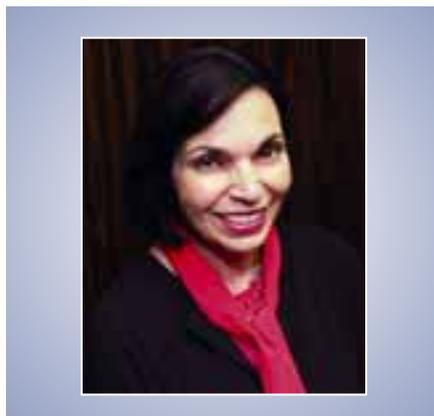


Priming the Pipeline for Nurses on Boards

Carol Toussie Weingarten, PhD, RN, ANEF

When the establishment of the Nurses on Boards Coalition was announced in November 2014, a historic milestone was achieved. For the first time, a nursing coalition was created specifically to ensure that nurses would be present on commissions, regulatory bodies, and corporate and non-profit health-related boards of directors. The Coalition includes associations representing registered nurses with diverse ethnic backgrounds, those practicing in general as well as specialty areas, educators, and nursing students (see Table 1). With a goal of 10,000 registered nurses on boards by the year 2020, this national strategy is aimed at bringing nurses' valuable perspective to governing boards that have impact on health care issues and decisions (American Nurses Association, 2014). This strategy also is a direct response to the Institute of Medicine (IOM) report *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health* (2011), which recommended that nurses use their knowledge of the health care



system to play more pivotal decision-making roles on boards and commissions. The Coalition is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and AARP as part of their collaborative effort to implement the IOM report through the Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action initiative.

Across the globe, there is a movement to create a gender balance on boards, especially corporate boards,

where only 20% of Fortune 500 Boards include members who are women. The Coalition's effort supports the 2020 Women on Boards initiative (Forté Foundation, 2015). The 2020 Women on Boards campaign conducts research studies about the gender and diversity composition of the boards of directors of U.S. companies.

Since its inception in 1952, the National Student Nurses' Association (NSNA) has been providing a robust, low cost, effective practicum for entry-level leadership development. NSNA school and state chapter leaders, serving as board and committee members, gain leadership experience that serves them well in their future nursing careers. These leadership experiences begin their preparation for roles in shared-governance in academic and clinical settings as well as professional nursing and health-related organizations. Throughout this article, "NSNA" will refer to the National Student Nurses' Association and "SNA" to the Student Nurses' Associations (including the school and state constituents of the NSNA).

Serving with understanding and impact on a board or commission means more than an appointment or election. As nurses break traditional barriers, those at the pinnacle of policy development are expected to prove their worth. National strategies focused on having the voice of nursing represented on

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Table 1.

The 21 Founding Members of the Nurses on Boards Coalition

| | |
|--|---|
| AARP | National Alaska Native American Indian Nurses Association, Inc. |
| American Academy of Nursing | National Association of Hispanic Nurses |
| American Assembly for Men in Nursing | National Black Nurses Association |
| American Association of Colleges of Nursing | National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers |
| American Association of Nurse Anesthetists | National League for Nursing |
| American Association of Nurse Practitioners | National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing |
| American Nurses Association | National Student Nurses' Association |
| American Nurses Foundation | Robert Wood Johnson Foundation |
| American Organization of Nurse Executives | Sigma Theta Tau International |
| Asian American/Pacific Islander Nurses Association | |
| Association of Public Health Nurses | |
| Jonas Center | |

Source: American Nurses Association, 2014.

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NSNA Stellar School Chapter Recognition Program

In its 6th year, the NSNA Stellar School initiative recognizes school chapters that demonstrate ongoing involvement in the National Student Nurses' Association and a strong commitment to shared governance and professional formation of their students and faculty. The program is open to official NSNA school chapters that have maintained Constituency Status for the past five years.

NSNA Stellar School Chapter Recognition Criteria Categories

A point system has been developed and a range of points are awarded based on how applicants document examples of ways in which the chapter meets the criteria categories below:

- Category I – Official NSNA Constituency Status (5 continuous years) and Chapter Leadership Participation
- Category II – Dean/Director/Chair and Faculty Support of Professional Development of Students through NSNA
- Category III – Facilitating Professional Development and Participation in NSNA
- Category IV – NSNA Program Involvement and Service Learning
- Category V – Support of NSNA Membership

NSNA Stellar School Chapter Recognition Program

Chapters receiving Stellar School Chapter Recognition are acknowledged as follows:

- The school chapter is recognized during the Opening Ceremony at the NSNA Annual Convention.
- The school chapter representatives are invited on stage at the Closing Ceremony, where they receive a certificate and Stellar School pins.
- An NSNA Stellar School pin is presented to the dean and school chapter president at the Closing Ceremony. (Pins are available for purchase by all faculty and NSNA members in the school to recognize their Stellar School status.)
- A listing of NSNA Stellar Schools is provided in *Program Books* and *Imprint*.
- Profiles of NSNA Stellar Schools appear on the NSNA website (www.nsna.org), featuring the school's logo and a link to the school website.
- The nursing program may add the



NSNA Stellar School logo to their school publicity, website, printed materials, student bulletin, etc. to "tell the world" that they are recognized for their leadership and support of the professional development of nursing students.

