

The Future of Nursing and Education Progression

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Our health care system is increasingly requiring a more educated workforce to meet the demands of an aging and sicker patient population, an influx of advanced technology, care moving into the home and community, and the advent of health care team configurations. Nurses, as the largest segment of the health care workforce, have the potential to play a critical role in providing patient care and care coordination across the health care continuum. Those with advanced degrees provide a glimpse of the roles nurses increasingly need to take on in a reformed health care system. Nurse practitioners, for example, are helping address the primary care shortage as fewer medical students enter primary care. Nurse practitioners also practice in rural areas and at community health centers where fewer physicians practice. In addition, nurses with advanced degrees are essential to increasing nurse faculty ranks. Each year, thousands of qualified students are turned away from nursing schools due to the limited faculty available to teach them (Kovner & Djukic, 2009). As a result, fewer nurses are available to meet increasingly complex health demands.

Despite the need for nurses with advanced degrees, far too few nurses attain them. That's why the landmark Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, calls for academic nurse leaders across all schools of nursing to work together to increase the proportion of nurses with a baccalaureate degree from 50% to 80% by 2020, double the number of nurses with a doctorate by 2020, promote lifelong learning, and implement nurse residency programs (IOM, 2011). The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, together with AARP, embarked on a "Campaign for Action" that builds on the IOM report's recommendations and envisions a nation where all Americans have access to high-quality, patient-centered care in a health care system where nurses contribute as essential partners in achieving success. One of the campaign's primary goals is to advance education progression so that the nursing workforce is able to address the challenges facing our health care system and improve patient care.

Best Practices in Advancing Education Progression

For far too long, the nursing field has engaged in an unproductive debate concerning the merits of associate degrees (ADs) vis-à-vis baccalaureate (BSN) degrees. The time has come to set that debate aside and focus on the nurse of the future and the competencies needed to provide exceptional patient care. Both degrees have value, and both degrees are sorely needed to get new nurses into the workforce. AD programs, for example, provide the nation its greatest number of minority and rural nurses (Fulcher & Mullin,

2011). We need to turn our attention toward ensuring that nurses continue their education, regardless of whether they earn their initial degree from a community college or four-year college or university. The campaign is promoting a variety of pathways to advance education progression by advocating for state or regional common curricula or new competency-based curricula. Other pathways include community colleges granting BSN degrees on their campuses and RN-to-MSN programs for AD students. At the heart of our strategy is a desire to put students first and make it easier for them to return to school to get advanced degrees. As deans and directors, you can help lead implementation of these best practices to advance education progression on your campus.

State or regional common curricula. One excellent method for promoting educational progression entails having universities and community colleges develop a common curriculum for a state or region. These educational collaborations between universities and community colleges enable students to transition automatically and seamlessly from an AD to a BSN program, with all schools sharing curriculum, simulation facilities, and faculty. Faculty workload is thus reduced, and the schools make greater use of resources. For example, the New Mexico Nursing Education

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Consortium, consisting of all New Mexico-supported nursing programs, is developing one state nursing curriculum for all schools of nursing to use and a state faculty pool that can be shared to alleviate the faculty shortage and allow more nursing students to BSN degrees. The BSN curriculum will be offered at all participating consortium schools, with the BSN degree awarded by either the University of New Mexico or New Mexico State University. Under this plan, a student could obtain a BSN degree without leaving his or her home community, making it easier for students with work or family obligations to earn advanced degrees.

State or regional competency-based programs. Another innovative way that schools of nursing are promoting education progression is through state or regional competency-based programs. Under this model, schools of nursing from a state or region develop consensus on a single set of competencies that nurses of the future must have and incorporate them into a shared curriculum. The Oregon Consortium for Nursing Education (OCNE) pioneered this model at eight community colleges and the five campuses of the Oregon Health and Science University. The consortium faculty created a shared curriculum, used on all campuses, that redefines the fundamentals of nursing to reflect health promotion, evidence-based practice, clinical judgment, relationship-centered care, and leadership. Students are co-admitted into both the AD and BSN programs, providing a seamless transition for students who start the program in a community college and move into the BSN program at the university (IOM, 2010). The model has more than doubled Oregon's previous rate of AD-to-BSN progression and provided inspiration for adaptations in Hawaii, California, Wyoming, New York, and North Carolina (Spann, 2011).

