

## Weaving NSNA into a Nursing Curriculum

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In the mid-1990s, Grand View University nursing faculty revised the nursing curriculum. One curricular thread emphasized professional organizations and leadership development for students. This thread was based on premises founded by Logan (1994). This author discovered that students actively involved in the National Student Nurses Association (NSNA) learn a wide array of the culture and values of the nursing profession. Logan's (1994) qualitative study found that student learning occurs through: 1) experiences of the organization, 2) involvement in the organization, and 3) connection to and with others. Activities are considered "professional clinical." Additional premises of Logan's research support the belief that the experiences within professional organizations can contribute to the development of professionhood. Experiences within organizations also challenge the student with realities of the contemporary health care delivery system and support their empowerment by engaging them in opportunities to influence health care policy on behalf of patients or the profession (Logan, Franzen, Pauling, & Butcher, 2004). These premises all support the curricular emphasis of professional organization activities for students.

The nursing program at Grand View University is a six-semester program beginning in the sophomore year of the college experience. Students at Grand View belong to the National Student Nurses Association (NSNA), the Iowa Association of Nursing Students (IANS), and Grand View Nursing Student Association (GVNSA). Membership is required of all undergraduate nursing students. Grand View participates in the NSNA Total School Membership (TSM)



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program. This program, which originated at Grand View, offers an opportunity for schools to have all students participate in the pre-professional NSNA organization. Membership dues are included as part of school tuition or fees.

The nursing faculty also recognized that role modeling was an essential component for successful integration of the student professional organization into the curriculum. In order to function as role models for students, all nursing faculty belong and participate in the American Nurses Association and/or the Iowa Nurses Association. Nursing faculty also support students by attending GVNSA meetings, as well as IANS and NSNA conventions.

### GVNSA

Currently GVNSA is recognized as an active student organization on the Grand View campus, participating in the Viking Council (student government) activities. There are around 200 members in the organization. Solid bylaws and policies and procedures guide the activities of the organization. One nursing faculty member serves as the advisor for the organization. Meetings are held two or three times per month, with special meetings, including an assembly (beginning of the semester gathering of all students), a MOCK convention (held prior to the state and national conventions), a "Legislative Day," and the "Semi-Annual Influencing Nursing Practice and Policy," held at the end of each semester.

GVNSA Board members are elected each February. This allows for transition between the Boards to occur. The Board meets once a month to discuss business of the organization and holds a general monthly meeting for all constituents as well. At the Assembly meeting, GVNSA Board members are introduced, goals for the semester are discussed, and newly admitted students are introduced. In addition, student activities are highlighted, such as a panel of students who have done summer internships. During the MOCK convention, Robert's Rules of Order are reviewed and a resolution presented at the IANS or NSNA convention is presented and debated. MOCK convention supports the development of confidence in the political arena and pre-

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pares students for future political activity. At MOCK convention GVNSA resolutions that will be presented at either the IANS (state) convention or NSNA (national) convention are reviewed. Resolution authors have an opportunity to experience authentic resolution debate. The “Legislative Day” meeting, usually held in February, focuses on current issues in Iowa facing nurses and health care with guest speakers. Students have also used the “Legislative Day” to travel to the Iowa State capital and lobby legislators about current health care issues. Students find the lobbying to be empowering. At the biannual “Semi-Annual Influencing Nursing Practice and Policy” meeting, senior Board members receive NSNA Leadership U awards; the GVNSA Student of the Year is recognized; Stellar Chapter pins are given to students completing their first semester of the nursing program; and resolutions, community service, and Breakthrough to Nursing (BTN) projects are showcased.

### Stellar Chapter

GVNSA was recognized as a Stellar Chapter of NSNA in 2011 and renewed in 2016. To be recognized as a Stellar Chapter, an application detailing how the chapter has met criteria in five categories is provided. The categories are as follows: **Category I:** Official NSNA Constituency Status 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; and **Category V:** Support of NSNA Membership.

### Mentoring

Nursing students in the program are mentored by their peers from upper level courses, which fosters relationships in learning about the nursing profession (Logan, 1994). First semester students are assigned a mentor from third semester students. Fourth semester students are assigned a mentor from final semester students. The GVNSA Mentorship chair coordinates the mentoring with input from nursing faculty. During the first month of each semester, GVNSA hosts a mentor meeting. At this meeting, students discuss mentor meetings and mentor assignments particular to each course, and are introduced to their assigned mentor or protégé.

## Curricular Examples

### Professionalism I

In the first semester of nursing courses, students take Professionalism I. This course focuses on professional development, the history of the profession of nursing, exposure to research and evidence-based practice, advocacy, decision-making, leadership, collegueship, the health care delivery system, legal and ethical aspects of professional nursing practice, social responsibility, professional responsibility, and professional organizations. Each student is assigned to a GVNSA team. Teams are composed of four members: Breakthrough to Nursing (BTN), Community Health/Service, Delegate, and Resolution Writer. “Engagement in these roles allows students to value these aspects of their nursing career and make meaning of class concepts related to professionalism” (Logan et al., 2004, p. 59). The BTN member participates in various recruitment activities of GVNSA, such as Nursing Action Day (NAD). NAD is held each Fall, bringing prospective students to campus for an afternoon of tours, information, and hands-on activities in the Center for Learning (nursing arts lab). Implementation of a service-learning project through the Community Service/Health role is a form of “giving back” to society or social responsibility. The delegate serves as a delegate to the annual fall IANS convention. The resolution writer is responsible for coordinating the team effort to write and present a resolution related to a key issue discovered by the team. Team dialogue assists students in identifying an issue related to health care and nursing. This process engages students in the process and development of understanding the power of collective voice and the opportunity to affect change. In addition, resolution writing helps to connect the student to the professional organization. Thus, teams broaden their perspective from a narrow view of nursing responsibility in the workplace to a broader view of societal responsibility inherent in professional nursing practice (Logan & Franzen, 2001).

