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Heather Reens MSN, RN

Molloy College, hreens@molloy.edu

Veronica D. Feeg Ph.D., R.N., FAAN

Molloy College, vfeeg@molloy.edu

Margaret Barton-Burke PhD, RN, FAAN

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Developing Nurse Scientists by Engaging in Research during Coursework

Heather Reens, MSN, RN; Veronica Feeg, PhD, RN, FAAN; and Margaret Barton-Burke, PhD, RN, FAAN

Introduction

The nursing research residency provides PhD students the opportunity to participate in research immersion during their coursework. Students can take this course as a 3-credit block or 1 credit per semester for a total of 3 semesters. Each credit has to include at least 30 hours of research activities.

Course objectives include:

- Describe selected research experiences as they work with an identified mentor engaged in research activities.
- Discuss a unique perspective about participating in research or serving on a team of researchers who are actively engaged in research.
- Analyze the numerous activities and roles of research team members.

Significance and Background

- Nursing is in need of strong research studies and dissemination of empirical findings to improve patient outcomes as well as to help advance the practice and discipline of nursing.
- Today only about 300,000 of the 3 million nurses have their doctoral degree (National Academy of Sciences, 2010).
- The IOM Future of Nursing Report (2010) stressed the need to double the number of doctorally prepared nurses by 2020

Purpose

- To describe research activities of a research residency course.
- The importance of courses like this is supported using examples of residency activities as they relate to science and practice of oncology nursing.

Interventions

The research residency provides an immersion into research activities under the supervision of research mentor.

Relevant research experiences include:

- Developing a research question and plan
- Writing a research proposal
- Preparing an IRB application
- Preparing for the conduct of research
- Data coding and preparation
- Conducting human research
- Analyzing data
- Publishing and disseminating research
- Planning for future research.



Evaluation

During the research residency, doctorally-prepared preceptors identify projects and work of/for the PhD student. The preceptor contributes to the evaluation providing constructive feedback to the PhD student/resident themselves. The product(s) or deliverable(s) are submitted for review and the student makes a brief presentation to other students in the residency (that includes invited outside attendees) using data or deliverables from the experience.

Discussion

PhD students who identify their research interests are given opportunities to assist with research within the field of interest.

The implications for oncology nursing practice identified during the research residency included grant proposal development and submission for an oncologic study. I have gained invaluable experiences in working with a mentor and learning from the ground up.

Innovation

- Research residency provides an alternative to classroom learning
- Develops a nurse researcher/scientist who is grounded in practice
- Residency provides guided and valuable research experiences into various aspects of the nurse scientist role helping advance future practice through empirical research.