



## **Report from Like Schools 2016 Spring Annual Meeting**

**Group:** *Small/Liberal Arts Schools*

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

### **1. What priorities would you suggest for AACN related to promoting diversity and inclusion?**

- A first priority would be to define “diversity” as it is a broad term...a specific definition of what comprises diversity for academic nursing would allow for setting goals and measuring outcomes and impact of future initiatives.
- A focus on learning disparities and learning deficiencies noted that this is a critical issue that prevents students from a wide range of cultural, ethical, and racial backgrounds either getting into a nursing program or succeeding.
- A focus on learning disparities and deficiencies pointed to a lack of sufficient support at the university or college level often leaving this responsibility to the School of Nursing or nursing program; and/or not providing supports that address the unique needs of the nursing student
- A focus on economic diversity – noted that it is difficult for many students to fund their education, often resulting in an interruption in continuing in a nursing program; and a challenged for many to go on to graduate schools.
- A focus on language capacity – many students, especially international students coming into the US with limited English proficiency, experience many academic challenges.

### **2. What barriers exist to creating a more inclusive community?**

- Difficulty recruiting diverse faculty with faculty salary levels a related barrier to this.
- The ability and preparation of a non-diverse faculty for working with diverse students. An example given was faculty’s ability to navigate conversations with students who are diverse.
- Lack of funding for nursing programs to provide academic supports needed for diverse nursing students such as tutoring
- Financial Aid as a barrier for students who may be more successful in an extended program of study but financial aid cannot be extended.

### **3. What information or resources are needed to support diversity and inclusion in your schools?**

- A report on best practices in diversity and inclusion initiatives that have demonstrated outcomes.
- Data driven resources for supporting diversity and inclusion in rural, small institutions.

#### ***Current initiatives regarding diversity and inclusion were shared and included:***

- One school has added to the nursing program an “Educational Support Specialist.” This is a non-nurse educational specialist that works with students who are academically challenged.
- Regarding English proficiency, one dean reported that her program with an enrollment of totally diverse students, when observing students across the program to be struggling academically, conducted reading testing and found that the majority of her students were tested at a 4th grade reading level. This dean added the Kurzweil Program, which provides computerized language support via translation.
- Using graduate students in nursing to assist undergraduate nursing students who need assistance in reading, A & P, and others.
- Peer mentors used to support students; the peer mentors are students who benefited from mentoring themselves and thus are very committed to assisting other students.
- Faculty are assigned students for tutoring. This is built into the faculty’s job description.
- Partnerships with hospitals to develop joint appointment for teaching and program administration.

#### **Other Topics:**

- Brief discussion regarding requirements that are used for NCLEX Preparation and for students who do not pass NCLEX on the first sitting.
- A question was posed regarding requirements for a department or division of nursing to become a school of nursing; a literature search on this yielded no resources. It was noted that the requirements for this are generally institutionally driven. However, a longer discussion on this with shared experiences would be helpful in the future.