

## The Nurse Residency Model: A Clinical Immersion Model for Curricular Change

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Curricular change is a stressful and disconcerting, yet necessary, element of quality nursing education. A dearth of clinical sites, decreasing faculty and financial resources, a need to accommodate a greater number of students, and higher clinical acuity levels warranting increased emphasis on safety necessitated a curriculum that was drastically different from traditional approaches. Our faculty elected to adopt an innovative and unique method of baccalaureate nursing education – the Nurse Residency Program. In this curriculum, traditional acute-care clinicals are reserved for the senior year of study in the form of an immersion experience, only after successful completion of didactic course work and its associated requirements in earlier years of study.

The Nurse Residency Program is based on curricular building blocks, which lay the foundation for later clinical experiences. In the freshmen year, students are admitted directly into nursing and begin fundamental nursing studies, along with liberal arts and science courses. Non-nursing courses are continued in the sophomore year, at which time stu-

dents also enter their foundational nursing courses. Sophomore nursing courses include general nursing subjects, such as clinical decision-making, health promotion, health assessment, pharmacology, and two semesters of pathophysiology. The junior year paves the way for clinical exploration by presenting each nursing specialty in a distinct course containing didactic content and field experiences. Each specialty area course culminates in an NCLEX®-style exam at the end of semester. The students are exposed to and must pass all didactic classes in order to earn the privilege to enter the clinical arena. This replicates the student teaching model in the preparation of educator.

The senior year immersion experience requires students to participate in clinicals for three consecutive eight-hour days per week during fall and spring semesters. Students complete two medical-surgical clinicals, one psychosocial clinical, one community clinical, and a maternal/child rotation (which includes both pediatric and peripartum experiences). The final clinical rotation of the immersion experience is preceptored, in

which students have an intensive clinical experience by working with a registered nurse in a specialty of interest. The clinical courses are pass/fail and include written assignments and a comprehensive clinical evaluation tool to assess clinical performance. Senior level students meet weekly on campus in larger discussion groups for their Senior Integration course, which weaves in numerous role-development issues that cross specialty lines, including professional behaviors, ethics, entry-to-practice, delegation, and NCLEX® preparation, among other topics. Students are also required to complete two nursing electives during their senior year, which build upon specialty area content presented in the junior year, and prepare them for direct entry into those specialty areas, as market forces permit. In contrast, our prior curricular design saw students attending clinical while taking the associated specialty course; in many instances, students were unprepared for particular clinical situations, disease states, and nursing implications.

In designing this innovative curriculum, a major paradigm shift for our faculty involved expanding the definition of "clinical experience." In addition to acute-care clinical experience with on-site faculty instruction and supervision, additional activities that promoted application of knowledge, psychomotor skills-building, and critical decision-making are classified as "clinical experience."

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Because one of the greatest reservations about the proposed curriculum was the lack of exposure to patients and clinical experiences prior to the senior year of study, these additional clinical experiences were developed in order to ensure student readiness for their senior level clinical immersion.

Four strategies were woven into the Nurse Residency Program to address these reservations: field experiences, teaching assistant program, work requirement, and simulation resource laboratory. Nearly every didactic nursing course contains several objective-based nursing field experiences which afford students the opportunity to get hands-on experience while learning content. Students are responsible for completing these experiences, which are coordinated with the assistance of faculty, teaching assistants, and our Clinical Coordinator.

Our second strategy to ensure student preparedness for their senior level clinical immersion experience is through the use of an active peer-mentoring teaching assistant (TA) program. Sophomore, junior, and senior students are invited to apply for teaching assistantships and are given academic credit. A least one TA (if not multiple TAs) is assigned to each didactic nursing course. As a TA, students perform a variety of functions, including mentoring and tutoring of students, assisting with the coordination of field experiences, participating in the implementation and supervision of simulation lab experiences, facilitating exam reviews, and more.

The third strategy to promote student readiness for the immersion year is the institution of a Work Requirement Course wherein academic credit is awarded for health-related work experience during the junior year. The final strategy is the creation of the Simulation Resource Laboratory, staffed by 3 full-time equivalent (FTE) of clinically experienced nurse educators. Most didactic nursing courses beginning in freshman year include multiple required laboratory

experiences. The lab has shown itself to be a leading strategy to enhance critical thinking, expose students to clinical situations, require participation in scenarios to foster clinical decision-making, and ensure mastery of psychomotor skills within a clinical scenario context.

At the beginning of the senior year, prior to initiating their clinical immersion experience, senior students are required to demonstrate competence on a comprehensive list of skills. Because of this, senior-level clinical instructors can expect their students to “hit the ground running,” which raises the bar in terms of expectations. In addition, senior students in their immersion experience benefit from voluntary or mandatory remediation in the simulation lab.

Anecdotal, quantitative, and qualitative/focus group data affirm the value of the new curriculum. Student feedback documents an increase in student accountability throughout the program, a high passing rate on licensure exams, and adept enculturation of graduates into the nursing work force. As students reach the senior year, they are eager for clinical experiences and express a high level of confidence in their nursing abilities. They also discuss the ability to focus only on clinical, not needing to study for exams in core courses.

