

# A “Capitol Hill” Immersion Experience: Boots on the Ground

**Melody K. Eaton, PhD, RN, FAAN**

**Professor of Nursing**

**Linda J. Hulton, PhD, RN**

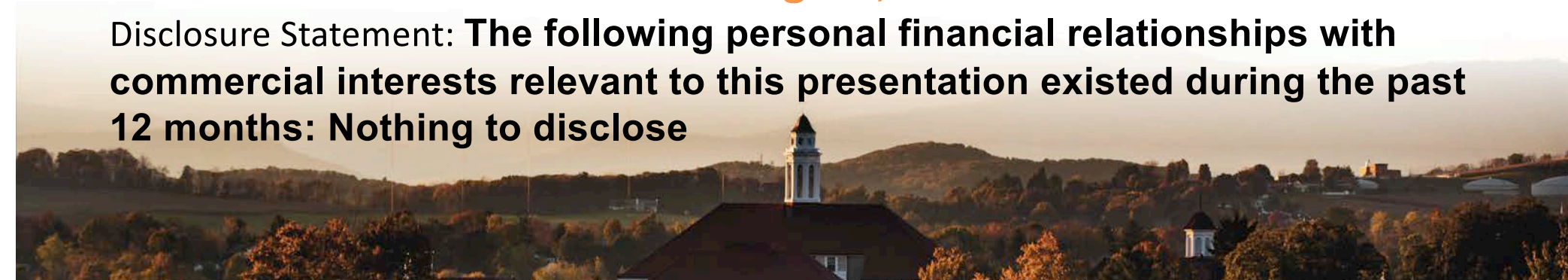
**Professor of Nursing**

**Jeannie Garber, DNP, RN**

**Professor of Nursing**

**2019 DNP National Conference  
Washington, DC**

**Disclosure Statement: The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months: Nothing to disclose**



# Objectives

## **Objective #1:**

Describe the planning, implementation, and evaluation of a Health Policy Institute (HPI) in Washington DC.

## **Objective #2:**

List potential assignments, projects, and activities of the Health Policy Institute

## **Objective #3:**

Identify appropriate data collection methods and evaluation measures of a Health Policy Institute



## Health Policy Institute (HPI) goals:

- Strengthen Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) student's political astuteness
- Meet AACN *DNP Essentials*.

## HPI key elements:

- Interprofessional experiential learning immersion on Capitol Hill
- DNP students paired with federal policymakers

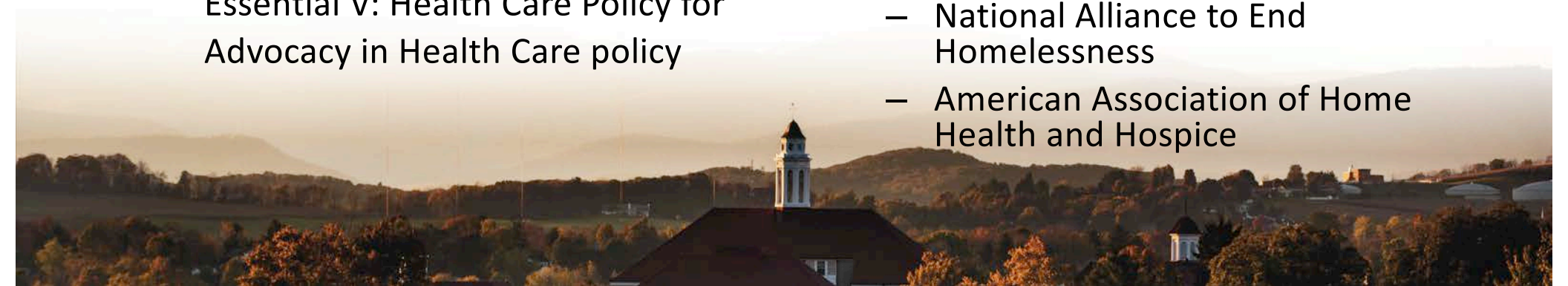
**Purpose of study:** To determine whether the HPI improved DNP student political astuteness.

