



## **Report on the Centralized Application Service (NursingCAS) March 2016**

Since October 2015 the following activities have been initiated by AACN and Liaison International staff to support the centralized application service. Liaison International provides the software, operations, processing, and support to users from participating schools at no cost.

**Current Operations:** The top priority for 2016 is user satisfaction, and several technological and operational improvements have been rolled out to support this goal. The service continues to grow with more than 15 new schools joining since last October. Applicant usage continues to be high with over 30,000 applications submitted between November 2015 and February 2016. Since the launch of new NursingCAS 3.0 platform in Fall 2014, over 100,000 applications have been initiated. February is the busiest month for operations since over 200 programs have deadlines that month. Despite significant growth and volume, application verification turnaround time has been on average 8 business days.

**NursingCAS is not just an application. It is powerful software and comprehensive service.**

- It is a Centralized Application Service for prospective students to research and apply for a nominal fee to RN diploma, associate degree, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral programs at participating nursing schools nationwide using one, online application. Schools can customize the design of their program home pages and requirements several ways.
- It is cloud-based admissions software (called WebAdMIT) that provides users from participating schools with a dashboard to access applicant data and manage their pool by using a variety of tools. This functionality includes the ability to score candidates based on custom criteria, track interviews, conduct an online review, calculate program-specific GPAs, send communications, create custom reports, and export data into internal student information and software systems.
- It is integrated administrative services that include the processing and management of transcripts, references, supporting materials, verification of transcript data and calculating GPAs, providing applicant service and support, and providing schools users with training and support.

**Key Technical and Service Improvements:** Phone line capacity increased by 100% and staffing increased by 65%. A call back feature was rolled out that allows applicants to request a call back from a NursingCAS representative instead of waiting on the line. A new "Check Status" feature on NursingCAS was added to the improved, top-level navigation that allows applicants to easily check the status of their transcripts at any time. A pilot project with Credential Solutions, a leading e-transcript provider, was launched to accept and process transcripts electronically. A new, dedicated Account Director with over 10 years of experience was put in place to direct the day-to-day operations and manage user requests and issues. An updated ticketing system was instituted for user inquires and issues in order to better track and

provide resolutions for end-users. Several initiatives to improve information sharing have been established. A Website dedicated to users from currently participating schools, [mynursingcas.org](http://mynursingcas.org), was developed in order to provide comprehensive resources and updates, and to share important information. A monthly NursingCAS email is also distributed to all users to highlight important items.

To ease the manual work involved in data integration from NursingCAS into school's existing student information systems, an Export API was released that allows users to automatically run export files from a back-end API.

A revamped version of the Configuration Tool that allows schools to customize their program listings on the application was released, and it includes a "Preview" and "Review" function. Now all programs must be reviewed and approved by a NursingCAS staff member before they are published on the application. Users can now preview how their programs will appear to applicants prior to publishing this information on the application.

### **Launching NursingCAS 4.0 and Establishing a Regular Cycle in 2016 and Beyond:**

Based on feedback from users, we have determined that moving towards an annual application cycle with NursingCAS is necessary for optimal operations and admissions workflow management. Two years of program data was analyzed to determine a feasible date for an annual cycle, and it was determined that August – August is the best timeframe primarily due to the fact that least number of deadlines occur in September. As a result, the NursingCAS 3.0 application, which has been open since October 15, 2014, will officially close on August 15, 2016.

The NursingCAS 4.0 application will open on August 25, 2016 and remain open through August 15, 2017. Applicants will be able to seamlessly carry over their data and transcripts from cycle to cycle, and their NursingCAS ID number will follow them throughout their academic progression. Several key enhancements will be rolled out with the launch of NursingCAS 4.0, including the ability to enforce reference requirements and a tool to execute batch PDF downloads of applications, transcripts, and other supporting documents. Programs that are not yet participating who wish to implement NursingCAS for the next cycle will be able to start onboarding to the system in June 2016.

**Outreach:** Since October 2015, staff and advisory group members have engaged in a variety of outreach activities to recruit and retain schools to the service and educate prospective students and applicants. Presentations were conducted at AACN's Baccalaureate Education Conference, Doctoral Education Conference, and Master's Education Conference with 250 people attending these sessions. In order to reach a broader audience the NursingCAS staff exhibited at the Organization for Associate Degree in Nursing Annual Convention in Jacksonville, FL.

Since the 2015 Fall Meeting, AACN staff has lead over 50 calls and 2 site visits to assist schools with the implementation process for NursingCAS by engaging with stakeholders on how to successfully transition to the online service. Regional training sessions are being planned for late summer and early fall. AACN staff will also be conducting sessions and exhibiting to prospective students at the National Student Nursing Association's (NSNA) Convention in April and the UC Davis Pre-Health Profession's Conference in October, as well as Health Professions week, which is planned for September 26 – 30<sup>th</sup>.