



Report from Like Schools 2015 Spring Annual Meeting

Group: Small/Liberal Arts Schools

Facilitator: Kathleen B. Scoble, EdD, Dean, School of Nursing, College of Our Lady of the Elms, Chicopee, MA

Agenda:

1. What value does Small/Liberal Arts Schools bring to AACN?
2. AACN may be lacking in a balanced representation on ballots and committees of small schools representatives; how can we be more representative?
3. How are people partnering with larger schools to share faculty and other resources?
4. What type of collaborative agreements do Small/Liberal Arts Schools have with community colleges?
5. How do you go about developing an endowed chair in a Small/Liberal Arts School?
6. What policies are in place to address the use of test banks for students?

Notes:

1. What value do small schools bring to AACN?
 - Is there a common definition of small schools? For example several “small schools” have more than 300 nursing students. Many are small and private, but very different missions/visions than some of the large private schools.
 - The liberal arts component and mission of the liberal arts schools represents a large number of this group and is one of the distinguishing characteristics.
 - The liberal arts purpose and values of many small liberal arts schools is thought to contribute to graduating a “different nurse.” This nurse is educated in various disciplines and is able to connect with patients on many levels. For others, they are often the only professional school on campus, the leading major, the largest program, and/or the school within the liberal arts college.
 - Also, the small liberal arts schools represent a “different student” ...these students are more often from their communities and thus, are representative of the region or community they will serve; they tend to remain in their communities to practice once graduated.
 - It was suggested that liberal arts colleges and schools of nursing meet the needs of their communities and in so doing admit students who often would not be admitted/accepted to the larger schools; this builds into teaching these students who may have unique challenges.

2. AACN may be perceived as lacking in a balanced representation on ballots and committees of small schools representatives.
 - Several agreed that they had volunteered for committees with no appointment or feedback. Two mentioned they had run on ballots with no success.
 - Truly, though, it was agreed that AACN is highly valued by the deans, directors, and chairs of small schools, but in brief, there is a desire for a more structured, intentional approach for balanced representation with the other constituencies.
3. Partnering with larger schools to share faculty and/or courses?
 - One example was a small school working with a larger school to dedicate seats for the DNP program.
 - Another example of collaboration: MSN/MBA where students graduate from a primary school but take classes from several schools with a revenue sharing model.
 - One school is currently exploring a DNP collaboration with two other schools where core courses are provided by one school and then students complete their midwifery specialty with other schools/programs throughout the state.
 - Another partnership included a sharing of faculty where one faculty develops the course objectives, exams, etc., and faculty from another school develops the content and teaches.
 - It was pointed out, though, that often there are many complexities that are associated with such partnerships (e.g., Who owns the faculty? Who evaluates them?).
4. What type of collaborative agreements do small liberal arts schools have with community colleges?
 - There are several partnerships in MA where RN-BS programs are offered onsite at community colleges; programs are designed for seamless progression from AD to BSN.
 - Several examples of dual enrollment agreements were noted, including the Ribbon Project in NC. It has public and private dual enrollment.
 - In some states, the public schools have universal articulation agreements where a standard number of credits are transferred. With this movement, private institutions are exploring the same model.
 - These articulation agreements, which in many cases do not require the same general education requirements, have presented challenges for some of the liberal arts schools.
 - A very successful and innovative program at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, NY was shared where students live on campus for 4 years, and complete their ADN the first two years followed by the BSN for the next 2 years. Completing both degrees in 4 years is completely seamless and less costly than two degrees in a traditional pathway.
 - A significant challenge noted by a few participants was the growing trend by community colleges to seek approval to deliver and award baccalaureate degrees.
 - In Michigan, community colleges have again returned to the legislature for approval to award the BSN. Of concern here is that of the 36 ADN programs in community colleges, only 16 are accredited. It was requested that AACN consider a position statement that does not support this trend.

- Finally, on this topic, the point was made that it is unfortunate that nursing programs at community colleges are often grouped with non-professional occupations when pursuing baccalaureate degree granting approvals and that our efforts must continue to dispel this and perhaps there is future promise in seeking nursing to be identified with STEM.

5. How are the small liberal arts schools developing endowed chair positions?

- A few schools have had experience in this and enjoy endowed positions.
- Great emphasis was placed on the need for deans, directors, and chairs to become very closely aligned with development offices in such efforts.
- An example was given of including a representative from development on the nursing program advisory committee. Thus, instilling a shared interest and passion from development for nursing that might not otherwise have occurred.
- Another suggestion: keep in close contact with alumni who make an impact within the community.
- Consider endowments be awarded to faculty, such as a Distinguished Faculty Award, to supplement salary. This can also be a strong recruitment strategy.
- Finally, our favorite suggestion – “snuggle up to the Board of Trustees!”
- Several cautions were posed in seeking an endowed position:
 - Donors may not always know how the money donated for the particular position is dispersed within the College (e.g., may be supporting another position or initiative).
 - When there is a donor for nursing, work closely with the development office to be sure the funds remain in nursing by providing them specific ideas of needs with the perspective of how the donation will make an impact on the nursing school and how the nursing program or school contributes to the goals of the College (i.e., with this support, the nursing program will achieve the enrollment projections for the next year).

6. What policies are in place to address the use of test banks for students?

- There is a growing trend of test banks being recalled because of breach of integrity (e.g., students gaining access or even purchasing test banks through the Internet).
- The picture of this challenge was painted by the following: One member shared her experience of a student who obtained access and claimed that she thought it was a study guide; the ability of students to obtain access easily by “Googling”; test banks being sold, etc.
- Test banks are widely used across the small schools and it was agreed that they are here to stay, given the enormous burden on faculty to write exams as well as an enormous stretch to expect all faculty to have the requisite skill and expertise needed for writing test questions.
- Several methods for averting such “cheating activity” were shared such as scrambling test questions, rotating questions each semester, and others.
- From a policy perspective, it was thought that this type of activity was best addressed through academic integrity policies. A resource in Higher Education Law was suggested to assist in reviewing and rewriting policy around this.

7. How are small schools handling the placement of out of state students?

- An experienced member in this matter reported on the complexities of placing out of state students.
- Each state has their own definition of “being physically present” and the state regulations are constantly changing, requiring schools to be very vigilant in monitoring what is required; this is very resource-dependent and in one college, which has resulted in a Compliance Officer; in another, a course release for faculty was granted.
- It is also important to be knowledgeable the requirements of the Board of Registration in Nursing (BORN) in your state who may require that faculty be licensed in another state if you have student placed there in residency.