



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Nurse Faculty Scholars—Growing the Next Generation of Academic Nurse Leaders

A Progress Report

INTRODUCTION

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) launched the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Nurse Faculty Scholars (NFS) program in 2008 with the goal of creating the next generation of national leaders in academic nursing through career-development awards to outstanding junior faculty. By supporting young faculty, the program also aimed to strengthen the academic productivity and overall excellence of U.S. nursing schools.

Thus far the program has admitted 54 scholars in four cohorts—15 each in 2008 and 2009, and 12 each in 2010 and 2011. The scholars represent 44 U.S. colleges and universities. The program places a special emphasis on recruiting scholars not only from the top tier research universities but also from nursing schools that are less research-intensive and that stand to benefit from the academic growth of their young faculty.¹ Some 41 percent are from the top 25 schools of nursing in terms of federal research funding,² and 59 percent are from less research-intensive schools.

RWJF authorized up to \$28 million for program activities in July 2007 and reauthorized its investment in August 2011 for up to an additional \$5 million. Funding will run through January 2017.

The program is directed by Jacquelyn C. Campbell, PhD, RN, FAAN, Anna D. Wolf Chair and a professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing.

¹ See *Nurse Faculty Scholars website* for a list of scholars by cohort; see [Appendix 1](#) for a list of participating colleges and universities (ranked by federal research funding).

² From the National Institute of Nursing Research 2008 ranking of schools receiving research grants.

WHAT IS THE PROGRAM ABOUT?

The program gives young faculty members three-year grants of up to \$350,000. Scholars receive mentorship, leadership training, and salary and research support to help them advance their academic careers.

“Historically, nurses have gotten doctorates later in life,” said Angela McBride, PhD, RN, FAAN, chair of the NFS national advisory committee.³ “They get a degree, then practice, get a masters, then practice, and then decide they need a doctorate because they are interested in academia. By the time they get a doctorate, they may be in their late forties or fifties.”

The program aims to recruit scholars much earlier in their careers, so that they will have time and energy to develop and progress as academic researchers and leaders in the field. In the first three cohorts, three-quarters (75%) of the scholars were within five years of receiving their PhD. Almost half (43%) were within 10 years of entry into nursing (getting their RN or BS degree).

“We want to help junior faculty who have finished their doctorates and are now teaching to get off to a good start in academia, meet the requirements of the university, and get tenure,” McBride said.

By enhancing the productivity of young faculty, the program also aims to enhance the overall productivity of nursing schools. The program places a special emphasis on recruiting scholars from nursing schools that are not research-intensive, as well as the top tier research universities. “We want scholars to develop the rest of the faculty and strengthen the rest of the school,” RWJF Program Officer Maryjoan Ladden, PhD, RN, FAAN, said.

“As the population ages and we need more health care, we also have nurses and nursing faculty who are retiring. That is a structural shortage that *Nurse Faculty Scholars* can work to alleviate. We cannot make it totally disappear, but we are part of the solution.”—*Jacqueline Campbell, PhD, RN, FAAN, RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars program director*

WHAT PROBLEM IS THE PROGRAM ADDRESSING?

Nursing schools report that thousands of qualified applicants are turned away each year from baccalaureate and masters programs because of an acute shortage of faculty and other resources. Yet in spite of the growing need for qualified faculty, few nurses choose to pursue academic teaching careers.⁴

³ For a list of [national advisory committee members](#), see the NFS website.

⁴ *RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars*, 2011 Call for Proposals.

Doctoral-prepared nurses cite the lack of prestige of the faculty role, intense faculty workloads, meager salaries, and the desire to retain patient contact and practice ties as reasons for seeking employment opportunities outside of academic settings.

In addition, minority racial and ethnic groups, as well as men, are underrepresented among nursing faculty. This means that nursing schools are less equipped to address health disparities and provide culturally appropriate health care education.

