

# The Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree in the U.S. – History & Politics, Problems & Progress

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# Background

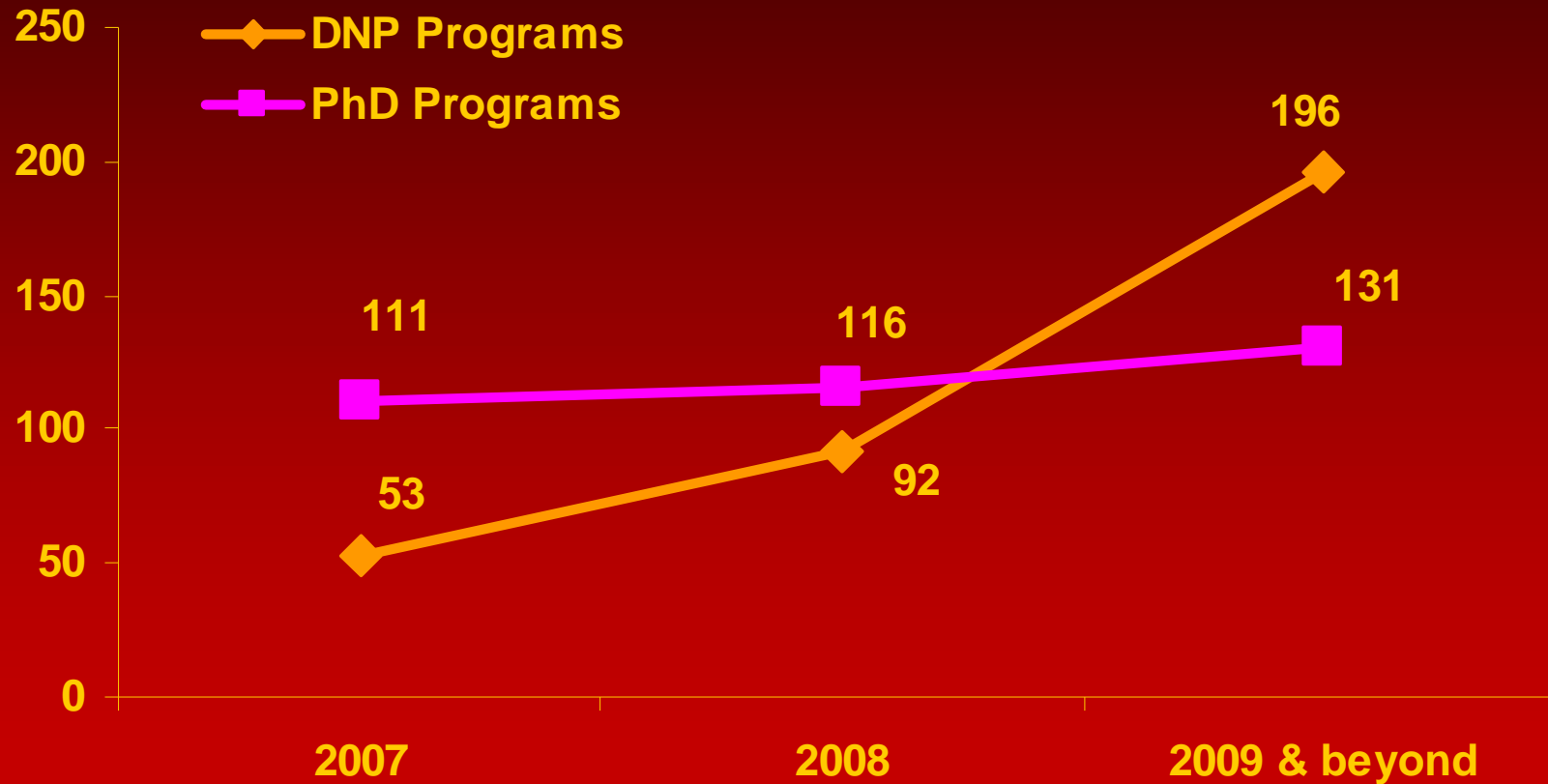


## Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree

**DNP** – Doctor of Nursing  
Practice

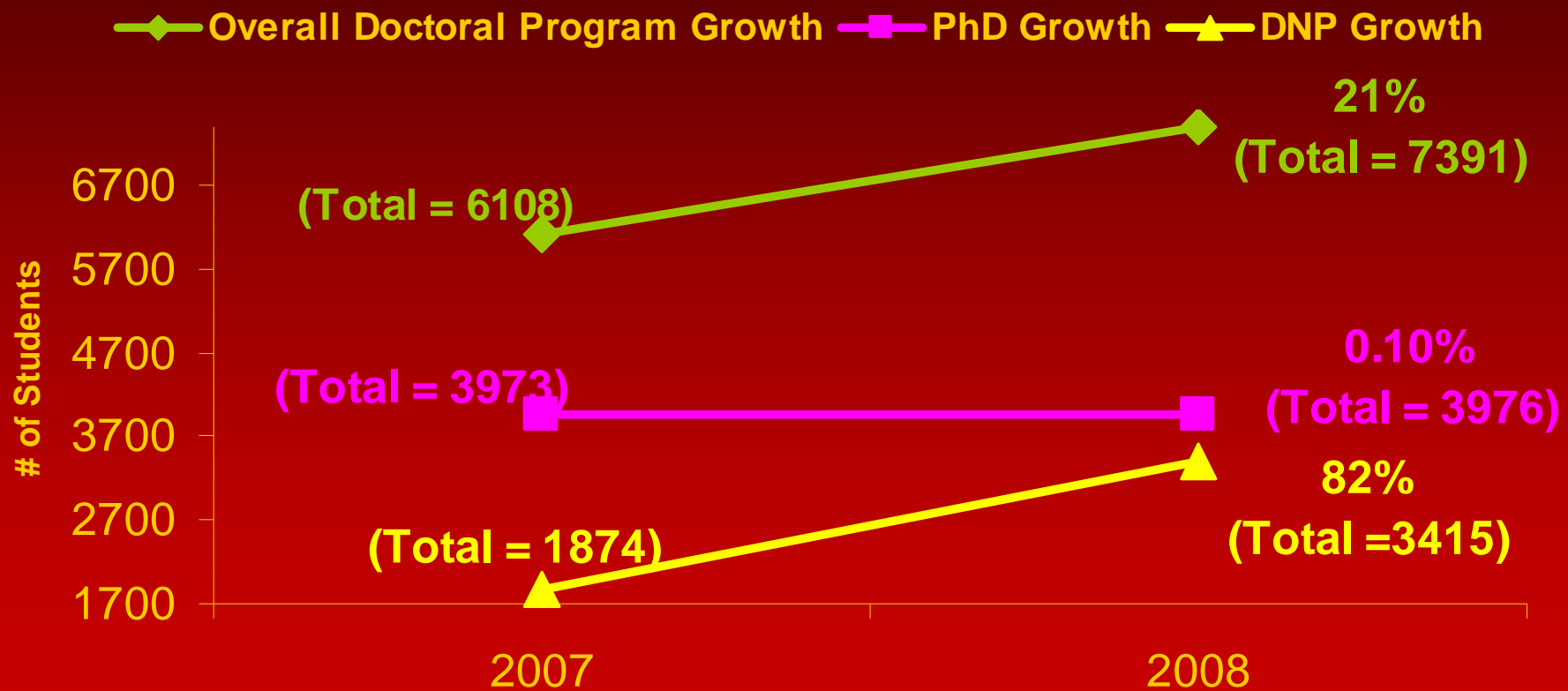
**DrNP** – Doctor of Nursing  
Practice

# Current Number of DNP and PhD Programs



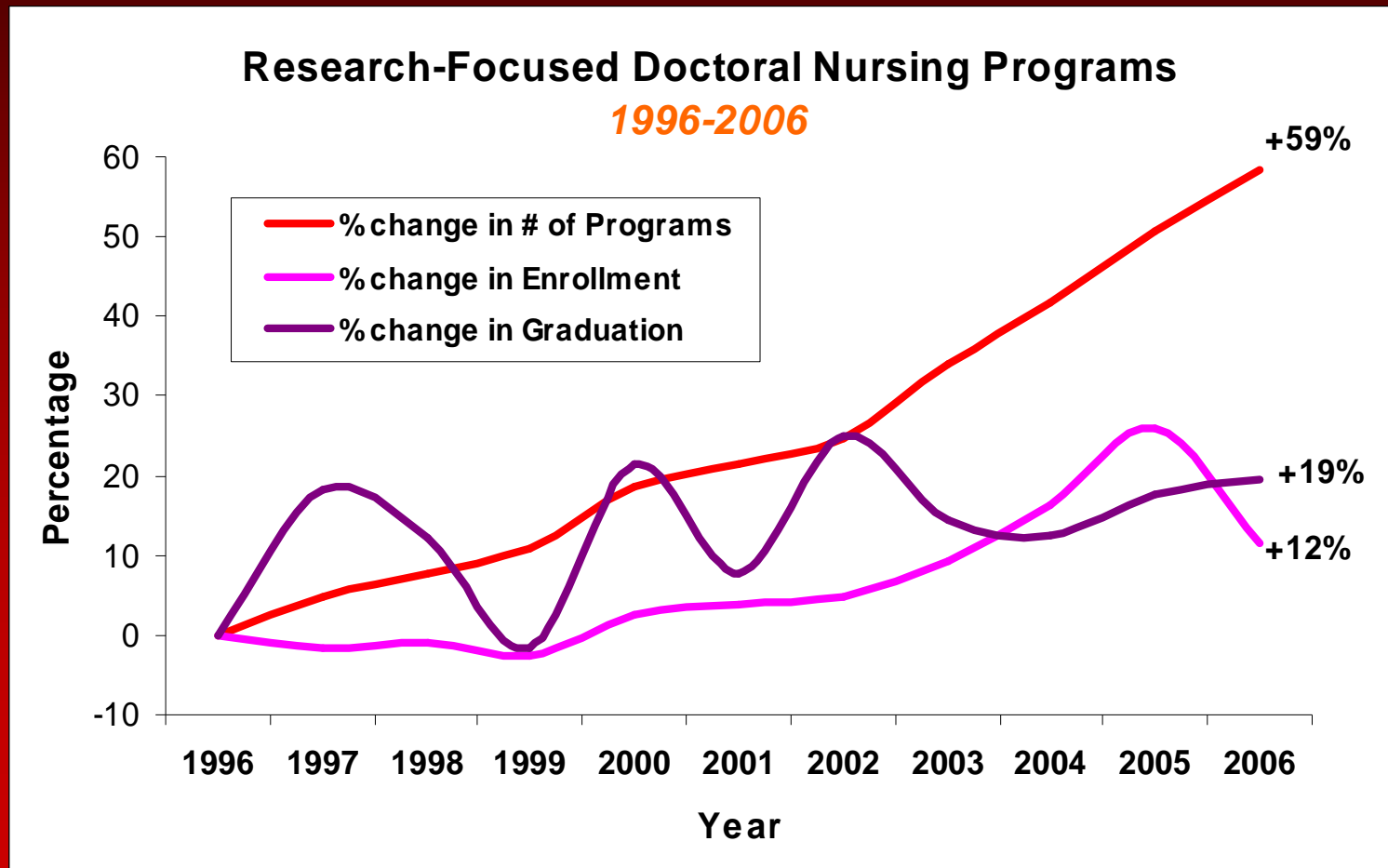
Extracted from AACN, 2008 data

# Comparison of Student Enrollment in DNP and PhD Nursing Programs 2007-08



Extracted from AACN data 2008

# Table Based on AACN Data 1996-2008: PhD Programs



# Brief History of Doctoral Nursing Degrees in the U.S.

From

EdD to

PhD & DNSc to

DNS & DSN to

ND to

**TODAY**

**PhD & DNP & DrNP**

# The Evolution of the Need for the Nurse with a Doctorate

- Impact of the Flexner report - 1910
- Movement of nursing education slowly from diploma programs into the university
- The burdens of an emerging discipline
- Parity with other university colleagues
- Resistance to 'is nursing a *real* science?'

# The First Doctoral Nursing Programs



- The EdD in Nursing Education from Teacher's College, Columbia University - est. 1933
- The PhD from New York University – est. 1934
- The PhD from University of Pittsburgh – est. 1954
- So who was teaching in these early programs?

# The Nurse-Scientist Training Program

## Instituted in 1961

- Goal was to prepare nurses with PhDs in *other fields besides nursing*
- First Division of Nursing Field Research Center founded in San Francisco in 1962
- Two early funded studies examined pre-post knowledge of diabetic patients after teaching & another looked at classifying patients and distributing nursing staff according to patients' nursing needs.

