



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAMS
2020-2021 ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT

STATISTICAL SUMMARY AND TRENDS ANALYSIS

DOH 669-269 (Revised May 2021)

Public Health – *Always Working for a Safer and Healthier Washington*

Acronyms

AD-RN	.....	Associate Degree in Nursing – Registered Nurse
AD-MS	.....	Associate Degree in Nursing to Master of Nursing
ARNP	.....	Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner
BSN	.....	Bachelor of Science in Nursing – Registered Nurse
PN	.....	Licensed Practical Nurse
PN-RN	.....	Licensed Practical Nurse to Associate Degree in Nursing Programs
GE	.....	Graduate Entry Programs – Registered Nurse
MSN	.....	Master of Science Nursing
NCLEX®	.....	National Council Licensure Examination
NCQAC	.....	Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission
RN	.....	Registered Nurse
RNB	.....	Registered Nurse Bachelor (Bachelor’s degree programs for licensed RNs)
PMC	.....	Post Master’s Certificate Nurse
DNP	.....	Doctorate of Nursing Practice
MN	.....	Master of Nursing
MS	.....	Master of Science
NA		Nursing Assistant

Nursing Programs Annual Report
2020-2021 ACADEMIC YEAR

Introduction

Background

The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (NCQAC) requires all nursing education programs to provide information annually [WAC 246-840-520(3)]. This report summarizes 2020-2021 academic year survey data from approved Washington State nursing programs and out-of-state programs approved for clinical placement of students. Selected data trends are highlighted.

This report combines results from three different surveys; 1) the in state prelicensure nursing program survey administered by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), 2) the in state post-licensure program survey administered by the NCQAC and, 3) the out-of-state program survey administered by NCQAC.

Twelve universities and 29 community and technical colleges (CTC) with approved nursing schools in Washington State completed the pre-licensure and post-licensure surveys as applicable. There are eight of the AD-RN programs offer a pathway from LPN to AD.

Ninety-four out of state schools approved for clinical placements completed the out-of-state survey during the 2020-2021 academic year. These 94 colleges and universities reported on a total of 242 approved programs (49 prelicensure and 193 post-licensure).

The report will combine, when possible, prelicensure and post-licensure student and faculty program information provided by nursing schools in the state of Washington. The more limited but valuable out-of-state program results are provided after the in-state program information. When appropriate, Washington state responses will be compared to national benchmarks and selected research findings. Finally, there is a summary and analysis of the annual survey findings, with a list of recommended actions based on these results and trend analysis.

Nurse Workforce

Workforce Survey Analysis

Beginning in January 2018, nurses (LPNs, RNs and ARNPs) in Washington State were informed of a requirement to complete an online survey with questions about their demographics, work characteristics, and education history when they renewed their nursing license or applied for a new license. The initial analyses for RNs, LPN, and ARNPs with an active Washington State license was completed on May 31, 2019 ([Stubbs 2020](#)). A second analyses for RNs, LPN, and ARNPs with an active Washington State license was released May 2022 ([WCN 2021](#)). A more complete picture of the nursing workforce can be appreciated combining the results of the Workforce Survey Analysis (WCN 2021) with this Nursing Programs Annual Report.

In-State Programs

Forty-one approved nursing schools in Washington State completed the annual survey. There are seven licensed practical nurse (PN) programs, and 25 associate degree RN (AD-RN) programs. Eight of the AD programs also offer an LPN to AD pathway. Five universities and four community colleges offer RN to BSN (RNB) programs. Nine universities offer Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN) programs. Two ADN to MSN (AD-MS) programs, one program offering master’s degree graduate entry to the RN (GE), one program indicating “other” and one master’s degree advanced registered nurse practitioner (ARNP) and six other master’s programs. Finally, there are six post-master’s certificate (PMC) programs, six doctoral of nursing practice (DNP) and two Ph.D. programs. The undergraduate and graduate programs specifics are outlined below.

Undergraduate Programs

The number of pre-licensure graduates show impressive increases across programs despite the challenge of the pandemic year. In 2020-2021, practical nursing programs (PN) had 315 graduates representing an increase after five years of decline, the number of AD-RN graduates has also increased to 1689 in 2020-2021 and the number of BSN program graduates to 1124. Those completing GE degrees are included in these graduation numbers because they are prelicensure programs, however, the GE student and faculty demographics are included with the graduate program results. The graduates of RNB programs increased to 1310 during this academic and pandemic year.

