



## **Expansion is not a Simple Cut and Paste Exercise**

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In response to the Nurse Support Program II (NSP II) identified need to advance the education of diverse students to advanced degree programs, the University of Maryland School of Nursing has expanded the Family Nurse Practitioner / DNP program to the Universities at Shady Grove campus. The location of the Shady Grove campus has enhanced recruitment of students from Western Maryland and Montgomery County, providing a convenient, cost-effective option for a diverse population of nurses to pursue advanced practice degrees. Currently, there are no public universities that offer the FNP DNP program of study in Montgomery County or Western Maryland, which makes access to affordable, high quality education a challenge, especially for nontraditional students.

Consistent with American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) recommendations (2016), expanding to the Shady Grove campus has begun to realize the potential to increase the supply of well-qualified primary care providers for the region and the added value of preparing doctoral level clinicians who are eligible to teach and precept the next generation of undergraduate and graduate nurses. While expanding an already established program to a new site may seem a simple exercise in cut and paste, gathering the resources, developing the partnerships and recruiting the students involved complex analysis of the geographic region, stakeholders, systems and curricular components needed to make such an expansion a success. This presentation will discuss the process and lessons learned in the first two years of the expansion, the development of clinical partnerships and the accepted students.

In 2015, AACN found that one of the primary reasons for not accepting all qualified students into advanced nursing programs was a shortage of clinical education sites. With this information and experience from the FNP DNP program in Baltimore, the first two years of the NSPII grant have focused on developing the capacity for clinical education through the development of preceptors and academic health partnership through outreach to clinical and regional stakeholders to precept students in primary care sites that serve the lifespan. Part of the strategy to develop clinical sites has included meeting the stakeholders identified needs for pipeline development, interprofessional education initiatives, and quality improvement projects utilizing the FNP DNP students and faculty.

It is well known that many students who graduate with an ADN do not return to obtain subsequent degrees, which precludes them from becoming nurse faculty. In order to have a diverse and robust faculty, it is essential to have students return to school for advanced degrees to be eligible to teach the next generation of nursing students. The first cohort of students accepted into the FNP specialty at USG had 38% with an Associate's degree as their first degree in nursing, 60% were from diverse backgrounds, 20% were veterans, and represented 6 counties in the state. This expansion meets another recommendation of AACN to reverse the shortage by providing options to return to graduate study.