The *RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars* program addresses the nurse faculty shortage by supporting the academic advancement of outstanding junior faculty. With enhanced skills, productivity and elevated stature, nurses will be more likely to remain in faculty positions, thus increasing the capacity of the system to produce more nurses in order to ease the nursing shortage.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

Through the program, nurse scholars receive training and mentoring to help them master new competencies and increase their effectiveness as academic nursing leaders. New skills include:

- Designing a research and academic career plan
- Securing research funding
- Integrating research and scholarship into teaching
- Exerting leadership through professional and university service
- Influencing health care policy through research
- Acquiring skills to assume a senior leadership role in academic nursing

In order to achieve these professional development goals, the program gives scholars:

- Sixty percent protected time for three years to focus on NFS activities
- Financial support for career development activities in the scholars' research focus area
- Opportunities to work closely with institutional and national mentors

After their three years in the program, scholars are expected to use their research and leadership training to advance their academic careers, develop their schools, contribute to the knowledge and science of academic nursing, and enhance the prestige of the faculty role.

“We want well-rounded academic people who pay attention not only to their own research development but also to the teaching mission and the service mission of the nursing school.”—*Jacqueline Campbell, PhD, RN, FAAN, RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars program director*

Scholars are also expected to become part of a cohort of committed and talented *RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars* across the United States. The program aims to make scholars leaders not only in nursing, but in the larger health care arena and beyond. With the U.S. population aging and its health care needs growing, talented nurses are needed to provide strong leadership in the broader fields of health care research, policy and administration, according to Program Director Jacqueline Campbell.

Mentoring

One of the most important aspects of the program, both its designers and the scholars agree, is mentoring.

Nurse faculty scholars have not one, but three, mentors. The scholars choose two mentors—a senior leader within their own school of nursing and a senior researcher in their university with similar or complementary research interests, preferably outside the field of nursing. The national program office chooses the third mentor—a nationally recognized nurse leader from a different institution.

Throughout the program, the mentors provide expertise and national perspective on the scholar's research and career development, both in person and via telephone.

“Mentorship is critical,” said Divina Grossman, PhD, RN, FAAN, vice president of engagement at Florida International University and a member of the NFS national advisory committee. “All of us who have gone through this process as scholars and nurse leaders recognize how pivotal mentorship will be in the scholars’ careers, as it was in ours.”

Leadership Training

One of the ways the *RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars* program differs from other research award programs is the array of leadership training opportunities the scholars receive. Scholars participate in a leadership curriculum focused on research and scholarship, personal development, management skills, policy formation, teaching excellence, and university/community leadership.

The training prepares nurse faculty to exert leadership not only in the nursing school but also in the larger university. These leadership roles include addressing fiscal challenges within their institutions, contributing to fiscal policies and philanthropic initiatives, and participating in strategic planning.

The program also gives scholars tools to enhance their effectiveness in public policy discussions and advocacy. At the 2010 leadership meeting in Washington, scholars were briefed by senior staff of various government agencies and health policy groups—including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the National Institutes of

Health, and the Institute of Medicine. “To be able to take the scholars to Capitol Hill and to various agencies that really impact what they do at the bedside or what they do in higher education is critical,” said Courtney Lyder, PhD, RN, FAAN, dean of the UCLA School of Nursing.

Communications experts coached scholars on how to be effective spokespeople when engaging with elected officials. “Leadership training on how to give a proper interview and how to stay on point when on camera are tools that nurses generally do not get,” added Lyder.

The goal is to prepare the scholars for leadership in general not just for leadership in academic nursing. “I think programs like this are consequential for people,” Grossman said. “Nurses have more to contribute beyond academic nursing. I believe we should be preparing nurses to be leaders in policy positions, for broader leadership in whatever arena. Being in those influential roles is how we make an impact on health care in general.”

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM CONNECT WITH OTHER RWJF NURSE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS?

The *RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars* program falls within RWJF’s Human Capital Portfolio, which supports programs that involve a diverse group of promising scholars and fellows in leadership development, training, and research and help ensure that United States has a sufficient, well-trained workforce. “We use all of the Human Capital programs that have any way of helping us as far as developing our pipeline,” Program Director Campbell said.

