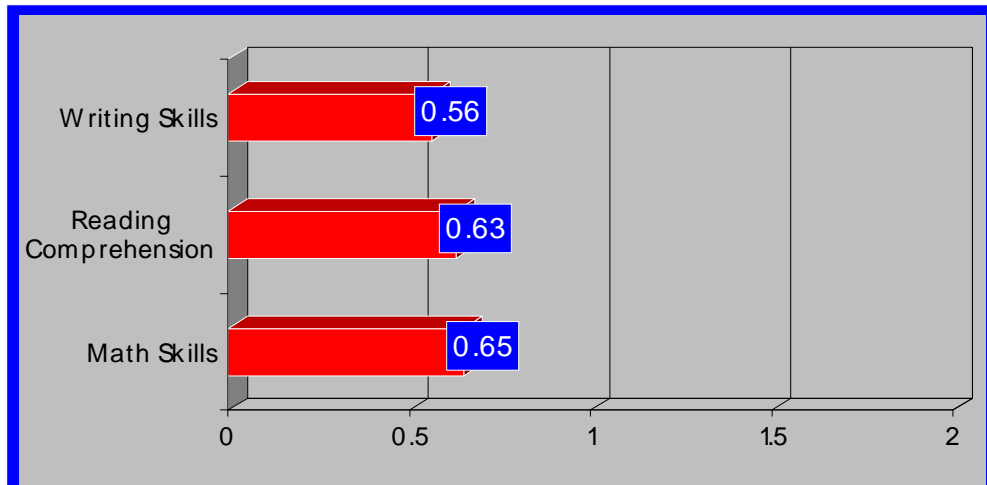
- ? Yes 77.4%
- ? No 25.6%

? *If grant money was available for students' use in paying ordinary expenses during nursing school, how should they be allowed to spend it?
(Ranked in order)*

- ? Education/Books
- ? Daycare
- ? Housing
- ? Transportation

Faculty Response-Preparedness at Time of Entry into Nursing School

- ? *How prepared do you think students are at the point of entry into nursing school for each of the following skills:*
- *Reading comprehension*
 - *Study skills*
 - *Time management skills*
 - *Math skills*
 - *Verbal communication skills*
 - *Writing skills*
 - *Computer skills*
- ? Results are based on mean scores from a scale of 0-2 (0=Below Average, 1=Average, 2=Above average). The following figure represents the mean scores for each of these skills.
- ? Faculty rated the students most prepared in computer skills (mean score of 1.29).
- ? Faculty rated the students least prepared in time management (mean score of 0.41).



- ? *Approximately how many hours per week are spent on program responsibilities, committee work, advising, teaching, and clinical responsibilities?*
- ? 50% of the faculty participants reported spending 36-45 hours on faculty responsibilities.
 - ? 28% of the faculty participants reported spending 46-55 hours on faculty responsibilities.
- ? *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 54.2%
 - ? No 45.8%
- ? *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 were asked to rank the following skills based on the importance to succeed in nursing school. (**Ranked in order of importance**)*
- ? Reading Comprehension
 - ? Study Skills
 - ? Time Management
 - ? Verbal Communication Skills
 - ? Writing Skills
 - ? Math Skills
 - ? Computer Skills

Faculty Response-Barriers to Nursing Education

- ? Faculty were given the opportunity to indicate barriers to successfully completing nursing education. The responses were grouped into five categories. They are as follows: academic abilities, faculty concerns, nursing profession concerns, student concerns, and miscellaneous items.

Student Academic Abilities

Lack of:

- ? Basic skills and academic abilities
- ? Motivation
- ? Effort
- ? Maturity
- ? Responsibility
- ? Qualified students
- ? Commitment
- ? Study skills (especially adult students)

Faculty Concerns

- ? Aging faculty
- ? Faculty out of touch with nursing practice
- ? Poor pay/salary
- ? Lack of qualified faculty
- ? Lack of creativity
- ? Lack of respect by hospital and doctors
- ? Increased paperwork, less time for students
- ? Increased demand and workload
- ? Clinical site problems

Nursing Profession Concerns

- ? Poor nursing image to the public
- ? Profession not attractive to bright young people
- ? Misconceptions about nursing
- ? Salaries

Student Concerns

- ? Working too much while attending school
 - ? Too many commitments outside of school
 - ? Lack of availability of funds
 - ? Lack of IHL nursing loans
 - ? Too structured/no flexible courses
 - ? Too much content
 - ? Full-time students with family
 - ? Cost of education
 - ? Childcare

Miscellaneous

- ? More interesting, less demanding professions
 - ? Low moral/ethical standards
 - ? NCLEX too difficult/doesn't reflect nursing practice
 - ? Curriculum changes to meet current student needs
 - ? Pre-nursing courses needed
 - ? Numerous personnel problems

Conclusions

Conclusions drawn from this study include student and faculty concerns. These concerns are divided into four broad areas:

Student Work/Family Issues

- ? Number of students with children
- ? Percentage of student time spent working
- ? Childcare
- ? Household bills
- ? Health Issues

Counseling

- ? Financial Counseling
- ? Psycho-social counseling

Preparedness Factor

- ? Differences in student and faculty perception in preparedness
- ? Pre-nursing assessment
- ? Pre-nursing education
- ? Faculty development

Workforce Issues

- ? Eliminate as many barriers as possible to allow students who enroll to graduate, which would improve and maintain diversity in the workplace.

Recommendations for Future Research

- ? Exploration of student work issues
- ? 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 to explore issues surrounding disparity in faculty and student perceptions of student preparedness
- ? Study the impact related to faculty education and innovative teaching/learning strategies on graduation rates
- ? Study the impact related to student participation in a nurse mentorship program on graduation rates
- ? Education/service disparity of new nursing graduate expectations
- ? Replicate this study in other healthcare disciplines to determine similarities or differences in educational barriers
- ? Nursing faculty workplace environment assessments

APPENDIX

Faculty and Student Data-At-A-Glance