# Superimposed on This Need for Nurses with Doctorates and Research Skills

- In 1965 less than 15% of all nurses had been prepared in academic programs (this included Associate Degree graduates)
- In 1965 The American Nurses Association first mandated that nursing education should take place in a college or university setting

# Emergence of Nurse Practitioner Programs in the 1970's

- With nurse practitioners gaining certificates and MSN degrees, more nursing faculty with the doctoral credential were needed
- Nurses without common university credentials were marginalized in academia
- Education research versus clinical research? The C.U.R.N. Project

# The Real Beginnings of the Research Nursing Doctorate in Nursing or Nursing Science

- ?? 1960
- UCSF 1964
- Catholic University 1967
- Texas Women's University 1971
- Case Western Reserve University 1972
- University of Pennsylvania & University of Texas – Austin 1974
- 1975: University of Alabama-Birmingham, University of Illinois-Chicago; University of Michigan; Wayne State University

# The First Quest for an Alternative to the PhD

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- q Iteration #1: The 'Doctor of Nursing Science' degree:  
'DNSc' – First at Boston University 1960, later at UCSF, Penn, Columbia, Yale, Catholic University, Rush, Widener, etc....all phased out now
  - q Iteration #2: The 'Doctor of Science of Nursing' degree  
'DSN' – First at Alabama-Birmingham 1975 later at East Tennessee State, U Texas Health Sciences-Houston, West Virginia, etc...all phased out now
  - q Iteration #3: The 'Doctor of Nursing Science' degree  
'DNS' – First at Indiana University 1976, later at Arizona State, LSU, University of Buffalo, etc..all but 3 phased out

# The Indiana University Story

- University based nursing education began in 1914
- BSN curricula first established 1932
- MS first offered 1945
- MSN first offered 1966
- DNS approved 1976
- First DNS degree awarded 1981
- Planning for PhD began 1990
- DNS converts to PhD 1996

# Colossal Failure of the Doctor of Nursing Degree – The 'ND'

- 1<sup>st</sup>: Case Western Reserve University - 1979
  - University of Colorado
  - Rush University
  - 4<sup>th</sup>: The University of South Carolina – late 90's
- ....all have now converted to the DNP

# The Contemporary Practice Doctorate Movement: DNP (mostly) & DrNP

- 2000: First steps taken by Columbia University faculty publication of

Mundinger, M., Kane, R., Lenz, E., Totten, A., Tsai, W., Cleary, P., Friedewald, W., Siu, A., & Shelanski, M. (2000). Primary care outcomes in patients treated by nurse practitioners or physicians: A Randomized trial. *JAMA*, 283, 59-68.

- 2001: Second steps by University of Kentucky DNP in Clinical/Executive Management *not advanced practice*

# The AACN 2015 Position



On October 25, 2004 the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) voted to require the Doctor of Nursing Practice for all advanced practice nurses – NPs, CRNAs, CNMs, & CNSs by 2015

**The vote was (162 yes, 101 no, 13 abstain)**

# 2005: The Rush BEGINS!!!

Case Western Reserve University (2005) ND converted to DNP

Columbia University (2005) DrNP (2008) DrNP converted to DNP

Drexel University (2005) DrNP

Rush University (2005) ND converts to DNP


University of Colorado Health Sciences Center (2005) ND converts to DNP

University of Kentucky (2001) DNP


University of South Carolina (2005) ND converted to DNP

University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center (2005) DNSc converts to DNP


# Problems and **Progress** with the Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree

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- 1) There is indeed curricular content and specialized knowledge *beyond the MSN* to give DNP/DrNP graduates additional, enhanced skills.
  - 2) There really should be an alternative degree to the research intensive PhD.
  - 3) A doctoral option gives advanced practice nurses more parity with other health professionals.

# Problems and Progress with the Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree

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- 1) Controversy over the mandate that the DNP degree *not require* (or even permit?) an empirical research project or dissertation.
  - 2) Disagreement over the required number of clinical hours necessary for the degree.
  - 3) Controversy over the mandate that the DNP degree not formally prepare educators.
  - 4) A burgeoning discussion over whether PhD and DNP students should share any common coursework.

# Our Solution at Drexel: The Hybrid Doctorate



A **hybrid** nursing doctorate in the U.S. that combines clinical practice & clinical research.