For example, *RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars* and *RWJF Executive Nurse Fellows*, a program designed to create a cadre of senior executive leaders in nursing, work jointly to recruit promising nurse leaders to their programs.

The two programs are also participating in activities to promote and implement recommendations from *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*. This report, released in October 2010 by RWJF and the Institute of Medicine, is a blueprint for transforming the American health system by strengthening nursing care and preparing nurses to help lead reform.

NFS also works closely with *Interdisciplinary Nursing Quality Research Initiative* (INQRI) to train upcoming nurse leaders. Maryjoan Ladden is the RWJF program officer for both programs. A number of the national mentors for *RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars* also are involved with INQRI. “We have a number of our scholars doing quality and safety work,” Campbell said, “and we make sure they are connected with INQRI as a potential source of funding in the future.”

The program collaborates with the interdisciplinary *RWJF Health Policy Fellows* to provide health policy leadership training in Washington for *RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars*. It also partners with the *RWJF Clinical Scholars program*, RWJF’s signature scholars program for physicians. Nurse scholars participate in *Clinical Scholars* meetings and initiatives.⁵

HOW IS THE PROGRAM PROGRESSING TO DATE?

Benefits for RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars

In September 2011, the first cohort of scholars completed its three-year term. Program leaders and the scholars themselves have noted significant shifts in how the scholars view themselves and the world.

“People in the first cohort are so much more savvy and astute about larger issues,” McBride said. “I find that the level of discussion over the course of the three years has gotten much more strategic, more complicated, with a range of opinion, and a depth of thoughtfulness in those opinions. They are thinking very broadly nationally and internationally and applying that to their school.”

Nurse Faculty Scholar Kathryn Laughon, PhD, RN, has focused her research on intimate partner violence and its effects on women and children. Being a scholar, she said, has helped propel her into local, state and national roles, shaping public policy in regard to violence. Read the [Grantee Profile](#) of Laughon.

Jacqueline Taylor, PhD, RN, said her mentors encouraged her to think “outside the box” in taking on leadership roles. Her research on the genetic components of high blood pressure in African American women prepared her for the role of national representative for congenital genetic conditions for the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners. “I would not have thought about doing this as a junior faculty had it not been for *RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars*,” she said. Read the [Grantee Profile](#) of Taylor.

Robert Atkins, PhD, RN, has focused his research close to home in Camden, N.J., where he is associate professor at the Rutgers University School of Nursing. He is studying how neighborhood poverty and childhood personality interact to influence health and well-being.

UCLA’s Courtney Lyder served as Atkins’ national mentor during his stint as a *RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholar*. “He found a voice and, with conviction, the true area of science he wanted to contribute to,” Lyder said. “It was a major transformation in his thinking, in

⁵ Other RWJF Human Capital programs focused on nursing are *Partners Investing in Nursing’s Future*, the *New Jersey Nursing Initiative* and *New Careers in Nursing*.

his confidence that what he is doing is absolutely correct.” Read the [Grantee Profile](#) of Atkins.

Across the cohorts, the program has afforded the scholars the time and resources to accelerate their research efforts. “They have published really important findings from their *Nurse Faculty Scholars* research and have also published other research because the grant gives them time to devote to all parts of their research career. Many have submitted National Institutes of Health (NIH) research proposals. They are well-launched in becoming leaders in nursing research.”

Benefits for Colleagues of the RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars

The scholars also are helping to mentor their faculty colleagues in how to be more strategic in their careers, UCLA’s Lyder said.

“They are teaching their colleagues how to say ‘no’ to the things that are not pertinent to them and will not advance their career and ‘yes’ to the things that will help them move toward promotion and tenure,” Lyder added. “It is one thing to have mentoring, but I think these informal networks really elevate and benefit the school.”

Taylor at Yale holds monthly brown-bag lunches with junior faculty to help them develop programs of research. Several other scholars have engaged their fellow faculty in discussions about the *Future of Nursing* report and its recommendations.

