

# Mentoring Doctor of Nursing Practice Scholarly Projects

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## **Objective: Appraise the current mentoring practices of faculty guiding DNP students during their scholarly project.**

***Mentoring:*** “A reciprocal relationship in which a more experienced faculty member acts as a guide, role model, teacher and sponsor of a less experienced student or faculty member. The mentor provides knowledge, advice, counsel, challenge and support in the mentee’s pursuit of becoming a full member of a particular profession” (Johnson, p. 23).

## **Methodology**

- Researchers developed survey tool with quantitative and open-ended elements
- Tool sent to 9 doctoral faculty from randomly selected AACN schools for review/feedback and revision
- Survey sent to 550 Deans and Program Directors
- 20-30 minutes to complete electronically
- Anonymous and voluntary
- Survey open for total of 17 days; one reminder email sent at day 10
- 230 surveys completed

# Sample Demographics

Table 1. Characteristics of the Respondents

	DNP n = 177
	n (%)
<b>Current Employment</b>	
Full-time, tenured	82 (46.3)
Full-time, tenure track	33 (18.6)
Full-time, non-tenure	58 (32.8)
Part-time faculty	3 (1.7)
Adjunct faculty	1 (0.6)
<b>Highest Degree</b>	
PhD	98 (56.0)
DNP	63 (36.0)
EdD.	9 (5.1)
DNSc.	5 (2.9)
<b>Current Role</b>	
Committee Chair	72 (41.9)
Committee Member	25 (14.5)
Both	59 (34.3)
Other	16 (9.3)

# Results

Table 2. Characteristics of the Program and Mentoring

	DNP n = 177
	M (SD)
Years enrolling students	7.5 (4.3)
Number students currently enrolled	72.2 (72.9)
Maximum number of projects chaired	5.8 (5.3)
Maximum number of committee memberships	5.7 (5.6)
Hours per week spent on mentoring	4.5 (5.1)
Weeks spent mentoring	40.1 (23.1)

# Results

Table 3. Characteristics of Mentoring and Student Projects

	DNP n = 177
	n (%)
Received formal training for mentoring	38 (21.5)
Currently being mentored on being chair	14 (7.9)
Chairs must first be committee member	49 (27.7)
Compensated for serving as chair	104 (58.5)
Being Chair NOT accounted for in workload	70 (39.5)
Who can chair project?	
Full-time faculty	165 (93.2)
Part-time faculty	75 (42.4)
Adjunct faculty	41 (23.2)
Retired faculty	20 (11.3)

## What would facilitate your efforts to be a more effective mentor to DNP students?

1. More standardized projects and consistency across DNP programs
2. Better defined expectations and better understanding by IRB of DNP projects
3. Formal preparation for mentoring role and mentoring guide
4. More protected time to mentor students
5. Better prepared/qualified students (writing skills; awareness of scope of doctoral education)
6. Lower student to faculty ratio to adequately implement mentoring role
7. Student resources (especially writing and statistical support)
8. Reasonable workload credit/reduction in teaching assignments
9. Faculty development opportunities and more access to resources

## Constraints Identified By Faculty

1. Variable student needs and skills
2. Large number of students and projects
3. Increased time commitment due to variability of student skills and needs
4. Impact of mentoring on faculty scholarship
5. Variable access to resources (primarily for students)
6. Faculty in need of mentoring and additional training/preparation
7. Number of faculty retirements

## Recommendations

1. Need for intentional faculty development efforts
2. Pre-Immersion courses beneficial for doctoral students
3. Collaboration between PhD and DNP faculty
4. Develop guidelines across academic nursing (roles, mentoring standards and vision for academic nursing related to doctoral preparation)
5. Need formalized clarification of DNP student outcomes, not all faculty fully understand the programs.



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