Other Information

- Schools must provide documentation of how the criteria in the categories are met.
- NSNA Stellar School status is awarded for five years and is renewable with resubmission of an application and supporting documents to demonstrate that the school chapter continues to meet the current criteria as an NSNA Stellar School.
- The application for the current academic year is received at NSNA Headquarters by February 3, 2016.

To request more information, send an email to nsna@nsna.org.

Stellar School Chapters

- Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, AR
- Brigham Young University College of Nursing, Provo, UT
- California State University, School of Nursing, Sacramento, CA
- Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA
- East Carolina University, College of Nursing, Greenville, NC
- Emory University (Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing), Atlanta, GA
- Emporia State University, Department of Nursing, Emporia, KS
- Georgia Baptist College of Nursing of Mercer University, Atlanta, GA
- Grand View University, Des Moines, IA
- Harding University Carr College of Nursing, Searcy, AR
- Kennesaw State University, WellStar School of Nursing, Kennesaw, GA
- Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, School of Nursing, New Orleans, LA
- Maurine Church Coburn School of Nursing at Monterey Peninsula College, Monterey, CA
- Molloy College, Rockville Centre, NY
- Oakland Community College, Waterford, MI
- Oregon Health and Science University, School of Nursing, Portland, OR
- Our Lady of Holy Cross College, New Orleans, LA

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NSNA school chapters were welcomed as Stellar School members at the NSNA Annual Convention in 2015.



Chapters renewing their Stellar School status in 2015 were also recognized at the NSNA Annual Convention.

boards and commissions must focus not only on education and mentorship for people who are already nurses and leaders, but must reach to the earliest days of nursing education to groom the next generation of leaders. NSNA has strategies and practices in place that foster governance education and leadership development. By 2020, some of today's NSNA members will be serving on boards, especially if they have entered nursing from other careers in leadership and management.

The Student Nurses' Association: A Practicum and Simulation for Leadership Development and Board Positions

An unprecedented number of nurses now have the experience, educational credentials, and documented success as health care leaders qualified to hold major positions as trustees and members of boards, commissions, and other decision-making and policy development bodies. Today, registered nurses as a group are being recognized and valued as *necessary* for these positions. Due in part to the success of nurse leaders who have pioneered major leadership roles, nurses who serve as members of influential decision-making groups bring diverse and informed perspectives to the table.

A key component in any national strategy to place more registered nurses on boards is the creation of a pipeline that establishes the course of leadership development. As members of NSNA, nursing students are introduced to the principles and competencies of shared-governance and the fiduciary responsibilities of boards. Not only do they learn how to read complex financial statements, nursing students gain insight into the ethics and legal aspects of decision-making, conflict resolution, and team dynamics. They become accountable, responsible leaders, ready to move into the next phase of leadership development by the time they graduate from nursing school.

Why do so many new-to-practice nurses, including those from highly rated nursing programs, graduate unprepared for leadership roles beyond direct patient care? Courses in *Issues, Trends, and Leadership in Nursing* are part of an undergraduate curriculum. Theory courses have leadership assignments, but they do not necessarily extend beyond the traditional means of fulfilling course requirements. Clinical courses entitled

Learning how to navigate within complex organizations, how to seek consultation, and ways to foster members' engagement translate directly into work on boards and with human groups anywhere.

"leadership" appropriately place nursing students with nurses in practice settings as they go through their clinical day providing direct care to patients. Sometimes undergraduate students attend organizational committee and council meetings to observe an aspect of an agency's governance functioning or "shadow" nurse leaders, but they do not participate in decision-making. Student leaders engaged in the work of NSNA apply the theories of leadership that they learn in the classroom through active membership, as well as elected and appointed positions. Learning how to navigate within complex organizations, how to seek consultation, and ways to foster members' engagement translate directly into work on boards and with human groups anywhere. Leading service-learning, community health, disaster preparedness, legislative-education, image of nursing, and Breakthrough to Nursing projects also provides solid background for future work on boards.