The program also gives career growth opportunities to nursing faculty who serve as primary mentors for the scholars, Program Director Campbell said. They get training in mentorship, attend national meetings and are invited to give presentations on various aspects of leadership. “They also become part of the RWJF family, which is a great benefit for them,” Campbell said.

Benefits for Schools of Nursing

RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars bring coveted research grant dollars to their schools of nursing, of course. But their energy and motivation to take on leadership roles may have an even greater potential to enhance the prestige of the school.

The program teaches scholars how to lead strategically, whether on curriculum committees or research committees or university-wide initiatives. “You see these scholars in year one and there is a little trepidation,” Lyder said. “By year three, they are saying, ‘I have been called to lead and I will do it with conviction.’”

For example:

- Taylor has been a valued participant in an ongoing strategic planning process at the Yale School of Nursing, according to Margaret Grey, DrPH, RN, FAAN, the school's dean and one of Taylor's mentors.
- Kathryn Laughon serves on the faculty senate at the University of Virginia, where she focuses on issues related to campus violence. She has also become a spokesperson regionally and nationally on intimate partner violence.
- Angela Amar, PhD, RN, a 2008 NFS at Boston College, chairs a university-wide committee on violence against women.

Exerting leadership brings respect not only to the scholar but also to her or his nursing school. That kind of recognition is especially valuable for the schools that are not research-intensive.

WHAT ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT RESULTS TO DATE?

RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars is a relatively new program in RWJF's Human Capital Portfolio. As such, it will take years to register its full impact. Still, an informal evaluation in 2011, spearheaded by the national advisory committee, found that the numbers are tracking in a positive direction. Since the beginning of the program in 2008:

- Nine scholars have been inducted into the American Academy of Nursing, the most prestigious honor in nursing, usually reserved for nurse scholars much later in their careers.
- Eight scholars have been promoted to associate professor in their schools of nursing.
- Twelve scholars have received academic honors or awards (see box at right).
- Scholars have published close to 100 articles in peer-reviewed journals.

NFS Honors and Awards

2008 Cohort

Angela Amar: 2010 Distinguished Fellow in the International Association of Forensic Nurses

Nancy Hanrahan: 2010 Teaching Excellence Award, University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

2009 Cohort

Janice Goodman: Partners in Excellence award from Partners Healthcare

Kathleen Hickey: Clinical Leader in the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing

Randy Jones: 2010 Innovative Teaching Award, University of Virginia; 2010 Jeanette Lancaster Endowment Fund of Faculty Excellence, University of Virginia

Sandra Kuntz: Sigma Theta Tau International Zeta Upsilon Chapter, Recognition Award for Research

2010 Cohort

Terrah Foster: 2011 New Investigator Award, Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association

Maria Katapodi: Teaching Fellow, Global Intercultural Experience for Undergraduates Program

Elizabeth Kostas-Polston: 2011 Recipient, Sigma Theta Tau International Rosemary Berkel Crisp Research Award; 2011 Recipient, Saint Louis University Beaumont Faculty Development Fund Award

Shannon Zenk: 2011 University of Illinois at Chicago Institute for Health Research and Policy Faculty Fellow; Midwest Nursing Research Society Harriett Werley New Investigator Award

- Scholars have been awarded more than \$32 million in research grants.⁶

The numbers don't tell the whole story though. There is evidence that the program is also producing "integrated scholars," said Program Director Campbell. Many scholars continue as active nurse practitioners, for example, combining their practice and their research roles to produce meaningful clinical research.

"Rather than saying—'on Monday I am an educator and on Tuesday I am a researcher and on Wednesday I do community service'—we want our scholars to meld their various roles together," Campbell said. "That is going to be of tremendous benefit to their schools of nursing wherever they end up working."

ARE THERE CHALLENGES, AND HOW ARE THEY BEING ADDRESSED?

Strengthening the Mentorship Component

"I believe that the most powerful part of our intervention is the mentoring," national advisory committee Chair McBride said. But with scholars having three mentors, there has been some variability in the quality of those relationships.