Table 1. In State Undergraduate Graduates

	PN	AD	BSN/GE/other	RNB
2016-2017	264	1741	895	987
2017-2018	226	1506	854	1319
2018-2019	232	1507	867	1191
2019-2020	238	1561	941	1209
2020-2021	315	1689	1124	1310

Figure 1: Total Undergraduate Program Graduates by Type of Program

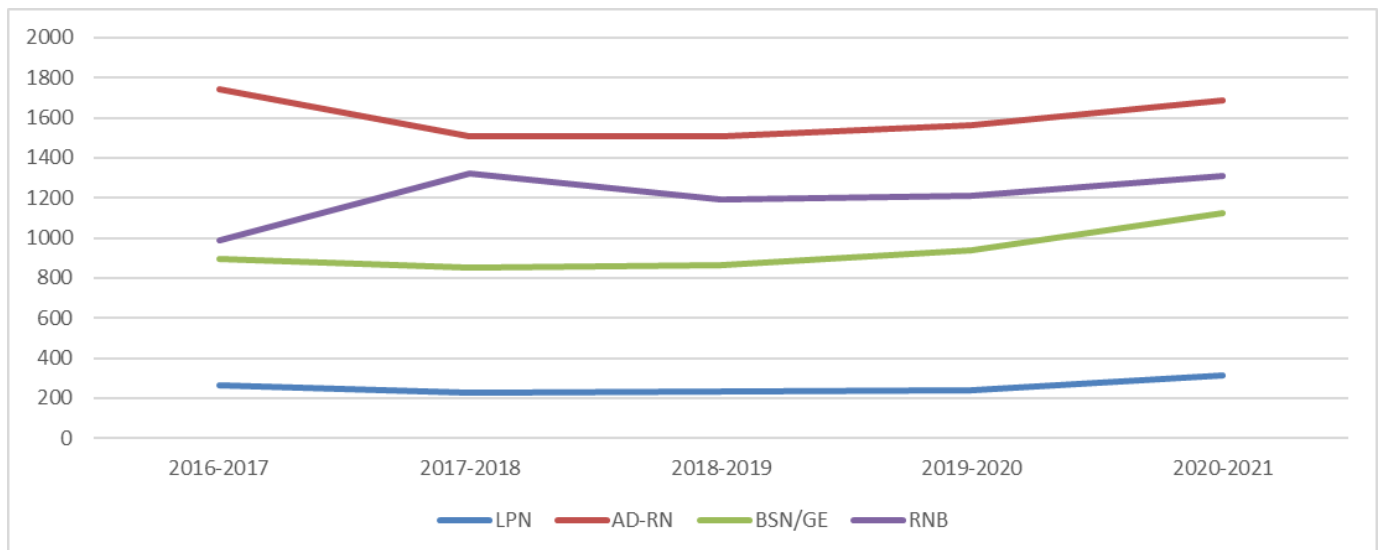


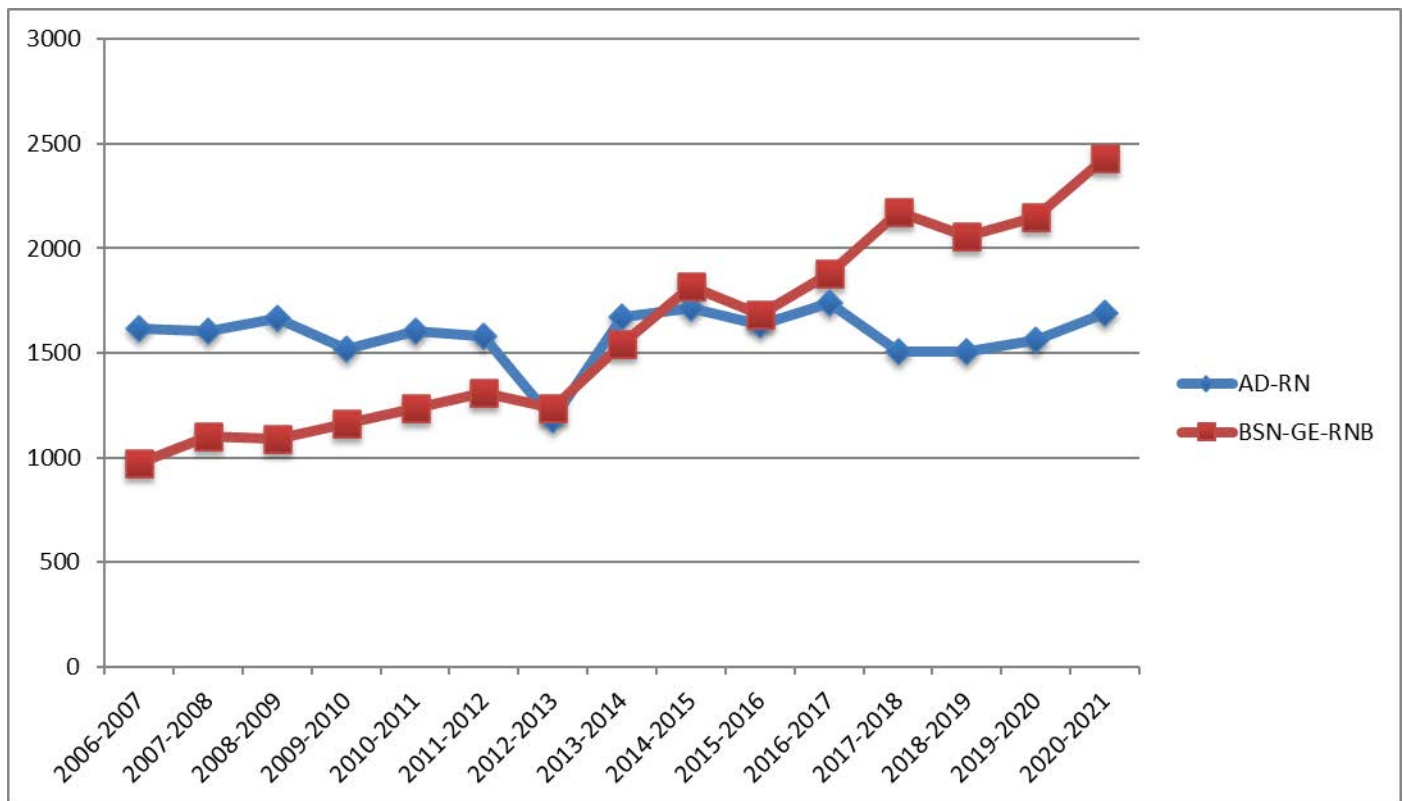
Table 1 and Figure 1 above provide undergraduate and GE/other program graduations for comparison to the past five years. There is a significant increase in graduates from all program types except the RNB. The Institute of Medicine Report (IOM) [2010], titled *The Future of Nursing*, identifies nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression. Washington State has been a leader in successful strategies for academic progression from AD to BSN. The impressive increases in prelicensure graduates at all levels illustrates the commitment of nursing faculty to providing a highly educated nursing workforce.

RN to BSN 2020-2021

The number of RN to BSN enrollment in Washington schools started to rise sharply in 2013-2014 academic year and continued to rise to a high in 2017-2018 with 2582 students enrolled in RNB programs, a significant increase from the previous year reported. There are 1310 RNB graduates this year representing a levelling off graduates over the last two years.

Figure 2 gives a little different picture of the results of these successful academic progression strategies on increasing the number of RNs with BSN degrees. The number of RN to BSN graduates are combined with BSN and GE graduate to represent the total BSN prepared RNs in 2020-2021. This can be compared with the ADN prepared RN graduates. Although an imperfect comparison, it can provide some insight into the changing nursing education landscape in the state.

Figure 2: Comparing ADN and total BSN graduate trends (RN)



Graduate Programs

Table 3 and Figure 3 outline the masters and doctoral graduates by type of program combining graduates into 2 master's categories and one doctoral for illustration. The 289 MN graduates preparing for specialties that do not require an ARNP and 64 RN to MS graduates are combined. One hundred-eight master's prepared advanced registered nurse practitioners graduated in 2020-2021 and are combined with the 24 post-master's certificates in nursing (PMCN) graduates. Also, programs reported 413 DNP and 37 PhD for a total of 450 graduates with a nursing doctorate in 2020-2021. The total number of graduates from master's and doctoral programs for three years is outlined below.