The NSNA has rich leadership development opportunities at the school, state, and national levels of the association. When professors link their leadership course assignments to the SNA activities, they are connecting students to the "big picture" and helping to establish the pipeline that primes the Coalition's strategic plan. Faculty who are themselves involved in professional associations quickly recognize the connection between courses and co-curricular activities like leadership course assignments and NSNA. Faculty teaching leadership without professional association involvement will find enormous help for their courses and inspiration for their own careers. The experienced advisors, consultants, and professional staff of NSNA frequently mentor faculty and help them to grow as leaders.

Currently, leadership topics like board membership are explored mostly in graduate education or learned on the job after graduation. Nurses fortunate enough to have mentors to help them grow as leaders flourish in environments that support and foster leadership devel-

opment. Nurses who participate in professional nursing organizations have the chance to network and seek elected and appointed leadership positions. Perhaps the greatest way to fast-track to leadership positions is to get to know people who can open doors and create opportunities for introductions to those in leadership positions. Students report that networking and mentorship are indeed major benefits of NSNA membership. Before graduation, many NSNA members have a well-established network of peers and nursing leaders who connect them to a lifetime of professional relationships.

Health care organizations invest heavily in simulations for leadership development, especially for registered nurses who are ready to move into team leadership and management responsibilities. However, nurses who have excelled in clinical practice may be unprepared or underprepared for the transition to leadership positions. Health care agencies with shared-governance models greatly benefit from employing nurses who have actually experienced and practiced shared-governance as active members of NSNA. While simulation-based team-building exercises serve as a valuable tool to develop leadership skills, registered nurses with leadership experience as students will improve their leadership competencies in these situations. Coaches and mentors can help emerging nurse leaders translate these competencies to those needed as board members.

Understanding the sociology of complex organizations, fiduciary obligations, parliamentary procedure, strategies to move an agenda forward, how to work effectively within groups and resolve conflict, how ideas become policy, how a board functions for maximum outcome and impact, and how to negotiate challenges along the way are all part of work on the boards of local school chapters, state associations, and the National Student Nurses' Association. Through activities focused on education, professional development, and service, as well as the formation of networks and

friendships, the student nurses' association essentially becomes a simulation strategy or practicum for leadership development.

While support from nursing programs and faculty are key for NSNA chapters to exist and thrive, the association is designed *for* students and *led* by students. Advisors and consultants do not vote or control the SNA; they are present as mentors and resources. They also provide continuity related to the history of the association as students graduate. Through their own example, they teach students to value association involvement and to seek career-enhancing mentoring.

State and NSNA conventions include Annual Membership Meetings and a House of Delegates. In this shared-governance setting, members vote on such matters as resolutions submitted by student authors; if passed, they become association policy. Candidates for governing board positions can be vetted and pre-slotted or nominated from the floor. The often-spirited processes of consensus-building and elections teach how to build coalitions and compromise to achieve goals. Even the best theory and clinical leadership undergraduate courses do not have similar experiences where students progress from novice to the highest leadership levels within an association and have the opportunity to grow over 1-4 years of involvement. It's a "real life" organization experience for students and a leadership practicum for future work.

Leadership University: Giving Credit Where Credit is Due

The NSNA's Leadership University is a gold mine for opportunities to structure and recognize the scholarship of leadership. The NSNA Leadership University is a framework that guides students and faculty in identifying ways for students to receive academic recognition in their own schools for activities related to learning and engagement in NSNA's shared-governance model. For example, an Introduction to Professional Nursing course may require students to write a paper based on their attendance at a school chapter meeting, state association meeting, or NSNA Annual Convention. An assignment in a senior leadership course might be focused on analysis of leadership experiences related to shared-governance, such as writing a resolution. Students can work with their faculty to craft assignments that meet course objectives while developing solid leader-

ship experiences and competencies. Students who complete projects earn a certificate of recognition from NSNA, which is awarded in their senior year. Refer to www.nсна.org for more details.

Credit Bearing Independent Study

Nearly every university offers the option of credit bearing independent studies (CBIS), which may also be called free electives or guided studies. These are real and rigorous courses designed by a student in conjunction with a supervising professor (Weingarten, 2008). The SNA provides a treasure trove of opportunity to study leadership linked to the SNA and NSNA. Objectives related to participation allow students to blend in-depth study of leadership with fieldwork such as school chapter, state association, and NSNA activities. In focusing on the scholarship of leadership, students may undertake a research study or an evidence-based project with specific goals related to understanding how to succeed on a governance board and work effectively within a complex organization. For example, Villanova University chapter president Julie Kurkowski (2014) applied Gebauer's and Lowman's 2008 framework for corporate engagement of workers to leadership in her school chapter. NSNA 2014-15 Vice President, Elizabeth Long (2015) applied the same framework to the NSNA with a specific focus on understanding generational diversity related to the association. Ms. Long summarized her experience by saying, "I can graduate and be 21 years old and already know what a governance board is and understand what it takes to be a member and leader within a board." Both Kurkowski's and Long's work have resulted in publications and podium and poster presentations. Most importantly, they, as well as other students completing CBIS, have honed skills in understanding and engaging in professional associations and boards.