For one thing, universities that are not research-intensive often do not have a wealth of potential mentors to choose from. "There are a lot of places where the senior people are not that experienced themselves," said McBride. "It may be that only the director of nursing is involved at the national level. That person may not have had a research career with a capital R."

If a scholar comes from a school that is not research intensive, he or she will be matched with a national leader who is research savvy. "That has been the biggest challenge," UCLA's Lyder said, "to make sure those from the smaller schools are on the same playing field, with the same type of resources."

Because academic nurses with national stature have demanding careers, some scholars have reported that their national mentors are hard to reach. "Then you may have a shy scholar who says, 'I didn't have a problem, so I didn't have to see him or her,'" McBride said. "My response is, when you talk to someone only when you have a problem, that is not mentoring. That is troubleshooting. Real mentoring is when you see someone regularly."

McBride said the national program office has intervened in a few cases to reassign mentors where the relationship was not working well. Program staff members have also created a "mentor matrix" with explicit expectations for mentors.

⁶ See [Appendix 2](#) for a sample of grants awarded to the 2008 NFS cohort.

“Mentors go to national meetings and come to orientations,” McBride said. “We do a session geared to what to keep in mind to be an effective mentor. It has gotten better the clearer we are about expectations. But it is a work in progress.”

Attracting Diverse Applicants

The program has worked hard to find qualified applicants who are Black, Latino, Asian and Native American. It also seeks out men, another minority in the female-dominated nursing field.

“It is challenging because there is a severe shortage of doctoral-prepared nurses to begin with,” Grossman said, “and then you have shortages within the shortage—minority PhD-prepared faculty and within that PhD-prepared minority faculty who are researchers. We are paying attention to that pipeline now to make sure that we are all aware of who the potential candidates are.”

To address the pipeline issue, the program has developed partnerships with an array of organizations that serve minority groups. These include the Ethnic Minority Nursing Association; the National Coalition of Ethnic Minority Nursing Associations, which also has a mentoring program; and the Minority Fellowship Program, a scholarship program of the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency.

Program staff present sessions at conferences of the National Black Nurses Association, the Hispanic Nursing Association and the Alaska Native, American Indian Nursing Association. “We are also working with the Indian Health Service, which has a number of nurses on their staff who are getting PhDs, said Campbell.

The program also partners with the Men in Nursing organization, as well as other organizations that serve male nurse scholars.

In 2010, working with a consultant from RWJF, the national program office created a strategic plan to ensure a diverse applicant pool. The initiatives for 2011 are to:

- Fully engage the national advisory committee and alumni in diversity outreach and recruitment efforts
- Improve the quality of applications from minority-serving institutions and non research-intensive universities
- Establish alliances with minority-serving institutions and professional organizations
- Create a program database to build a strong candidate pipeline

“[Diversity] has to be a continual project, not something where you say, ‘okay I am done with that,’” Campbell said.

Fine-Tuning the Scholars' Leadership Training

Feedback from scholars has affirmed the importance of the leadership training and also highlighted areas for improvement. “We learned that no matter how important the talking head is, the scholars are not much into talking heads,” Campbell said. “We want to make sure our training is interactive, and that we use scholars’ talents as well as other experts.”

Some parts of the leadership curriculum need greater depth and breadth, national advisory committee Chair McBride said. “We do a lot with communication skills, but the first time around it was too narrow. We were not thinking big enough. How to be effective in meetings and on committees needs to be connected to the larger issue of getting ready to show you would be a good board member, for example. We want to take it up a notch.”

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

At the 2011 annual meeting, the graduating 2008 cohort reported on an imaginative exercise in which they had asked each other, where will you be in 10 years? Some answers were predictable—dean of a nursing school, for example. Others were more surprising and included head of a major federal health agency, university president, U.S. congressperson, Supreme Court justice and agency director of the World Health Organization.

“It was meant to be humorous in keeping with their personalities,” McBride said. “But what amazed me was the number of positions that were no longer discipline-specific. They saw themselves as acting in a larger world than has historically been the case for most people in nursing. The cohorts as a whole have such an engagement in the future. We are helping them get better prepared. It’s a very good investment because our scholars see themselves as change agents.”

