May 10, 2022

Dear Chief Nurse Administrator,

I am writing to share several updates and announcements with all nursing education programs that are affiliated with the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). CCNE has some important news to share with you regarding 1) our return to the conduct of on-site evaluations in Fall 2022, 2) the upcoming standards revision process, and 3) the approved fees for fiscal year (FY) 2023.

1) As you know, COVID-19 has impacted our campuses and communities around the world. In the United States and its territories, our institutions of higher education and accrediting agencies have worked diligently to transition to the changing environment while continuing to offer high quality nursing education programs and produce well-prepared graduates. CCNE worked collaboratively with programs pursuing or maintaining accreditation by conducting virtual evaluations from Fall 2020 through Spring 2022, consistent with good accreditation practice and guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Education to all recognized accrediting agencies.

    At a recent meeting, the CCNE Board of Commissioners re-assessed this practice, considering the importance of continuing accreditation operations and the health and safety of our community of interest. I am pleased to share with you that CCNE will return to conducting *in-person* on-site evaluations this fall. Therefore, CCNE is planning for all Fall 2022 evaluations (as well as subsequent evaluations) to occur on site, not virtually.

    As programs continue to adapt in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board has affirmed that submission of a substantive change notification will not be required for temporary changes made by programs in the areas of a) method of program or course delivery or b) clinical practice experiences, in response to COVID-19. If such temporary changes extend past December 31, 2022, CCNE will consider those changes to be more permanent in nature, and a substantive change notification should be submitted. For further guidance, I invite you to review CCNE's *Information Regarding COVID-19 Impact on CCNE-Accredited Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs* (updated May 4, 2022).

2) This summer, CCNE will launch its systematic process for reviewing the standards for accreditation. The standards revision process is a planned activity that occurs every 5 years or sooner, if needed. A Standards Committee will be appointed to assist in coordinating the review of the standards. There will be multiple opportunities for members of CCNE's community of interest to provide input during the standards revision process. This will include opportunities to comment about CCNE's current (2018) *Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs* and to review and comment on any proposed revisions before they are approved by the CCNE Board.

    At its meeting on April 26-28, 2022, the CCNE Board affirmed that CCNE will continue to accredit nursing programs at the baccalaureate, master's, DNP, and post-graduate APRN certificate levels, acknowledging and respecting the autonomy of institutions within its community of interest and the diversity of nursing programs and their respective missions. The Board also affirmed that CCNE will continue to accredit master's programs with nurse educator tracks.

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As you know, revisions were recently made to *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education* [American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), 2021] and the *Standards for Quality Nurse Practitioner Education* [National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education (NTF), 2022]. Nursing programs that are working toward incorporation of the new AACN *Essentials* and/or the revised NTF *Standards* are welcome to move forward. CCNE is neither precluding programs from incorporating these updated professional nursing standards and guidelines nor mandating incorporation.
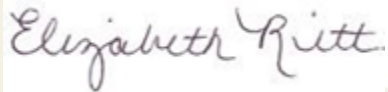
Please note that the 2018 CCNE *Standards* will remain in effect at least through December 31, 2023. Any nursing program that is submitting a report to CCNE or hosting a CCNE on-site evaluation in 2022 or 2023 must address its compliance with the 2018 CCNE *Standards*, which identify the previous editions of the *Essentials* and the 2016 NTF *Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs*. The *earliest* the CCNE Board anticipates approving revised *Standards* is Summer 2023. Consistent with best practice, the approved *Standards* would not go into effect until several months later. Therefore, CCNE anticipates that the revised *Standards* will go into effect for all programs no earlier than January 1, 2024. Adjustments may be necessary as the work of the Standards Committee progresses, and we keep constituents apprised of the timeline, as appropriate.

I encourage our community of interest to engage in the standards revision process by attending CCNE forums and commenting on the accreditation standards when these opportunities are made available. CCNE looks forward to hearing your perspectives as we engage in the 2022-2023 standards revision process.

3) Finally, I am pleased to share with you that, recognizing the challenges and fiscal constraints that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on its affiliated higher education institutions, the CCNE Board has voted for the third year in a row to keep CCNE's annual fees steady in FY 2023 (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023). In fact, you will see *no increase in any CCNE fee category*, illustrating CCNE's commitment to implementing an accreditation process that is efficient, cost-effective, and cost-accountable. Please take a moment to review the CCNE fee structure for nursing education programs.

If you have any questions about these important updates and announcements, please contact Dr. Daniel Michalski, CCNE Director of Accreditation Services, at dmichalski@ccneaccreditation.org.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Ritt

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Chair, CCNE Board of Commissioners