Conclusion

The Nurses on Boards Coalition heralds a new era of opportunity for nursing leadership and influence. Preparation for key roles on local, state, and national boards requires a national strategy that focuses not only on short-term outcomes, but on grooming the next generation of qualified nurses who will graduate as leadership "natives." The NSNA and its state and school chapter constituents offer a gold mine of opportunities for development of nursing students who will graduate understanding the

basics of service on boards. The NSNA plays an important role on the Nurses on Boards Coalition in crafting a national strategy and priming the pipeline for future nurse leadership. The NSNA and its affiliated constituents indeed provide an existing, accessible, and inexpensive practicum and "simulation" for leadership development. **DN**

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- Riverside City College-School of Nursing, Riverside, CA
- The Reading Hospital School of Health Sciences, Reading, PA
- University of Arkansas at Monticello, Monticello, AR
- University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock, AR
- University of Central Arkansas, Conway, AR
- University of Central Florida, College of Nursing, Orlando, FL
- University of Illinois, Chicago, IL
- University of North Florida School of Nursing, Jacksonville, FL
- University of Toledo, Toledo, OH
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A New Adventure in Planning a Nursing Career

NSNA MidYear Conference

November 5-8, 2015, Atlanta, GA

Please mark your calendars for the 33rd Annual NSNA MidYear Career Planning Conference, November 5-8, 2015, at the Hyatt Regency, Atlanta, GA. Career planning and leadership development are the foundation of the conference, which includes a 9-hour NCLEX Review Course sponsored by Cengage Learning; a Keynote address presented by Sally Karioth, PhD, RN; two panels with presentations by nurses in a variety of specialty practice settings; as well as workshops, roundtables, and many professional development programs. A robust faculty continuing education program will also be offered. In addition, on Thursday, November 5, immediately following the Keynote Address, a memorial service will be held to honor the five Georgia Southern University students who tragically lost their lives in a car accident in April. Other student nurses and nurses who passed away over the course of the year will also be remembered.

Keynote Speaker

Some public speakers make you laugh. Some speakers make you cry. Some speakers make you look at life differently. Sally Karioth, who presents the Keynote Address on Thursday, November 5, is a very special public speaker

because she makes you do all three. It is a gift she has acquired from her varied experiences as a nurse, teacher, writer, talk-show hostess, and nationally renowned grief therapist. If one sentence characterizes the message of her speeches, it is her slogan: "Life is not a dress rehearsal."



Sally Karioth, PhD, RN

"Every day," she tells audiences, "you should have at least one exquisite moment."

Karioth holds degrees from the Wisconsin-Green Bay Bellin School of Nursing, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Florida State University (FSU),

and the University of Florida. Dr. Karioth is a longtime faculty member of the Florida State University College of Nursing, where she teaches one of the university's most popular courses, "Death, the Individual, and the Family." To date, she has taught over 25,000 students at FSU and takes students to London both over spring break and in the summer. She continues to say that every year she is allowed to teach, she remains the luckiest woman at FSU. This year marks her 45th year on the faculty.

For more than 40 years, Karioth has also been a counselor, helping people cope with the death of loved ones. Her particular concern is parents who have lost a child to death.

Karioth has been active in trauma work, and is called frequently to events nationwide to speak to tragedy survivors and mental health officials suffering compassion fatigue.

Karioth has received numerous national, state, and local awards, and appeared in two award-winning public service films. She appears frequently on radio and television shows.

For more information about the MidYear Career Planning Conference and exploring Atlanta, visit www.nsna.org or contact nsna@nsna.org. **DN**



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NSNA Annual Summer Leadership Conference

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November 5-8, 2015

Hyatt Regency Atlanta • Atlanta, Georgia

NSNA 64th Annual Convention

March 30-April 3, 2016

Orlando, Florida

NSNA 34th Annual MidYear Conference

November 10-13, 2016

Kansas City, Missouri

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April 5-9, 2017

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April 4-8, 2018

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Questions? Send an email to nsna@nsna.org for assistance.

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