Faculty have expressed both pros and cons related to the new curriculum. Ongoing curricular assessment and revision continue to tighten the curricular design. Some changes made include redistribution and reorganization of sophomore level content, validation of course content to ensure inclusion and avoid repetition of information, and restrictions on fulfillment of the work requirement. Faculty have discussed the high quality of clinical students, the value of the simulation laboratory, and increased student accountability in lab and clinical teaching.

This curriculum has been endorsed by the state board of nursing, has received both National League for Nursing Accreditation (NLNAC) and

Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditation, and has been favorably received by agencies in the area. Ongoing evaluation will include NCLEX® success, employer interviews, alumni surveys, and emphasis on and benchmarking outcomes with comparable nursing programs.

As with most curricular transitions, ours will continue to be evaluated and revised to meet the needs of students, agencies, patients, and our institution. We believe that the Nurse Residency Model represents an innovative and effective strategy to provide quality nursing education. We encourage your comments or questions and look forward to continuing to expand and modify our program to meet the needs of today's nursing students. **DN**

**For more information, please contact:**

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## Resources

- 2008 Resolution passed by NSNA House of Delegates on March 26-30 in Grapevine, TX, titled *In Support of National Standardized Curricula for Nurse Residency Programs*.
- Ulrich, B., Krozek, C., & Reinsvold, S. (2009). RN residencies for new graduates. *Imprint*, 56(1), 25-29.
- Mentoring tomorrow's nursing leaders through involvement in curriculum development and shared responsibility in quality outcomes, NSNA *Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities and Guidelines for Planning: Shared Governance*.
- Simulation Innovation Resource Center (SIRC), an online e-learning site where nursing faculty can learn how to develop and integrate simulation into their curriculum and engage in dialogue with experts and peers. Visit <http://sirc.nln.org> for more information.
- NSNA Leadership University. Visit <http://nsnaleadershipu.org> and click on Leadership Library/ Faculty for more information.

Direct links to these and other resources can be found at <http://www.nsna.org/resources/>

# 2009 NSNA Annual Convention

## The Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center

April 14-19, 2009 • Faculty Schedule

**Tuesday, April 14, 2009**



**1:00 pm – 8:00 pm**  
**NSNA Leadership**  
**University Consultants**  
**and Advisors**  
**Certificate Program**

The NSNA Leadership University Consultants and Advisors Certificate Program evolved from the ongoing need and requests for a formalized educational program, specifically tailored to enhance the experience and effectiveness of state consultants and school chapter advisors. This new program will offer information on the role of consultant/advisor, what NSNA constituency status is all about, roles of the chapter officers, governance and the consultant/advisor role, chapter financial responsibilities, and much more.

There is no additional registration fee to attend the NSNA Leadership University Consultants and Advisors Certificate Program, and continuing nursing education (CNE) and a networking dinner will be sponsored for participants. However, as seating is limited and interest is high for this program, please pre-register for this session by sending your contact information to [carol@nsna.org](mailto:carol@nsna.org) and indicate "Consultants and Advisors Certificate Program Registration" in the email subject line.

This CNE activity has been submitted to the New York State Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

**Wednesday, April 15, 2009**



**9:00 am – 4:00 pm**  
**Faculty Pre-Convention**  
**Workshop**  
**Moving Beyond Lecture:**  
**Principles and Practice of**  
**Active Teaching**

*A special registration is required for this workshop.*

This informative workshop will discuss good teaching practices, student characteristics you should consider when you are selecting instructional strategies, how to foster and inspire a learning environment, and much more. Demonstrations, small group work, and a variety of exercises will keep you engaged while you are learning to formulate an individualized plan to incorporate ideas into your personal practice. Continental breakfast, breaks, and lunch will be provided.

Six contact hours will be awarded for this program by the National League for Nursing, an approved provider through the International Association of Continuing Education and Training.

**Speaker:** Karen T. Pardue, MSN, RN, ANEF, Associate Professor and Assistant Director, Department of Nursing and Health Services Management, University of New England, Portland, ME

**Sponsors:** National League for Nursing, New York, NY and National Student Nurses' Association, Brooklyn, NY



**5:30 pm – 7:30 pm**  
**Opening Ceremony and**  
**Keynote Address**  
**Making it BIG: Nursing**  
**Students Stepping Up and**  
**Stepping Out**

The Opening Awards Ceremony includes an outstanding keynote speaker, Rear Admiral Carol A. Romano, Chief Nurse Officer, U.S. Public Health Service.

Scholarship winners will be recognized along with their sponsors, as well as the 2009 Leader of Leaders Award winner, Marilyn Bagwell winners, the 2009 Spirit of Nursing Award winner, and the Honorary Member Award winner.



**7:30 pm – 8:30 pm**  
**Reception**

This reception will be held in honor of award winners and sponsors.