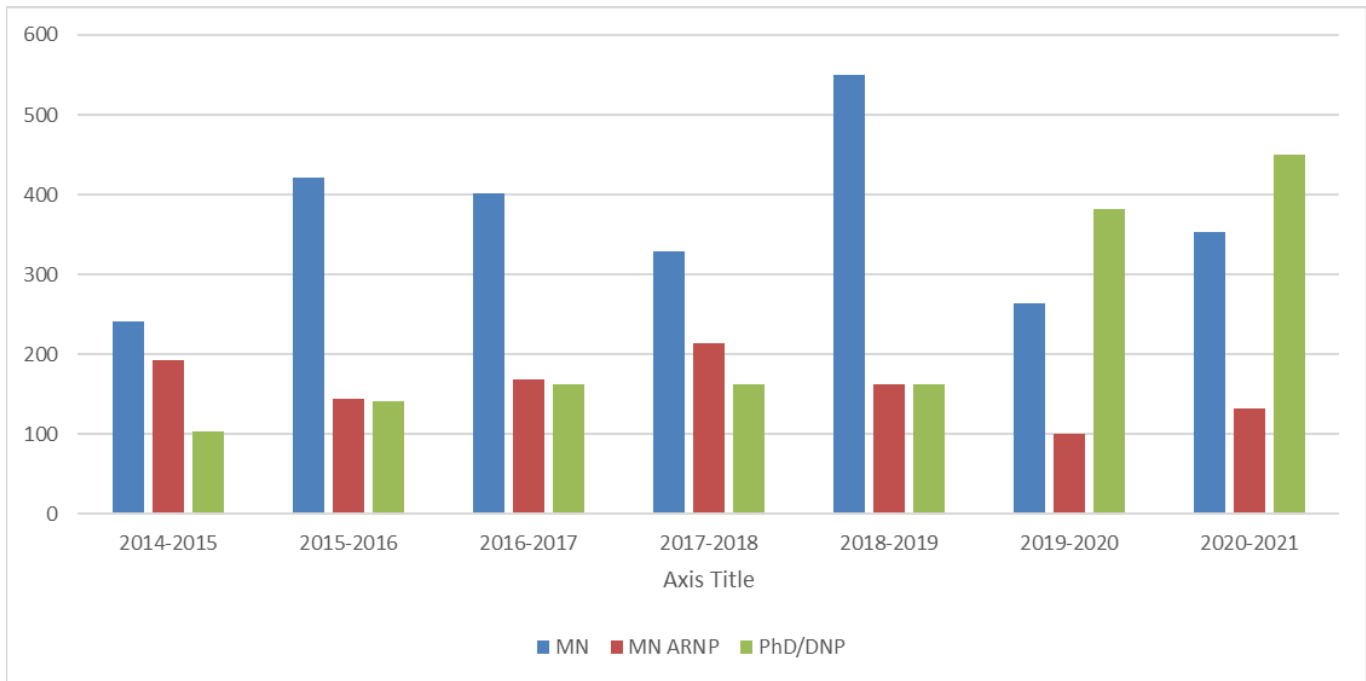
Table 3. Master's and Doctoral Total Number of Graduates by Program

	MSN/ADMN Non ARNP	MSN/ARNP/PMCN	PhD/DNP
2018-2019	550	163	162
2019-2020	264	101	382
2020-2021	353	132	450

**Post Master's Certificate in Nursing*

Although there were graduates from graduate entry (GE) programs during 2020-2021, the GE graduates were reported with undergraduate pre-licensure programs, so they are not included in the graduation numbers below. It is important to recognize the increase in graduates across programs in post-licensure programs is also noteworthy given the challenges of the pandemic.

Figure 3: Total Number of Master and Doctoral Graduates by Program



Individual specialty programs are provided in Table 4. The graduates prepared in different specialty areas meet needs across the state in primary care, education, research, and other areas of practice. The number of graduates by program and specialty area are outlined below from three types of programs and 12 different specialty areas.

Table 4. In-State Post licensure Graduates by Program and Selected Specialty Areas 2020-2021

2020-2021	CNS	FNP	ANP	MHNP	PNP	GNP	MW	ANES	ED	Adm	POP	Oth
ARNP-MN	0	44	0	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MSN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	104	135	9	15
ARNP-DNP	2	139	35	36	15	7	17	12	0	6	0	11
TOTALS	2	183	35	71	15	7	17	12	104	141	9	26

Faculty and Student Race

The 2020-2021 academic survey was completed by nursing programs impacted by the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic in its second year. Washington State nurse educators are committed to the goal of assuring faculty and students reflected the diversity of the Washington State residents they serve. These efforts have accelerated with commitment to infuse all work with goals of equity and inclusion.