Community colleges granting BSN degrees on their campuses. A third model for accelerating educational progression is for community colleges to grant BSN degrees on their campuses. The Florida College System, which comprises the state's community college system, offers BSN degrees on 14 of its campuses. As a result, more nurses are able to achieve higher levels of education through an improved and seamless academic pathway. Since community colleges already educate the

majority of nursing students, they have the potential to become a major producer of BSNs if they are able to offer BSN degrees on their campuses (IOM, 2011). Community colleges offer a wider geographic reach, moderate costs, diverse student bodies, and a large infrastructure. They enable nurses with ADs to continue working while pursuing a higher degree. The BSN programs have tended to target and attract time- and place-bound students who might not otherwise pursue a degree at a four-year college or university due to varying personal constraints. Florida community colleges worked closely with the institutions within the public university system to develop BSN programs. St. Petersburg College, for example, collaborated closely with the University of South Florida (USF) to determine the degrees each institution would offer, enabling USF to focus more on master's programs. As a result, both schools are maximizing the number of students who can be educated (IOM, 2011).

RN-to-MSN programs. A final promising practice for promoting educational progression is RN-to-MSN programs. These programs enable AD-prepared nurses to move into leadership, teaching, advanced practice, or research roles. The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill is one of many schools that offer an RN-to-MSN program. Students are admitted as graduate students and take three online BSN competency "bridge" courses and then progress to an on-campus master's degree program with a wide variety of concentrations. Students can complete the program in two years, though they may take longer because of work and family commitments (Spann, 2011).

The Role of Deans and Directors in Promoting Educational Progression

Nursing deans and directors must be involved in promoting educational progression. Without your active partnership, we will not be able to achieve our nation's goal of increasing the number of nurses with BSN degrees and higher to 80% by 2020 and doubling the number of nurses with doctorates. In most states, Action Coalitions made up of diverse partners are coalescing to advance the IOM recommendations, including education progression. I urge you to visit www.thefutureofnursing.org to sign up and get involved.

Education progression is most likely to succeed when nursing education

programs leverage existing relationships and engage partners from a variety of disciplines. We need deans and directors to form strong collaborative partnerships with their community college president or university provost or equivalent, as well as with hospitals, long-term care facilities, clinics, or other employment settings in your state. Programs must establish trust with partners during the early stages by clearly defining shared goals. Seek funding, in-kind support, or grants from partners, including foundations. Also, do all that you can to reduce the bureaucratic hurdles between academic institutions. Discuss who will get tuition monies and allow cross registration of credits among institutions. Above all, please remember to make your plans student centric. Students can face significant barriers to returning to school, so anything you can do to encourage, mentor, and make all systems smoother for them, the better the outcomes for our health care system and our patients.

If nurses are going to be leaders and committed partners in transforming patient care, we need to ensure that our schools of nursing do everything in their power to prepare our workforce to meet America's upcoming health care demands. Let's work together to promote education progression so that more nurses will be prepared to lead change to advance health. **DN**

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NSNA Offers Faculty a Priceless Experience for an Affordable Price

Please join us for the 29th Annual MidYear Conference in Memphis, TN, October 27-30, 2011!

With college and university as well as personal budgets stretched to the limit, NSNA offers faculty a reduced registration fee of \$80 (advance registration) for the entire MidYear Conference! In addition to a wide selection of student leadership development sessions and topical workshops, faculty can earn contact hours for selected programs. The following are some program highlights of the MidYear Conference.

Compassion Energy: How to recognize it. How to experience it.

The Keynote Speaker is **Sally Karioth**, PhD, RN, teacher, writer, talk show host, and nationally renowned grief therapist. Dr. Karioth will explore how to encourage students and faculty to be energized and honored when caring for complex and difficult patients – rather than overwhelmed with compassion fatigue. She will help attendees recognize the exquisite moments of each day, avoid life traps, and celebrate the essence of nursing as a profession and avocation. The Keynote Speaker is sponsored by Anthony J. Jannetti, Inc.

The Road to Sharps Injury Prevention

Needlestick and sharps injuries remain one of the greatest risks that frontline health care workers face. Improving the safety of the work environment has long been a core goal of the American Nurses Association and the organization has launched a number of advocacy and educational campaigns to reduce sharps injuries among U.S. nurses. This presentation makes the case for refocusing efforts on prevention and provides an overview of ANA's Safe Needles Save Lives Campaign. Nursing students and faculty will come away with a better appreciation for this occupational risk and learn how to prevent injury. We are honored that ANA President, **Karen Daley**, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN, will deliver this important message. This session is sponsored by the American Nurses Association.

Faculty Workshops for Continuing Education Credit: This activity has been submitted to the New York State Nurses Association for approval to award contact hours. The New York State Nurses Association is accredited as an approver of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

NSNA Leadership University Consultant/Advisor Certificate Program

This 4.5 hour certificate program is specifically tailored to enhance the experience and effectiveness of state consultants and school chapter advisors. Topics include: role and responsibility of faculty advisors and state consultants, essentials of fiduciary responsibility, legal and financial aspects of running a non-profit organization, working with volunteer leaders, avoiding conflicts of interest, and much more. Pre-test and some self-study required prior to attending so please register in advance. Contact nsna@nsna.org for more information.

