

## Diversity Initiative Mentoring Program Survey - Summary Report

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Washington Center for Nursing

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### Introduction:

This report describes the results of a needs assessment survey conducted by Washington Center for Nursing, for the purpose of developing an online nursing mentoring program for nursing students and recent nursing graduates of color and/or from underrepresented minority groups under the Diversity Initiative. This study is funded by Grant #N14191 from the Department of Health, State of Washington.

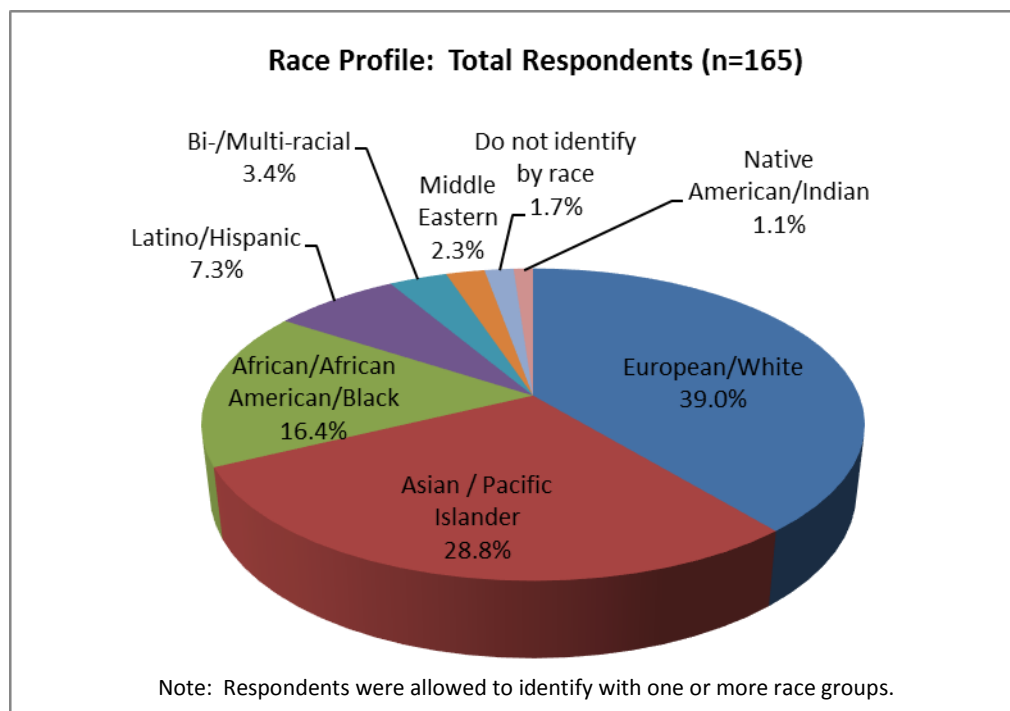
This survey was targeted to the nursing workforce and nursing students of color and/or from underrepresented ethnic communities in Washington State. Survey participants were recruited via email and listserves through nursing programs, nursing associations and organizations, as well as nursing communication networks. The voluntary survey was made available online between March and April of 2013, using software provided by SurveyMonkey®; a total of 165 survey responses were collected and analyzed.

Questions regarding demographic information were collected from all survey participants; separate questions were asked to the three different categories of survey audience – **nursing students**, **recent nursing graduates**, and **experienced registered nurses (RNs)**.