Figure 4: Percent of Faculty and Student Race Compared with WA State Population

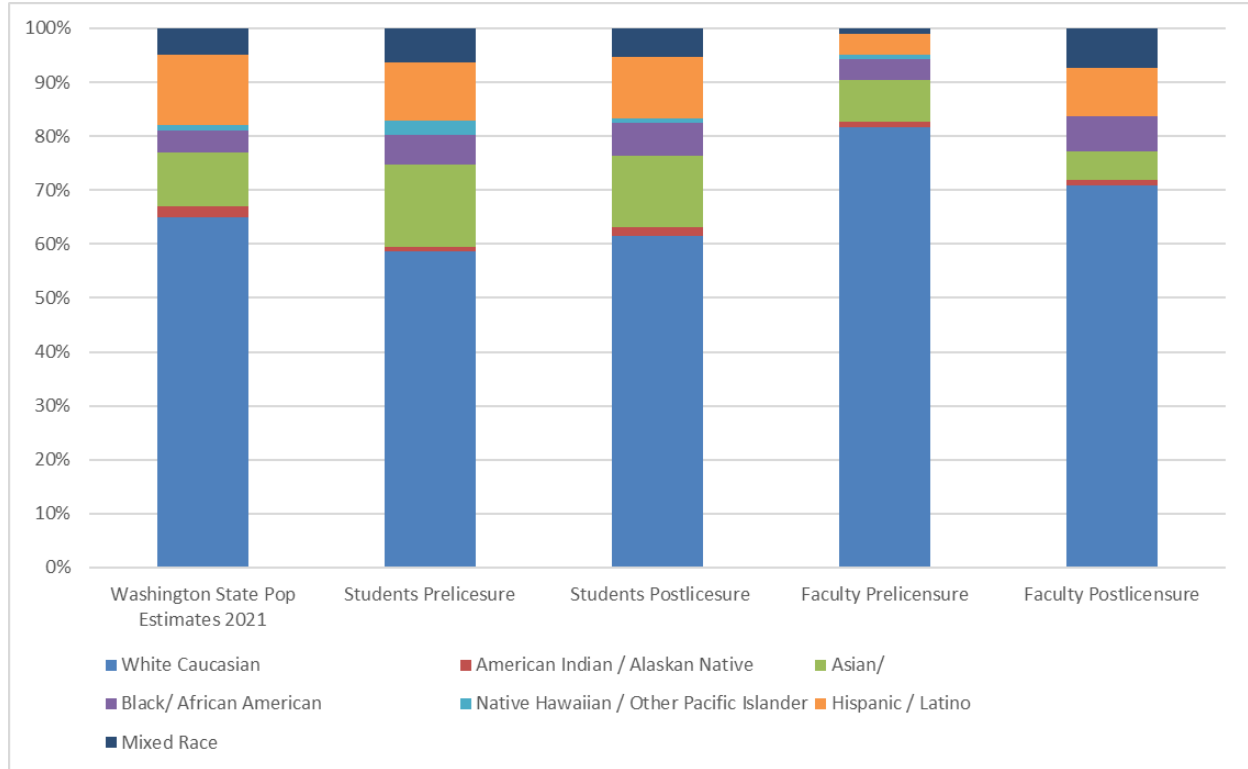


Figure 4 above illustrates the differences between Washington State population patterns compared with students and faculty. There have been some improvements in diversity of students and pos-licensure faculty. Table 5 below provides the 2020-2021 percentage comparisons of student and faculty race with Washington State population. Eighty-five percent of prelicensure fulltime and part time faculty members are White/Caucasian, 8 percent Asian, 4 percent black/African American. Seventy eight percent of post licensure faculty are White/Caucasian 6 percent Asian, 7 percent black/African American. The figure below illustrates that prelicensure and post-licensure students are more in line than faculty with the diversity of the state population in the variable of race/ethnicity.

