

# A Pilot Study of the BSN Program at UD

Factors influencing racially and ethnically underrepresented minority applicants' acceptance of admission offers to health science majors

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## Reasons to increase diversity in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program:

- Growing racial/ethnic imbalance between the nursing workforce and the US population
- Significant healthcare disparities exists between racial/ethnic minority groups and the majority group resulting in significant increases morbidity and mortality
- Experts believe healthcare disparities are caused, in part, by failure to diversify the healthcare workforce
- Not enough under-represented minority students are entering and persisting in nursing programs

**Purpose:** To gain insight into the factors influencing URM (African-American and Latino/a) interest in nursing careers and factors influencing acceptance or decline of a UD admission offers to the BSN program.

**Methodology:** Mixed methods, including a quantitative survey questions and qualitative free response questions as well as focus groups or individual interviews

## Conclusions:

- **Nursing career choice**
  - Students are divided in how they view a career in nursing, with some seeing it as a “step up,” and others seeing it as a “step down” or “runner up” to a career in medicine. Students who view nursing as a caring profession may lack the science background to be successful in the nursing major. Students and parents who view nursing as a “step down” may have stereotyped, inaccurate images of nursing careers.

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## Conclusions, continued:

- Interactions with nurses are a key factor in piquing and solidifying interest in the profession. In addition to planned experiences such as shadowing and volunteering, students cited real-life interactions with nurses as quite powerful and compelling.
- Career choice remains fluid, with many participants indicating a choice of nursing in their late HS years
- Parents are highly influential in career choice, with peers and high school guidance counselors having little reported influence.
- **Majoring in nursing at UD**
  - Financial challenges remain a top concern for students who declined admission offers, particularly for out of state, highly academically competitive students.
  - Positive interactions, especially with students, were a key component of their attraction to UD. However, some students base their admission decision solely on website/internet research and no on-campus visit, so electronic communications are of key importance.
  - Proximity to home may suggest regional recruitment efforts are best.
  - The degree of concern about ethnic/racial climate (from a recruitment standpoint) vary across individuals, with the most concerns voiced from current (as opposed to prospective) students.

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