



National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties

Nurse Practitioner Faculty Practice: An Expectation of Professionalism

Kathryn A. Blair, PhD, APRN-BC, FNP

Patricia Dennehy, RN, MS, FNP

Patricia White, PhD(c), APRN-BC

Professionalism in nursing has been a consideration in nursing education at all levels of preparation. Although the major facets of professionalism are taught during educational programs, the actualization of professional behavior begins with practice. Therefore, practice is relevant for all nurses including nurse practitioner (NP) educators.

The question arises "How has professionalism been defined?" Professionalism requires a body of knowledge, service to others, autonomy, self-regulation, code of ethics, and participation in professional societies (Miller, Adams, & Beck, 1993). The very essence of this definition implies that the practice of nursing is an expectation of professionalism.

Several nursing organizations emphasize the importance of practice for NP educators. The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) supports that "NP faculty who teach the clinical components of the program maintain current licensure and certification; demonstrate competence in clinical practice through faculty development" (National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education, 2002, p. 23). In the same document NONPF suggests that "competence of NP faculty should be evaluated annually in all role areas including teaching and clinical competence" (p. 25). The American Nurses Credentialing Center and the American Academy Nurse Practitioners require a minimum of 1000 hours of nursing practice every five years to maintain certification as a nurse practitioner. The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education in *Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Program* (2003) states:

Faculty members are academically and experientially qualified and sufficient number to accomplish the mission, goals and expected outcomes of the program. The faculty roles in teaching, scholarship, service and practice are identified clearly and congruent with mission, goals and outcomes of the program (Standard II).

The National League for Nursing, in a position statement, *Preparation of Nurse Educators 2002* highlights "Nurse educators practice in academic and clinical settings and they must be competent clinicians."

The importance of faculty practice in the educator role transcends clinical competence. Faculty practice serves multiple venues. It allows the educator to bring to the classroom real life situations that bridge the gap between theory and practice and changes learning from a stagnant to an active experience (Blair, 2005). Furthermore, faculty practice exemplifies professionalism by role modeling service to others, autonomy and self-regulation.

Confusion exists about what constitutes "faculty practice" for NP educators. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing is clear that "Practice in an indirect role (consultation, research and administration) alone is not sufficient to maintain competence as a nurse practitioner" (as cited in NONPF, 1995). From this statement it is clear that practice must include some form of interaction with a client either directly or indirectly. Saxe et al. (2004) proposed a broad definition such that "Faculty practice is a formal arrangement between a school of nursing/academic health center and a clinical facility/enterprise/entity that simultaneously meets the service needs of clients, while meeting the teaching, practice, service and research needs of the faculty and students" (p. 166). Embedded in this definition is the assumption that faculty practice is a venue for initiating, sustaining and enhancing direct and indirect services to clients, students and the community.

Although practice is an essential component of the NP educator role, the integration of faculty practice into the academic role is a challenge. The seminal work of Boyer (1990) and others defining the scholarship of practice set the stage for incorporating faculty practice into the tripartite mission of academia. Boyer defined the scholarship of application (practice) as the acquisition and application of knowledge through practice. In order for practice to be defined as scholarship "it must be public, susceptible to critical review and evaluation and accessible for exchange and use by other members of one's scholarly community" (Schulman, 1999, p. 6). The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (1999) suggests that the scholarship of practice must include such activities that develop clinical knowledge, promote professional development and apply technical or research skills. (For a complete discussion of the dimensions of scholarship refer to NONPF's forthcoming scholarship manual).

Recently, Riley, Beal, Levi and McCausland (2002) proposed a universal model of nursing scholarship that incorporates practice as an integral component and expands Boyer's work. These authors describe the scholarship of practice with two defining questions: "What is the best practice?" and "How does the clinical practitioner influence the scholarship of knowing, teaching and service?" In order to answer these questions, there is an assumption that "clinical practice" is required.

These definitions of faculty practice, its relationship to scholarship and professional behavior highlight the importance of practice for NP educators. Faculty practice is necessary to maintain competence, a forum for scholarship and the expectation of

professionalism. As stated earlier, the core foundation of professionalism is *nursing practice*.

Approved by NONPF Board of Directors, January 2005.

References

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (1999). Defining scholarship for the discipline of nursing. *Journal of Professional Nursing, 15* (6), 372-376.
- Blair, K. (2005). Does faculty practice validate the NP educator role? *The 2005 Sourcebook for Advanced Practice Nurses*, 9-10.
- Boyer, E. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching.
- Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. (2003). *Standards for accreditation of baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs*, amended October 2003. Retrieved October 31, 2004, from http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Accreditation/NEW_STANDARDS.htm
- Miller, B., Adams, D., & Beck, L. (1993). A behavioral inventory for professionalism in nursing. *Journal of Professional Nursing, 9* (5), 290-5.
- National League for Nursing. (2002) *Preparation of nurse educators 2002*. NLN position paper. Retrieved October 31, 2004, from <http://www.nln.org/aboutnln/PositionStatements/prepofnursed02.htm>
- National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education. (2002). *Criteria for evaluation of nurse practitioner programs*. Washington, DC: Author
- National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties. (1995). *Advanced nursing practice: Curriculum guidelines and program standards for nurse practitioner education*. Washington, DC: Author
- Riley, J., Beal, J., Levi, P., & McCausland, M. (2002). Revisioning nursing scholarship. [Electronic version]. *Image 34* (4), 383-389.
- Saxe, J. M., Burgel, B. J., Stringari-Murray, S., Collins-McBride, G. M., Dennehy, P., Janson, S., Humphreys, J., Martinc, H., & Roberts, B. (2004). What is faculty practice? *Nursing Outlook, 52*(4), 166-173.
- Schulman, L. S. (1993). Teaching as community property: Putting an end to pedagogical solitude. *Change, 25* (6), 6-7.