## Key Findings:

### In general:

- Of the 165 respondents, 75% were identified as experienced RNs (124); the remaining 25% included half nursing students (21) and half recent nursing graduates (20).
- Of the 21 nursing student respondents, 12 are first-year students while 9 are second-year students.
- More than half of survey respondents were 46 years of age or older (51.5%).
- More than half identified themselves as non-Caucasian minorities (63.6%); 3 respondents did not identify themselves with any particular race (1.8%).  
< Respondents were allowed to identify with one or more race group. >
- Majority of respondents live, work or study in Western WA (92.6%); 63.0% of respondents are situated in the Seattle/King County region.  
< 3 respondents did not identify a particular region within WA State. >



Among the nursing student respondents (n=21):

- More than half of them were from a community college (55%); and from a technical college (20%) and university (25%).
- Of the 9 who has a nursing-focused mentor, they were generally satisfied with their mentors.
- Family support and spouse support ranked highest in terms of the helpful resources for applying and getting into nursing school, as well as for progressing through nursing school.
- These respondents prefer email as their primary mode of communication with a potential mentor; in-person meeting was their second preference.
- Topics of interest in a mentoring program ranked highest among these respondents include balancing school, work, and home life; developing a sense of professional identity as a nurse; effective communication skills as a nursing student; and transition from education to career in nursing.

Among the recent nursing graduate respondents (n=20):

- In terms of transitioning from nursing student to graduate or practice role, spouse/family/peer support and previous work experience ranked highest in terms of helpful resources.
- Mentorship program was identified as the most important resource that was *missing* in terms of transitioning from nursing student to graduate or practice role (9 of 18 respondents); preceptorship program was ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in terms of missing resources that would have been helpful for transition to a career.  
< *Preceptorship programs are defined as being assigned to one or two practicing RNs who monitors the progress of the nursing student.* >
- When it comes to their first professional placement as an RN, family/spouse/peer support and residency programs were found to be the most helpful resources for these recent nursing graduate respondents.  
< *Residency programs are defined as hospital-based programs that support newly graduated RNs into nursing practice.* >

- Interestingly, residency programs for new grads, mentorship program, and preceptorship programs were also ranked highest among helpful resources that were *missing* in their first professional placement as an RN.
- These respondents prefer in-person meeting as their primary mode of communication with a potential mentor; email was their second preference.
- If they had access to a mentoring program, these respondents indicated that leadership and communication as a nurse as the most important topic of interest.

Among the experienced RN respondents (n=124):

- 82% felt that they had interactions with students and new nurses that would benefit from mentorship.
- Time commitment was listed as their top concern about serving as a mentor.
- Respondents identified training curriculum to be the most helpful type of support to potential mentors.
- The ideal amount of communication between mentor and mentee preferred by experienced RNs ranged between once a month, twice a month, and weekly basis. Note: A number of the experienced RN respondents commented that the ideal amount of communication depends on the needs of the nursing student or new graduate.
- These respondents indicated that, on average, they are able to use online technology with ease; over 95% of respondents indicated that they have access to cellphone, internet, email, and laptop or computer with internet capability at home.

## Conclusions and Recommendations:

- Development of a mentoring program should be piloted in the Western Washington regions, since majority of the respondents for nursing students and graduates as well as the supply of interested experienced RNs as potential mentors are all situated in Western WA.
- All three categories of survey audience felt that having a mentor of similar ethnic or cultural background is of little importance, while it was indicated by nursing students and recent nursing graduates that a mentoring program is missing in their curriculum. This suggests that nursing students are strongly interested and see the value in having a mentoring program, regardless if the mentor has a similar ethnic or cultural background.
- Since in-person meetings and email are the preferred mode of communication for nursing students and graduates with their mentors, the mentoring program may not need to be conducted online.
- Development of the mentoring program should include a detailed training curriculum to best prepare the mentors; the program needs to be flexible, in order to work around the time constraints of the mentors.
- Since family, spouse and peer support were identified as the important resources that helped the nursing students and recent graduates progress through their nursing program, as well as for transitioning to professional roles, it may be worthwhile for WCN to coordinate and to align resources that reinforce or strengthen these types of support.

The results and recommendations from this needs assessment survey were presented to the WCN Diversity Initiative Advisory Committee between April and August; the committee used these recommendations in developing their pilot mentoring program, which will be implemented in September and October of 2013.