Table 5: Percent of Faculty and Student Race Compared with WA State Population

Race / Ethnicity	WA St Pop Estimates 2021	Stud Pre-licensure	Stud Post-licensure	Faculty Pre-licensure	Faculty Post-licensure
White Caucasian	65	65	70	85	78
American Indian / Alaskan Native	2	1	2	1	1
Asian	10	17	15	8	6
Black/ African American	4	6	7	4	7
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	1	3	1	1	0
Hispanic / Latino	13	12	13	4	10
Mixed Race	5	7	6	1	8

Faculty Retention

Table 6 outlines important information on faculty retention. Nursing programs reported in 2020-2021 that 12 percent of full-time faculty are expected to retire in the next five years compared to 22 percent the year before. There are 10 percent of faculty reported to have resigned in the last year compared to 5 percent the previous year. Retaining full time faculty in this time of transition is a major concern.

Table 6: Full Time Faculty Turnover 2019-2020 and 2020-2021

Academic Year	Percent expected to retire in 5 years	Percent who resigned
2020-2021	12	10
	22	5

Faculty Salary

A barrier to successful recruitment and retention of nursing faculty members is inadequate compensation. Respondents answered the following questions. What are the contract lengths and associated salary ranges for your full-time nursing faculty? The largest number of programs reported nine-month contracts. The average salary ranges for nine- and 12-month contracts at community colleges and universities have been collected and are currently being validated to provide the most accurate picture across CTC and Universities. The validated salary information will be available by September 2021.

Out-of-State Programs

The out-of-state nursing program approval process for student clinical placement in Washington State began in 2012. Initial data were gathered by calendar year in 2013 and 2014. The out-of-state survey was revised to reflect the academic year beginning 2014-2015 so it could be reported with the data from in-state programs to offer a more complete picture of nursing education program capacity in the state.

Because the approval process relates to clinical placements only, the data gathered are different from that gathered from the in-state programs. The student numbers reflect student clinical placement only and do not currently include graduation numbers. Since many of these students may remain in the state after graduation, we plan to track Washington state graduation rates starting year 2020-2021.

There are a total of 528 tracks in 109 colleges and universities from other states who are approved in the state of Washington for clinical placement. Ninety-four approved colleges and universities completed the survey and indicated they had clinical placements in one or more tracks. Table 9 outlines there were 49 prelicensure programs and 193 post-licensure program tracks totaling 242 tracks with clinical placements this year.

Table 9: Out of State Programs and Student Clinical Placements 2020-2021

College/University (94 total)	Total Programs	Total Clinical Students
Prelicensure	49	1068
Post licensure	193	788
Totals	242	1856

During the academic year 2020-2021, forty-nine programs with clinical students in Washington State preparing graduates for initial PN or RN licensure completed the survey. Two practical nurse (PN) programs four associate degree RN (AD-RN) programs, two graduate entry (GE), and 18 schools have students in Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN) programs.

The remaining programs with clinical students prepare graduates to advance their education post-licensure. There are 23 RN to BSN (RNB) programs, eight associate degree to master's (AD-MS), 46 master's programs preparing for ARNP licensure (NP-MN) and 43 other master's programs (MSN). Finally, there are 38 post master's certificate programs (PMC), 53 doctoral of nursing practice (DNP) and five Ph.D. programs. The total number of programs by type is outlined below in Table 11 providing the previous five years results for comparison.

Table 11: Number and Types of Out of State Programs with Clinical Site Placements

	PN	AD-RN	BSN	RNB	AD-MS	GE	MSN	NP-MN	PMC	DNP	PhD	Total
2016-2017	4	6	28	22	14	3	35	39	30	42	8	231
2017-2018	4	6	30	19	5	1	37	38	32	39	7	218
2018-2019	3	6	28	33	6	4	41	41	34	51	8	252
2019-2020	1	6	29	30	9	5	39	43	37	44	9	252
2020-2021	2	4	18	23	8	2	43	46	38	53	5	242

Out-of-State Student Statistics

The number of students placed in clinical by out of state programs is illustrated below showing trends for the last five years. Approved out-of-state programs completing the survey provided 1856 clinical site placements for students in the 2020-2021 academic year reflecting an increase from a total of 1,738 students in 2019-2020.

Prelicensure program clinical placements from out of state programs preparing students for PN or RN licensure returned to previous numbers after a significant decline last year. The ARNP MN program placements have continued to increase particularly in the last two years as well as an increase in DNP programs.