RWJF has authorized funding for the *RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars* program through 2017 and is releasing the call for proposals for the 2012 cohort in October 2011.

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APPENDIX 1

Schools of Nursing That Have RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars

Schools with asterisks are in the top 25 research nursing schools in terms of federal research grants, according to the National Institute of Nursing Research, 2008 ranking, which is used by the program.

Boston College	University of Colorado, Denver
Columbia University*	University of Illinois, Chicago*
Duke University	University of Iowa*
Duquesne University	University of Maryland*
East Carolina University	University of Miami*
Emory University	University of Michigan*
Indiana University—Purdue University of Indianapolis*	University of Missouri, Columbia*
Johns Hopkins University*	University of New Mexico
Medical College of Georgia	University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*
MGH Institute of Health Professions	University of North Carolina, Charlotte
Montana State University	University of North Dakota
Ohio State University	University of Pennsylvania*
Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey	University of Rochester*
Saint Louis University	University of South Florida
San Diego State University	University of Utah*
Thomas Jefferson University (Philadelphia)	University of Virginia*
University of Arizona	University of Washington*
University of California, Davis	University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
University of California, Irvine	Vanderbilt University
University of California, Los Angeles*	Wayne State University
University of California, San Francisco*	West Virginia University
University of Cincinnati	Yale University*

APPENDIX 2

Sample of Extramural Grants Awarded to RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars

The 2008 scholars submitted a total of 22 applications requesting extramural funding. Here is a sample of awarded grants.

Angela Amar, Boston College

- *Help Seeking in College Women*
 - \$100,000 award from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health

Cindy Anderson, University of North Dakota

- *Assistance-Type Cooperative Agreement*
 - \$2,670,000 award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service

Jennifer Doering, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

- *Self-Management of Postpartum Fatigue in Poor Urban Women*
 - \$210,389 award from the Center for Enhancement of Self-Management in Individuals and Families, National Institute of Health

Nancy Hanrahan, University of Pennsylvania

- *Patient Safety in Inpatient Psychiatry*
 - \$750,000 award from the National Institute of Health

AkkeNeel Talsma, University of Michigan

- *Peri-operative Outcomes Initiative (POI)*
 - \$25,000 award from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan / BCN, Michigan

Diane Von Ah, Indiana University

- *A Brief Family Intervention to Promote Adaptive Coping with the Stress of Adult Marrow Transplantation*
 - \$500,000 award from National Institute of Health, National Institute of Nursing Research
- *Advanced Cognitive Training in Breast Cancer Survivors*
 - \$25,000 award from the American Cancer Society

Joaquim Voss, University of Washington

- *Mitochondrial Gene Expression Changes related to a Symptom Cluster in Prostate Cancer*
 - \$275,000 award from National Institute of Health, National Institute of Nursing Research
- *Mitochondrially targeted antioxidants, aging and AZT in skeletal muscle dysfunction*
 - \$ 9,000,000 award from National Institute of Health, National Institute on Aging
- *Estrogen Effects on Inflammatory Responses after a Crush Muscle Injury and Acute Exposure to Hypobaric Hypoxia*
 - \$ 2,263,979 award from the U.S. Department of Defense, Air Force

Jennifer Wenzel, Johns Hopkins University

- *Developing Cancer Navigation Support for Rural African American Elders*
 - \$729,000 award by the American Cancer Society

Kynna Wright-Volel, University of California, Los Angeles

- *The PLN Child Obesity Study and Intervention*
 - \$20,000 from the Boeing Charitable Trust

PROFILE LIST

- [Robert Atkins](#)—An RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholar Studies Effects of Urban Poverty on Children and Adolescents
- [Kathryn Laughon](#)—An RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholar Pursues Clinical and Policy Solutions to Intimate Partner Violence
- [Jacquelyn Taylor](#)—An RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholar Attacks Health Disparities With Research