**Political astuteness defined:** an “awareness and understanding of legislative and policy processes, and political skills” (p. 260). (Primomo's (2007)



# Health Policy Institute: Experiential Learning

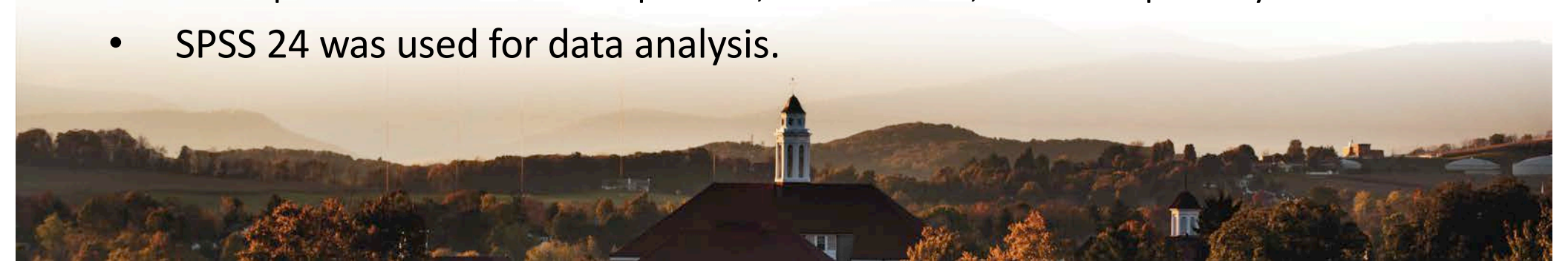
- **Objectives of the HPI-** adapted from the subobjectives of *DNP Essential V: Health Care Policy for Advocacy in Health Care*
- **Student experiences include:**
  - Living and working on Capitol Hill for one intensive week
  - Working with an assigned mentor at the federal policymaking level
  - Achieving competency in DNP Essential V: Health Care Policy for Advocacy in Health Care policy
- **Assignments include:**
  - Agency Focused Projects
  - Reflective Journals
  - Self -Assessment of DNP Essentials
- **Sample agencies and offices:**
  - Senator Kaine
  - Congresswoman Barbara Comstock
  - American Nurses Association
  - American Association of Colleges of Nursing
  - Institute for Public Health Innovation
  - National Alliance to End Homelessness
  - American Association of Home Health and Hospice





# Methods

- Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and consents
- Online Qualtrics© survey
- Adapted version of Clark's (1984) Political Astuteness Inventory (PAI)
  - 40-item inventory that assesses political understanding, general knowledge, and participation in the legislative process and movement on four categories:
    - 1) completely politically unaware,
    - 2) slightly political aware,
    - 3) a beginning political awareness, and
    - 4) politically astute.
- Additional scale was added to the pretest/posttest survey
  - self-rating of the eight (8) health policy subobjectives from DNP Essential V
  - 3- point Likert scale of “Exposure”, “Immersion”, and “Competency”
- SPSS 24 was used for data analysis.



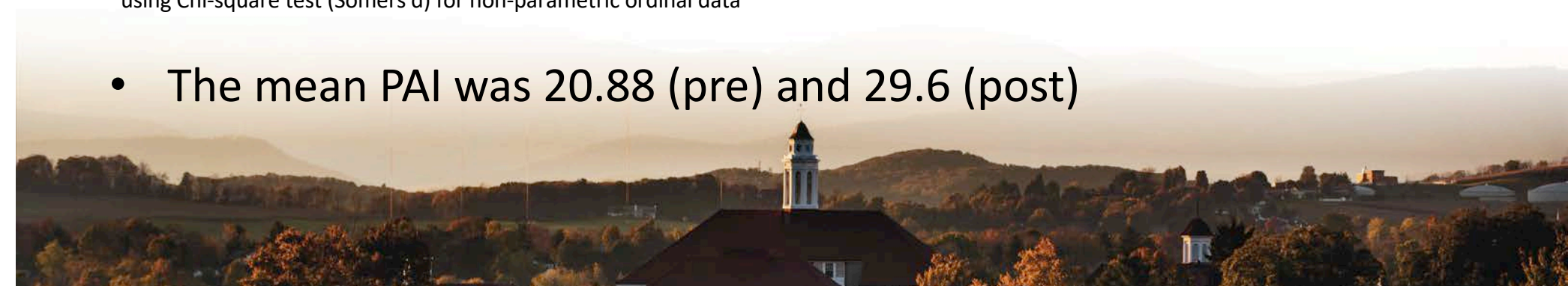
# Results

## CrossTabulation for DNP Essential V: Health Policy Subobjectives Pre/Post (n = 12)

	Pretest			Posttest			P value*
Sub- Objective	Exposure	Immersion	Competency	Exposure	Immersion	Competency	
1	7	4	1	1	2	9	0.025
2	4	7	1	0	3	9	0.18
3	5	3	2	0	2	8	0.068
4	5	4	3	0	1	11	0.54
5	5	4	3	0	3	9	0.14
6	4	4	3	0	2	9	0.70
7	6	3	0	0	1	8	0.28
8	7	4	1	0	3	9	0.025