### Leadership Development

In semesters two through five, students are immersed in leadership development. Participation in local activities with GVNSA and service learning connected to courses, such as KEEP (kidney screening held annually at the university), and community health activities, such as hygiene drives, canned food drives, or diaper drives for local shelters. Students

may also adopt a local family through the elementary schools and provide a meal or clothing, serve as a student representative to Nursing Faculty committees (Curriculum or Admissions, Progression, Graduation, and Scholarships), or serve as an elected member of the GVNSA Board.

### Conventions

All Grand View nursing students and nursing faculty attend the IANS convention each fall. There is no “clinical” make-up because faculty view conventions as a “professional clinical.” GVNSA sends a full cadre of delegates to the IANS convention. Most years, three to six members of the GVNSA are elected to the IANS Board of Directors.

At the state level, students from Grand View serve as elected members of IANS Board of Directors, as a delegate to the state IANS convention, or present a resolution at the IANS convention. At the national level, students present resolutions at the annual NSNA convention, serve as a NSNA delegate to the House of Delegates, or serve on a national committee, such as resolutions or nominations and elections, or Council of State Presidents. In addition, students learn to embrace the professional values of altruism, autonomy, human dignity, integrity, and social justice. Students also begin to value and practice social responsibility. Mentor contacts are maintained throughout the process.

Faculty applaud students who attend state and national conventions. Student attendance and participation are considered crucial to professional development (Logan, 1994). When they return to campus the class time is spent discussing the convention and what students learned about leadership, professional organizations, advocacy, and professional responsibility.

### Capstone Course

In the final semester of the curriculum, students develop a policy related to a nursing issue in the form of a position paper, an organizational policy, or a resolution. Early in the curriculum, students are introduced to the professional responsibilities of professional nursing practice, including advocacy and the social responsibility to safeguard and defend social justice, particularly as it relates to health care. The Grand View model (Logan, Pauling, & Franzen, 2011) facilitates the development of the nurse’s role in policy advocacy and provides a structure for analyzing policy. Ultimately,

the model is a framework to guide and engage students in complexities of policy and acculturate them into the roles of professional nursing.

### Leadership U

Grand View students who have been active at the local GVNSA, state IANS, or national NSNA level receive formal recognition by receiving a NSNA Leadership U award at the end of the Grand View nursing education program. NSNA Leadership U was initiated in 1998-1999 as a mechanism for students to study and practice leadership and management skills. Leadership U is seen as “giving credit where credit is due”. More information is available at: <http://www.nсна.org/Membership/LeadershipUniversity.aspx>

### Curricular Revision

In the Fall of 2012, Grand View faculty began the process of curricular revision. Maintaining the NSNA thread and resultant leadership development was stressed. Student input, AACN Baccalaureate Essentials, current trends in nursing, and nursing education were considered. The beginning course, “Profes-

sionalism I” was combined with the other first semester course, “Caring,” into “The Caring Professional.” Previously identified course themes were maintained. Changes were made to the GVNSA team concept, with the roles of delegate and resolution writer removed. The revised curriculum was implemented in the Fall of 2015. Delegates from the beginning courses are now chosen from the entire student membership, with GVNSA Board members and any IANS Board members automatically having delegate status at the IANS state convention. Resolution writing was moved to the fourth semester of the program, an Adult Health course. Faculty believed students would have more exposure to health care and nursing after three semesters and be better able to identify issues for resolutions. TSM was also retained.

### Conclusion

At the 2016 NSNA convention, Drs. Logan and Pauling received national leadership awards. We wish to thank Dr. Mancino for her continued support over many years. However, if not for the faculty support for inserting meaningful activities throughout the curriculum, we

would not have been successful. Indeed, it was noted at the convention that Grand View University has submitted more resolutions for debate than any other school in the nation. We are so proud of our students. Our students connect to other students across the country as they engage in leadership activities. They know how to impact health care policy, which will become ever more important to the future of nursing and patient care. **DN**

### References

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## NSNA Stellar School Chapter Recognition Program

In its 7th year, the NSNA Stellar School initiative recognizes school chapters that demonstrate ongoing involvement in NSNA, 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 range of points will be awarded based on how applicants document examples of how 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:

- School chapters are recognized at the NSNA Annual Convention Opening Ceremony.
- School chapter representatives are invited on stage at the Closing Ceremony where they receive a beautiful certificate and Stellar School Pins.
- NSNA Stellar School Pin 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).
- Listing of NSNA Stellar Schools in program books, and *Imprint*.
- Profile NSNA Stellar Schools on the NSNA website ([www.nсна.org](http://www.nсна.org)), featuring the school's logo and link to the school website.

- The nursing program may add the NSNA Stellar School logo to their school publicity, website, social media, printed materials, student bulletin, etc., to “tell the world” they are recognized for their leadership and support of nursing student professional development.

### Other Information

- 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.
- Deadline for current academic year is received at NSNA Headquarters by February 8, 2017.
- NSNA Stellar School Chapter Recognition Program Application (<https://form.jotform.com/50404685468966>).

To request more information, email Cathy Ramos at [nsna@nsna.org](mailto:nsna@nsna.org) **DN**

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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, New Orleans, LA  
Pittsburg State University, Department of Nursing, Pittsburg, KS  
Reading Hospital School of Health Sciences, Reading, PA  
Riverside City College, School of Nursing, Riverside, CA  
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 Nebraska Medical Center, Scottsbluff, NE  
University of North Florida School of Nursing, Jacksonville, FL  
University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Memphis, TN  
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