

Title: KU Nurses Alumni Workforce and Leadership Study

Proposed by: The Center for Nursing Leadership and Workforce

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Background and Significance:

Nursing workforce shortages are of paramount concern, both nationally and in Kansas.¹⁻⁵ Many states are addressing nursing workforce issues through centralized nursing workforce centers that bring together a broad coalition of stakeholders including academia, professional associations, employers, and governmental agencies to address concerns at the state level.⁶ Yet, Kansas is one of only 10 states and D.C. that does not have a nursing workforce center.⁷ As a result, Kansas lacks data on the nursing workforce and its distribution, making recruitment, retention, and forecasting difficult for employers, educators, and professional associations. The Center for Nursing Leadership and Workforce aims to fill this gap. We are submitting the following study proposal as a first step in working with the KU Nurses Alumni Association to provide important information about KU nurses.

Since most of the employment information is self-reported from KU alumni constituents, The University of Kansas does not ensure accuracy of employment-related data that is housed in the alumni database. This limits the KU Nurses Alumni Association's ability to share with others what KU graduates are doing, where they are working, and at what level. It also limits the KU Nurses Alumni Association's ability to connect experienced KU nursing alumni with KU nursing students, recent graduates, and nurses experiencing a career transition for mentoring purposes.

At a public level, there is a general lack of understanding of the complexity of professional nursing today. Data that helps tell the story of KU Nurses will help with providing education to the public on the vast career options in nursing and counter some negative images created by the pandemic.

Having a more comprehensive understanding of the KU nurses alumni workforce would enable the KU Nurses Alumni Association to: (1) recognize alumni for their contributions, (2) share what KU nurses do with other alumni, students, prospective students, and the public, (3) partner with the KU SON and employers throughout the state in identifying current and future nursing needs, and (4) create meaningful professional development and mentoring opportunities for nursing students, early career nurses, and nurses during career transitions.

Additionally, having more comprehensive data about KU nurses will likely generate new questions that have yet to be thought of, as questions answered from this study spark new insight and questions that can be answered by the data collected.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to:

1. Describe the KU nurses alumni workforce including areas worked, satisfaction with work, job intentions, educational preparation and plans, leadership experience, and mentoring interests.
2. Tell the story of what it means to be a KU Nurse to be shared with the public, current, and future nurses.

Anticipated Outcomes:

To our knowledge, this is the first study to comprehensively examine the KU nursing alumni workforce and tell the story of KU nurses. Data gathered from this study will help the KU Nurses Alumni Association, KU SON, KU Endowment, and the public understand where KU nurses are working, in what areas, at what levels, as well as their job intentions. Findings from this study will assist in targeted marketing for potential students, pairing KU nurses for mentoring, and understanding the career trajectory of KU nursing graduates. Results may also assist in identifying nursing workforce hotspots/areas of need. Findings from the survey questions about mentoring interests will be used to explore opportunities for future funding and inform mentoring program offerings.

Dissemination Plan:

Results from this study will be used by the KU Nurses Alumni Association, KU SON, KU Endowment, and KU for marketing and dissemination. Preliminary results will be shared during the 2023 KUMC Alumni Association Weekend. Results will also be maintained and used by the Center for Nursing Leadership and Workforce for future, secondary analyses, shared on the Center website (e.g., educational briefs, infographics, and/or dashboards), through publication, and presentations.