Table 10: Students with Clinical Site Placement from Out of State Programs by Program Type

	PN	AD-RN	BSN	RNB	AD-MS	GE	MSN	NP-MN	PMC	DNP	PhD	Total
2016-2017	48	198	354	249	19	0	313	137	31	66	2	1,417
2017-2018	126	309	400	163	6	0	440	145	40	85	0	1,714
2018-2019	168	276	534	240	4	8	139	516	185	191	0	2,261
2019-2020	20	163	206	107	3	0	61	557	61	94	1	1,738
2020-2021	126	235	551	155	1	1	86	532	51	114	4	1,856

Summary/Analysis

Washington State nurse educators made the commitment in 2011 for a higher educated and more diverse nursing workforce, when the Council for Nurse Education in Washington State (CNEWS) and the Washington Center for Nursing (WCN) collaborated to develop a Master Plan for Nursing Education ([WCN, 2014](#)). The commitment has been reinforced with the work of *Action Now!* and the Critical Gap workgroups addressing the gaps in the nursing workforce. This report highlights trends in the direction to meet these goals as well as refocused goals and priorities due to the pandemic.

Diversity/Inclusion

The survey results indicate there are continued challenges meeting our commitment to a more diverse nursing workforce. Our experiences in the pandemic have further illustrated the urgency of assuring our faculty and students reflect the population they serve.

Providing a nursing faculty workforce that reflects the diversity of their students and the population of Washington State is essential. A diverse nursing workforce can help improve patient and population health outcomes, particularly related to reducing disparities in health. The undergraduate student diversity closely resembles Washington residents, and graduate students are showing some positive changes. However, the nursing faculty diversity is furthest from the state population and there has been little change over the past four years (NAM 2021).

Academic Progression

Access to academic progression for nurses at all levels from nursing assistant (NA) to PhD is important. Nurse educators in Washington have responded with increased enrollments, creative strategies, and increased education capacity. Thanks to these significant efforts of nurse educators, the capacity needs for RNB programs are being met at this time. There are several projects examining LPN academic progression and significant work has been ongoing standardizing nursing assistant curriculum.

Enrollment and graduations in graduate programs have shown impressive increases responding to the shortage of nurse faculty, primary care providers, and researchers. Our state mirrors national trends with more ARNP students moving to DNP programs from MSN programs. Approval of out-of-state programs tracks for clinical placements helps ensure quality and additional capacity in high-need areas, however availability of quality clinical placements for all nurses provides a significant challenge for both in state and out of state programs.

Faculty

The overall educational preparation of all faculty (full time and adjunct) needs to be increased to meet state (WAC 246-840-523) and national (CCNE 2017) standards for a master's degree in CTC and a doctorate in universities. Faculty must complete graduate studies potentially accruing additional debt and further straining income inequities. In addition to the imperative to increase nursing faculty education level, there are impending retirements and vacancies. Salary trends for university nursing faculty are being tracked, validated, and will be shared in September.

Recommendations

Diversity/Inclusion

Play key leadership role as the Nursing Commission to support the closure of the identified critical gaps in the nursing workforce. Provide resources and time to infuse concepts of diversity and inclusion in this work, as well as all ongoing work of the Commission.

Faculty Recruitment and Retention

Work to increase University faculty salaries and examine workload. Support and sustain current funding level of Community and Technical College nursing faculty and additional education for faculty.

Academic Progression

Continue to support strategic initiative on LPN academic progression, scope of practice, and education.

Workforce Data

Continue to serve on the leadership team to close the critical gaps in the nursing work force to assure the right mix of nurses to meet the needs of Washington state residents, using supply, demand, and education data to inform actions, meet goals and evaluate progress.

Conclusions

Now is the time to learn from the difficulties of the pandemic and accelerate our progress providing the educational mix of nurses for safe and quality care in Washington State. The complex multiple education pathways in nursing provide multiple opportunities to increase the overall education level of nurses. Across settings, nurses are being called upon to coordinate care and to collaborate with a variety of health professionals, including physicians, social workers, physical and occupational therapists, and pharmacists, most of whom hold master's or doctoral degrees.

The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity (NAM 2021) renews the focus on the education preparation of nurses as well as challenges nurses to be leaders in the urgent work to advance health equity. RNB, masters, and doctoral enrollments and graduations have continued to increase, adding to a higher educated workforce, but we must continue to accelerate our progress to meet the growing health care needs of the residents of Washington State including LPN and nursing assistants' academic progression. The Nursing Commission is one of four lead organizations to address critical gaps in the nursing workforce and will continue to advance the goals of health equity so essential to this work.

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