Characteristics of Accelerated BSN Students

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Saint Louis University accepted 10 students into the nation’s first Accelerated BSN Program in 1971.

1972-1975
- 3 year grant from NIH
That was then. . .

Requirements of the first ABSN program

- Baccalaureate or higher degree—most recent within the past 5 years
- 3.0 GPA unless otherwise recommended by admissions committee
- Prerequisites completed
  - Chemistry (4 hrs), Anatomy & physiology (4 hrs), Microbiology (3 hrs), Social behavioral science (9 hrs)
That was then. . .

- 84 students in 1972-1975
  - 14 men (17%)
  - Mean age 26
  - Previous degrees
    - 32% Social Science
    - 21% Physical science
  - 25% had previous healthcare experience
  - Described as “highly motivated, close knit and achievement oriented”
This is now . . .

205 Accelerated BSN Programs in 2007
- 37 in planning stages
- Growth
  - 1987—10 programs
  - 1990—31 programs
  - 2003—129 programs

56 Accelerated Masters Programs in 2007
- 13 in planning stages
This is now...

- 9938 students enrolled in ABSN programs
  - 7% of all entry level BSN enrollees
- 5881 ABSN graduates in 2007
  - 14% of all entry level BSN graduates

- Accelerated Masters Programs
  - 4303 enrolled, 1032 graduated in 2007
  - 7% of all masters enrollees, graduates
Who are Current ABSN Students?

- Describe demographic characteristics of one program’s recent ABSN students.
  - Compare & contrast with other programs
- Explore personal characteristics that seem to be common among ABSN students.
- Discuss recent ABSN graduates’ plans for a career in nursing.
Sources of Data

- AACN Fact Sheets on Accelerated Programs
- AACN 2007-2008 Enrollment and Graduations in Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing
Sources of Data

Saint Louis University (SLU) Program Data

- Evaluation of Accelerated Option Program 2004-2008
- “Help Us Get to Know You” sheets, 2006-2008
  - Where do you see yourself in 1 year? 5 years?
  - Who are the most important people in your life?
  - What 3 words best describe you?
- Thoughts after 18 years of teaching ABSN students
ABSN Program at SLU

- 12 month (May to May program)
- Primarily designed for college graduates
  - Started admitting a limited number of non-degree students beginning in May 1999.
- ~300 applicants a year
- Last year 147 admitted; 69 enrolled in 5/08
Sources of Data

CINAHL literature search

Terms used

- Accelerated students, accelerated programs, accelerated BSN, second degree programs, second degree students, accelerated baccalaureate students, accelerated baccalaureate programs

Limited to research, nursing journals, years 2000 >, programs in USA
Sources of Data

Cangelosi 2007
- George Mason University, Leesburg, VA

Hamner & Bentley, 2007
- Auburn University, Auburn, AL

Heege & Larson, 2008
- South Dakota State University, Aberdeen, SD

Mullen, 2007
- Regis University, Denver, CO
Sources of Data

- **Raines, 2007**
  - Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL
- **Seldomridge & DiBartolo, 2005, 2007**
  - Salisbury University, Salisbury, MD
- **Suplee & Glasgow, 2008**
  - Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA
- **Utley-Smith, Phillips & Turner**
  - Duke University, Durham, NC
- **Walker, Martin et al., 2007**
  - University of Mississippi, Jackson, MS
Who Are ABSN Students in the 21st Century?

Age

- **SLU Current Class**
  - Mean 27.34 (SD 7.72)
  - Age range of second degree students = 21-62

- **SLU Class entering in 2003**
  - Mean 28 (SD 7.45)
  - Age range of second degree students = 22-51

- **Consistent with literature**
  - Mean age 30.6 at Salisbury, MD in classes entering 2003-2006
Who Are ABSN Students in the 21st Century?

Gender

- SLU
  - Current class 9% male (n=6)
  - 2003-2007 entering classes average 16% male
- AACN—all BSN programs 10.5% male
- In the Literature
  - Auburn 33% male from 1994-2005
  - Others 16-22% male
Who Are ABSN Students in the 21st Century?

**Ethnicity**

- **SLU 2008-2009 class**
  - 84% White, non-Hispanic
  - 13% African American
  - 6 born and raised outside of USA
    - Korea, Peru, Hungary, Nigeria, Jamaica, Haiti

- **SLU 2003-2004 class**
  - 4% African American
Who Are ABSN Students in the 21st Century?

Ethnicity

- AACN data
  - 74% White, 12% African American, 6% Latino
- Other reports in literature
  - Auburn U—92% White
  - Florida Atlantic U—36% non-Caucasian
  - Salisbury—80% White, rise in International students
  - Drexel—66% white, 11% African American
Who Are ABSN Students in the 21st Century?

Previous Academic Degrees

- **SLU 2008-2009 class**—63 students
  - 23 physical sciences (36.5%)
  - 10 social sciences (15.9%)
  - 8 health related fields (12.7%)
  - 5 have graduate degrees

- **SLU 2003-2004 class**
  - Physical Sciences 30.2%
  - Social Sciences 22.6%
Who Are ABSN Students in the 21st Century?

Previous Academic Degrees

- **Auburn**
  - Human / social science 24%, Science 16%

- **Salisbury**
  - Science 47%, liberal arts 33%

- **Drexel**
  - Biology 16%, psychology 15%, business 10%
Who Are ABSN Students in the 21st Century?