\*using Chi-square test (Somers'd) for non-parametric ordinal data

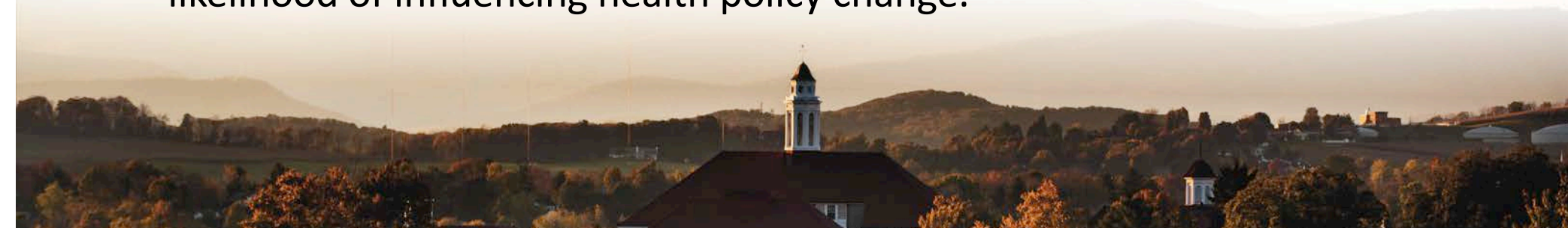
- The mean PAI was 20.88 (pre) and 29.6 (post)



# Discussion/Conclusion

## Implications

- The Health Policy Institute experience significantly enhanced doctoral nursing students' awareness and understanding of political skills and the legislative process
- Students reported transformative activities and events.
- Health care professionals often lack the knowledge, experience, and /or underestimate their ability to educate legislators on the value of healthcare, health care professionals, and healthcare-based need for policy change.
- This health policy immersion experience, participating directly with policymakers on Capitol Hill, enhanced graduate DNP nursing students' political astuteness and met health policy related *DNP Essentials*.
- Implementing experiential learning opportunities to improve political astuteness, such as the HPI, may prove to advance DNP graduates' likelihood of influencing health policy change.



# References

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2006). Essentials of doctoral education for advanced nursing practice. Retrieved from <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/dnp/Essentials.pdf>.
- Boswell, C., Cannon, S. and Miller, J. (2005). Nurses' political involvement: responsibility versus privilege. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 21(1), 5-8. doi:org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2004.11.005
- Clark P.E. (1984). Political astuteness inventory. In: Clark MJD, ed. *Community Nursing: Health Care for Today and Tomorrow*. Reston, VA: Appleton and Lange; 168-189.
- Clark M.J. (2008). Political astuteness inventory by PE Clark 1984. *Community Assessment Reference Guide for Community Health Nursing*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall; 1-2.
- Gruen, R. L., Campbell, E. G., & Blumenthal, D. (2006). Public roles of US physicians' community participation, political involvement, and collective advocacy. *JAMA*, 296(20), 2467-2475.





# References

Feldstein, P. (2006). *The politics of health legislation: An economic perspective* (3rd ed.). Chicago, IL: Health Administration Press.

IOM (2010). *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*. Washington, DC:

National Academies Press. Retrieved from

<http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/ThePracticeofProfessionalNursing/workforce/IOM-Future-of-Nursing-Report-1>

Primomo, J. (2007). Changes in political astuteness after a health systems and policy course. *Nurse Educator*, 32(6), 260–264.

Primomo, J., & Bjorling, E. (2013). Changes in political astuteness following nurse legislative day. *Policy, Politics & Nursing Practice*, 14(2), 97-108. doi:10.1177/1527154413485901

Salvador, Diane (2010). Registered nurse's perceptions and practices related to health policy. Doctoral dissertation.) Retrieved from The University of Toledo Digital Repository. (Paper 961).

Umscheid, C. (2007). Political activity of US physicians. *JAMA*, 297 (9), 951-952.  
Doi:10.1001/jama.297.9.951-b.