Orientation to the Conference and NSNA Update for Consultants and Advisors

Faculty will learn about the highlights of the 2011 MidYear Conference, discuss major programs of NSNA that are relevant to both faculty and students, learn about NSNA's programs and activities, and identify strategies to assist students to develop their leadership potential and professional identity. The speakers are **Cheryl Schmidt**, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, ANA-appointed consultant; and **Cheryl Taylor**, PhD, RN, NLN-appointed consultant.

Innovative Teaching Strategies, Tips for Effective Teaching

Review current NCLEX[®] pharmacology standards with an emphasis on teaching strategies for the classroom. These enjoyable strategies will facilitate memory, application to clinical settings, and successful testing. The speaker is **Loretta Manning**, MSN, RN, GNP, Executive Officer, I CAN Publishing, Suwanee, GA, Director Sylvia Rayfield & Associates, Pensacola, FL.

Update from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN)

Hear about how the NCSBN is transforming the future of regulatory leadership. Faculty will be brought up to date with reports on the NCSBN simulation study, the NCSBN evidence-based regulatory model for transitioning new nurses to practice, NCLEX[®] update, social media guidelines, and alternative programs for treatment rather than discipline. The speaker is **Nancy Spector**, PhD, RN, CAE, Director of Regulatory Innovations, NCSBN.

Coaching and Mentoring Student Nurses

The faculty role in coaching and mentoring students as they plan their future career in nursing will be discussed. Participants will learn how to review resumes, discuss options for academic advancement, describe how to prepare for practice in specialty areas, explain the importance of making a short and long-term career plan, and much more. This valuable information will facilitate faculty involvement in the MidYear Conference Career Counseling Center and is value-added for assisting students in your school prepare for a very challenging job market. The speaker is **Lois Marshall**, PhD, RN, Nurse Education Consultant, Author, Miami, FL.

Sharing Successful Organization Strategies

This interactive session features representatives from NSNA constituent states and local chapters, as well as members of the 2011-2012 NSNA Board of Directors to share ideas and strategies for success. Topics include: increasing your chapter membership, involving students in leadership activities, applying for NSNA awards, implementing successful fundraising activities, and mentoring students during organizational leadership transitions.

The full student program (\$95 pre-registered) includes a 9-hour NCLEX[®] RN Review, Image of Nursing Seminar and Dress for Success style show (sponsored by Life Uniform), two panel presentations featuring 16 specialty practice profiles, and several workshops on a variety of career-development topics. Brochures are available by writing to nsna@nsna.org or visiting www.nsna.org. The MidYear Conference offers students and faculty an unequalled educational opportunity at a very reasonable price! **DN**



Volume 33, No. 1 • September/October 2011

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Dean's Notes is indexed in Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature.

Dean's Notes is published five times a year (September/October, November/December, January/February, March/April, and May/June) by Anthony J. Jannetti Inc., East Holly Avenue, Box 56, Pitman, New Jersey 08071-0056. Telephone 856.256.2300. FAX 856.589.7463. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the express written permission of the publisher. Address changes should include mailing label and be forwarded to the publisher.

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Anthony J. Jannetti Receives 2011 APEX Award for *Dean's Notes*

The National Student Nurses' Association is pleased to announce that *Dean's Notes* has been selected for a 2011 Awards for Publication Excellence (APEX) Award. Anthony J. Jannetti, Inc., publisher of the newsletter, was recognized in the "Most Improved" category.

Sponsored by *Writing that Works: The Business Communications Report*, the APEX has been awarded for 23 years to publications demonstrating excellence in graphic design, editorial content, and success in achieving overall communications effectiveness.

Tony Jannetti, AJJ's owner and CEO, thanks Layout and Design Specialist Darin Peters, Art Director Jack Bryant, and Managing Editor Katie R. Brownlow for continually improving the newsletter into a top-quality publication that features valuable content in an eye-pleasing design.

"*Dean's Notes* is one example of the excellent work the AJJ team produces on a daily basis," Jannetti said. "We thank our staff for their dedication and congratulate them on the award."

Visit <http://apexawards.com/> for more information on the APEX Awards. **DN**



Coming Soon in *Dean's Notes*

You won't want to miss the results of NSNA 4th Annual Survey of New Graduates. Since 2008, NSNA has collected data related to the hiring of new RN graduates. Conducted by NSNA Executive Director, Diane J. Mancino, EdD, RN, CAE, FAAN, this annual survey offers the only real-time resource identifying trends and issues related to nursing supply and demand. This information is an invaluable resource for policy planning and development and will be available in the November/December issue of *Dean's Notes*. **DN**



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