**DNP**-----**DrNP**-----**PhD**  
(practice/non-research) (practice/research) (research)

# Other hybrid health professions doctorates

Doctor of Public Health – **DrPH**

Psychology Doctorate – **PsyD**

Doctor of Social Work – **DSW**

Doctor of Science of Physical Therapy – **DScPT**

**Doctor of Nursing Practice - DrNP**

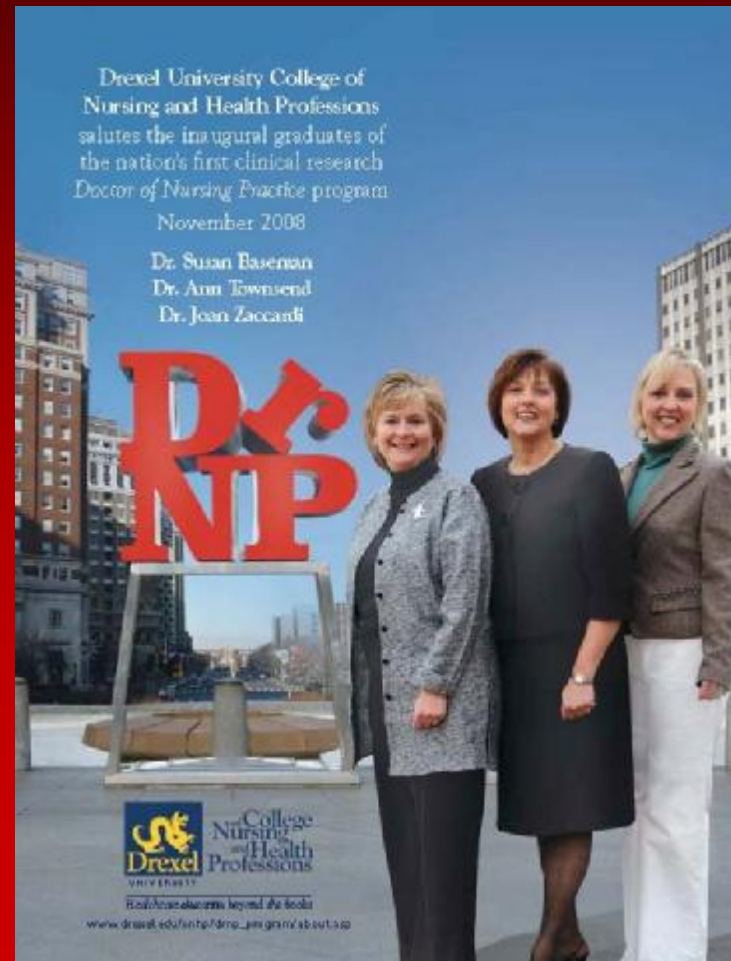
The **DNP** is not a hybrid doctorate nor do students complete a empirical research project

# The “Clinical Dissertation”



- § The **DrNP clinical dissertation** is modeled after the **PsyD clinical dissertation**, and will generate empirical knowledge for the discipline of nursing, but will have a more applied and practical focus than many traditional PhD dissertations.
- § It is designed to generally be completed in 1 year (although proposal development begins in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> quarter of study).

# First three DrNP Graduates 2008



# First 3 Clinical Dissertation Titles



## **The Association of Weight and Health Promotion**

**Practices of Middle-Aged Women** – Dr. Ann

Townsend/Dr. Kathy Falkenstein - submitted to *Applied Nursing Research*

## **The Relationship of Physical Function to Social**

**Integration Following Stroke** – Dr. Susan Baseman/Dr.

Kathleen Fisher– submitted to *Journal of Neuroscience Nursing*

## **The Effect of Pelvic Muscle Re-education on Comfort in**

**Women Having Surgery for Incontinence** – Dr. Joan


Zaccardi/Dr. Linda Wilson – manuscript in press

# Our 5<sup>th</sup> graduate & 1<sup>st</sup> to join the faculty: Dr. Kym Montgomery

“Researching Professionals” – Dr. Graham



# Some final frank thoughts...

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1. The lightening speed development of so many non-research DNP degrees in the U. S. since 2005 is a cause of concern - especially as they surpass the number of PhD degrees.
  2. The threat to nursing knowledge development is a valid concern.
  3. So early into the DNP, the decision to attempt to disallow empirical research is risky and maybe even anti-intellectual
  4. Outcome data is critical to determine whether the DNP truly improves health status, rather than just the 'status' of the practitioner.
  5. Much like Physical Therapy did with the DScPT degree after the rise of the DPT, doctoral education in the U.S. needs a hybrid doctorate option.