Time since first degree

- **SLU 2008-2009 class**
  - Mean time since graduation 4.43 years
  - 35% 1 year or less prior to enrollment
    - 9 graduated in 2008
  - 19% graduated >5 years ago
- **SLU 200-2004 class**
  - Mean time since graduation (3.7 years)
  - 38% graduated < 1 year prior to enrollment
Who Are ABSN Students in the 21st Century?

- Time since first degree
  - Florida Atlantic U—7.4 years
  - Salisbury U—7.5 years
    - 25% returning after more than 10 years
  - Regis U
    - 30% 1-3 years from 1st degree
    - 50% more than 5 years
ABS N Students Tend To . . .

Have a variety of reasons for choosing nursing as a career

- Describe themselves as
  - Compassionate
  - Caring
  - Helpful
  - Kind
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Total N (%)</th>
<th>Second degree N (%)</th>
<th>Non-Degree N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities/Flexibility in nursing</td>
<td>18(30.5)</td>
<td>17(37.8)</td>
<td>1(7.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewarding nature of nursing as a career</td>
<td>13(22)</td>
<td>12(26.7)</td>
<td>1(7.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with previous career field</td>
<td>9(15.3)</td>
<td>9(20)</td>
<td>1(7.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always wanted to be a nurse</td>
<td>8(13.6)</td>
<td>8(17.8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal experience with health care/nursing</td>
<td>6(10.2)</td>
<td>6(13.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3(5.1)</td>
<td>3(6.7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSN students tend to... 

Be very selective in deciding on a nursing program

Consider school’s

- Reputation
- NCLEX pass rate
- Program duration
- Location
- Cost
ABSN students tend to . . .

Change their mind about attending school

- SLU--147 admitted in 2008, ~100 confirmed, 69 enrolled
- Students frequently defer admission
  - Can’t finish prerequisites
  - Family circumstances
  - Financial concerns
- Auburn reported 28 student admitted, 19 actually enrolled in 2005
ABSN students tend to. . .

Have a history of academic success

- Most programs have minimum GPA requirements
  - SLU current class, Mean GPA = 3.38
  - SLU 2003-2004, Mean GPA = 3.28
- Previous degrees may foster “black & white” learners
- Are often very grade conscious
ABSN students tend to . . .

Have very definite plans for their future in nursing

- Where do you see yourself in 1 year?
  - Only 7 of 69 unsure of area they wanted to work in
  - 28 of 69 express interest in ICU/ER
- 75% take jobs in area they originally planned
- Interested in graduate education
  - 62% of current SLU students plan on graduate school
  - At graduation, 90% interested in graduate school
ABSN students tend to. . .

- Be highly motivated
  - Describe themselves as passionate, focused, determined, dedicated, hardworking
  - Self-directed, needing little external motivation
ABSN students tend to. . .

- Have high expectations for the program and the faculty
- In the classroom
  - Little tolerance for disorganization
  - “Tell me what I need to know”
  - Love stories from faculty about clinical experiences
    - Appreciate faculty who love what they do
    - Make clinical world real
    - Case studies
ABSN students tend to...  

Have high expectations for the program and the faculty

- In the clinical area
  - Demand clinical competence in faculty
  - Help them connect the dots
  - Individualize learning
ABSN students tend to...

- Have little tolerance for “busy work”
  - Time is most precious commodity
  - Papers, assignments, projects, clinicals that waste time create anger, frustration
    - “There were a lot of unnecessary assignments that just stressed people out and didn’t really produce any knowledge.”
  - Meaningful clinical time is desired
    - Public health & psychiatric mental health clinicals often unappreciated.
ABSN students tend to. . .

Desperately seek feelings of confidence and competence in practice of nursing

- “We all want to learn to be really good nurses in a short period” Cangelosi, 2007
- Focused on skills and actual practice in clinical area
  - Current SLU students--only 15 of 69 have previous health care experience
ABSN students tend to . . .

Be Stressed!!!!

- Academically
  - Large amount of material to be mastered in short time frame
    - “the insanity of the work—very intense, no relief”
  - Perceived need to do well to go on to graduate school
  - Competition among students
  - ESL students often particularly stressed
ABSN students tend to. . .

Be Stressed!!!!

Financially

- Students encouraged not to work
  - Approximately 40% of 2008 SLU grads worked
    - 4 hours per week in spring semester
    - 30-36 hours per week to support self/family

- Loans primary source of funding
- Tuition support from health care institutions presents opportunities/challenges
ABSN students tend to . . .

Be Stressed!!!!

- Personally
  - Other commitments in their lives
    - SLU 19% have children
    - Regis 21% have children
  - “Did school work seven days a week.”; “Not enough time to do things.”
  - Balance is tenuous
  - Some students seem to add stressors to their lives
Conclusion

Back to the future

Like 1970s classes, current students
- Described as highly motivated, achievement oriented
- Come from physical and social science backgrounds
- Typically do not have previous HC backgrounds

Unlike 1970s classes
- Trending older, ↑ time since last degree
- Personal, financial stress increasing
  - 1972 tuition $2890/ year
Conclusion

ABSN students need balance of
- Intellectual ability
- Time management and organizational skills
- Personal support
- Emotional fortitude
Conclusion

ABS N faculty need to be

- Able to differentiate need to know from nice to know.
- Willing to kill sacred cows when necessary
  - Keeping in mind that students don’t always know what they need to learn to become nurses
Conclusion

ABSN programs are not for every student (or for every faculty member) but they serve a real need for some.

As one 2008 SLU graduate stated,

“I had a great experience. Met wonderful people. Learned a lot. Got a job. Can’t ask for much more.”