**Sponsors:** U.S. Army Nurse Corps and the U.S. Army Recruiting Command

**Thursday, April 16, 2009**

**11:30 am – 1:00 pm**  
**Consultant/Advisor Orientation to the**  
**Convention**

How can you get the most from the NSNA Annual Convention? What resources are available to help consultants and advisors? What sessions should you attend? What do you need to know to make this a valuable learning experience?

**Speakers:** Carol-Grace Toussie Weingarten, PhD, RN, consultant appointed by the National League for Nursing, and Cheryl Schmidt, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, consultant appointed by the American Nurses Association



**1:30 pm – 3:00 pm**  
**Transition Into Practice**

Transitioning new nurses to practice is an issue that boards of nursing, nursing programs, and practice are all struggling with. This session will review findings from the literature

and the National Council State Boards of Nursing's (NCSBN) studies, as well as conclusions from the "Transitions to Practice Initiatives" recently completed by NCSBN, how it will work, and how much a regulatory model will improve patient safety.

**Speaker:** Nancy Spector, PhD, RN, Director of Education, National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Chicago, IL

**Sponsor:** National Council State Boards of Nursing, Chicago, IL

**3:00 pm – 4:30 pm**  
**Consultants/Advisors Briefing**

This session will include review of 2009 resolutions, issues to be discussed by the House of Delegates, and an update on NSNA business.

**Speakers:** Carol-Grace Toussie Weingarten, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, consultant appointed by the National League for Nursing, and Cheryl Schmidt, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, consultant appointed by the American Nurses Association

**Friday, April 17, 2009**

**1:00 pm – 2:30 pm**  
**Fundamental Assessments and Best**  
**Practices in the Care of Older Adults:**  
**Resources and Strategies for Nursing Faculty**

During this session, you will learn about the "Older Adults: Recommended Baccalaureate Competencies and Curricular Guidelines for Geriatric Nursing Care," successful faculty development initiatives, and teaching resources. You will view "How To Try This" video programs and hear about unique applications for their use based on the recommendations of faculty colleagues.

**Speakers:** Katherine Kany, BS, RN, Project Director, "How to Try This" Assessment Series, New York, NY, and Laurie Dodge Wilson, MSN, RN, GNP-BC, ANP-BC, American Association of Colleges of Nursing, Washington, DC

**Sponsor:** *American Journal of Nursing*, New York, NY

**3:00 pm – 4:30 pm**  
**Rejuvenate Nursing Faculty**

Are you spending weekends grading clinical papers? Are you working harder than any other faculty on campus? Are your outcomes as good as you would like? Let us energize your future with information and ideas on working differently.

**Speaker:** Sylvia Rayfield, MN, RN, CNS, Board Member, Sylvia Rayfield & Associates, and Owner of ICAN Publishing, Inc., Pensacola, FL

**Sponsors:** Sylvia Rayfield & Associates and ICAN Publishing Inc., Pensacola, FL

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**5:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

**Consultant/Advisor Roundtable Discussions**

Select your own topic or join a group to discuss how to increase your chapter membership, get school support to attend conventions, fundraising ideas, NSNA Leadership University, and more.

**Speakers:** Carol-Grace Toussie Weingarten, PhD, RN, consultant appointed by the National League for Nursing, and Cheryl Schmidt, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, consultant appointed by the American Nurses Association

**Saturday, April 18, 2009**

**9:30 am – 11:00 am**

***The Times They Are a Changin'***

Of the many challenges facing faculty who teach in today's contemporary nursing classroom, overcoming generational differences may be the most trying. However, shared values and goals connect students and nurses of all ages and backgrounds. This workshop will provide guidance and teaching strategies faculty can use to effectively prepare today's generation of nursing students for the challenges and rewards of tomorrow's nursing practice.

**Speakers:** Susan M. Stone, MSN, RN, Professor of Nursing, and Manny Ramos, MSN, RN, Professor of Nursing, Valencia Community College, Orlando, FL

**Sponsor:** National Student Nurses Association, Brooklyn, NY



**3:45 pm – 4:45 pm**

**Chat with the ANA President**

Spend some time with Becky Patton, President of the American Nurses Association. Becky will be spending time with consultants/advisors and

faculty in an informal chat session to answer your questions, get to know your concerns, and learn about your needs.

**Sponsor:** American Nurses Association, Silver Spring, MD

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Plan now to join faculty colleagues for the NSNA MidYear Conference in Phoenix, AZ, October 29-November 1, 2009.**

**Watch for more information in the May/June issue of *Dean's Notes!***

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**National League  
for Nursing**

The 2009 NSNA Convention Faculty Lounge is sponsored by the National League for Nursing, New York, NY. The Faculty Lounge is located in the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center (Room: Bayou D) and will include a faculty cyber café sponsored by the University of Alabama Birmingham Hospital, Birmingham, AL. The Faculty Lounge will be open for a quiet place to network with other faculty, state chapter consultants, and school chapter advisors on Thursday, April 16 (7:00 am – 6:00 pm, with light refreshments available); Friday, April 17 (7:00 am – 7:00 pm, with light refreshments available); and on Saturday, April 18 (7:00 am – 3:00 pm, please note that no light refreshments will be served on Saturday).

