

# Persistence, Attrition Rates, Satisfaction, and Learning Outcomes of DNP Students

MaryAnn Martin, DNP, ARNP, MBA; Wilaiporn Rojjanasrirat, PhD, RN, IBCLC  
Graceland University School of Nursing, Independence, Missouri



## INTRODUCTION

- The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program at a private university school of Nursing in Midwest, United States matriculated the first cohort of students in 2012.
- Monitoring and assessing of program outcomes are important activities in designing and delivering a successful DNP program.

## PURPOSE/AIMS

Summative program evaluation findings:

- students' completion and attrition rates in the DNP program since its matriculation
- students' satisfaction and learning outcomes based on the Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice.



## METHODS

**Design:** Retrospective data were gathered using data from the University's graduation program records, summative program evaluation, and exit survey from 2012 -2018.

**Setting/Participants:** DNP nursing students at a private university in Midwestern, USA

**Tool:** Student Satisfaction & Exit Survey were developed by the authors using likert scale (1-5) ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

**Sample:** DNP Nursing students who completed the program and current students. Since this was part of the summative program evaluation IRB was not sought.

**Table 1**

DNP Program Satisfaction (n=15)	Percent
Course offering	88
Library support	86
Technical/computer services	80
Academic advising	86
Registration process	90
Financial services	90
DNP project progression	76

## RESULTS

- 85 students from 2011 to 2018 with 37 students successfully graduated from the program.
- The attrition rate ranged from 14% to 53%.
- The overall program satisfaction was 4.4/5.0. The DNP satisfaction data showed an average of 3.8 to 4.5 (out of 5) indicating high levels of satisfaction with the program. See table 1
- On the DNP exit survey, mean students learning outcomes were 4.4 to 4.6 (out of 5).

**Table 2. Primary Supportive System**

Primary Support System (N=15)	% (N)
Family	93.3 (14)
Friends	40 (6)
DNP school peers	33.3 (5)
Work colleagues	26.7 (4)
Employers	13.3 (2)

## REFERENCES

- Brown, M. A. & Crabtree, K. (2013). The development of practice scholarship in DNP program: A paradigm shift. *Journal of Professional Nurse*. 29(6): 330-337.
- Murphy, M. P., Staffileno, B. A., Houch, B., & Carlson, E. (2017). Promoting clinical scholarship in DNP programs. *The Journal for Nurse Practitioners*. 14(2): e31-e39.

## RESULTS

Strategies Use to Overcome Difficulties	% (N)
Balance work, school, and family	80 (12)
Personal drive	73.3% (11)
Set priority	53.3 (8)
Pure perseverance	46.7 (7)
Support from faculty advisor	26.6% (4)

## SUMMARY

- Ongoing program outcome evaluation related to student satisfaction and their learning outcomes are vital to faculty and administrators involved in program and policy development.
- Findings can be used to provide realistic guidance related to time management, revised course sequences, and DNP project completion process.
- Recommendations for future research include their professional opportunities, career paths, scholarship, clinical practice involvement, and professional satisfaction.