

## Professional Development: Mentoring New Nurse Practitioner Faculty to Employ and Retain the Best and Brightest

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### Abstract

Simultaneously, as the nursing workforce ages, nursing educators are also growing older. The need for new and younger faculty is evident in nursing programs, including those for nurse practitioners. Many institutions of higher education are having difficulty adding and replacing faculty. Higher remuneration in practice, lack of support systems, difficulty finding time for scholarship all contribute to the unattractiveness of academia. Finding the right balance between teaching, practice, scholarship and service is key along with a mentorship program that helps new faculty excel.

### Introduction

The unique challenges in attracting nurse practitioner (NP) faculty include low academic pay as compared to earnings in clinical practice as well as the difficulty in continuing to practice in addition to teaching, producing scholarship and engaging in service. NP faculty need to complete in four days what non-practicing faculty complete in five days. Balancing the four responsibilities of academia with family and personal well-being is the art and science mastered by successful faculty members. It is the successful integration of all faculty responsibilities that leads to a productive and progressive career.

### Methods

Mentorship of new faculty includes socialization to the institution and program and review of the official and unofficial work responsibilities. A successful mentor-mentee relationship includes information and strategies for managing workload, practice, and expectations for new faculty.

### Results

Faculty who work with an assigned and efficient faculty mentor are more likely to retain their faculty positions in universities that provide such experience. School or program structure that includes a senior faculty overseeing faculty development provides another stepping stone to successful careers. New faculty will benefit not only from protected time for scholarship, but also from access to resources, grants and groups of faculty with similar interests. Finally, program directors who oversee workloads and schedules are key players in the success of junior faculty.

### Summary

If institutions that employ nurse practitioner faculty provide new faculty with a balanced mentorship model, they will enjoy increased success in hiring and retaining the best and brightest nurse practitioner educators. It is the obligation of senior faculty to work with junior faculty in the struggle to achieve balanced workloads which include preparation for teaching, teaching itself, service, scholarship and practice. Programs that continued to develop mentorship systems continue to attract new faculty.

### Conclusions

Effective mentorship attracts new faculty and is essential to hire and retain nurse practitioner faculty. A structured mentorship model with formal and informal mentors helps to socialize new faculty at the institution. Senior faculty who support scholarship and protect workload further enable junior faculty to excel.