

# Academic Nursing Leadership Conference

November 1-3, 2025 | Washington, DC

TRANSFORM • CONNECT • LEARN • LEAD

The Future in Focus: Empowering Academic Nursing Leaders to Drive Innovation and Impact

## - PROGRAM SCHEDULE -

November 1-3, 2025  
JW Marriott | Washington, DC

### Learning Outcomes for the Educational Sessions:

- Understand issues and opportunities connected to using AI to augment student learning, enhance faculty effectiveness, and improve the overall quality of healthcare services.
- Describe the value and impact of nursing science and nursing expertise in high stakes health policy settings and explore current opportunities and challenges in health policy engagement.
- Build new peer connections through structured, purposeful conversations and generate innovative ideas to address critical topics through experience-informed discussions that go beyond what any individual or institution would achieve alone.

### Nursing Continuing Professional Development:



The American Association of Colleges of Nursing is accredited as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

Attendees will be awarded continuing nursing professional development (NCPD) credit for the sessions they attend and evaluate.

Up to 11.25 NCPD credits are available for attendance.

There are no conflicts of interest or relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies to disclose for any individual in a position to control content for this education activity.

*\*NCPD credit available*

## Saturday, November 1

12:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

**Registration Open**

**Grand Ballroom Foyer**

12:30-1:15 p.m.

**First-Time Attendee Meet & Greet**

**Russell, Hart, Cannon (Meeting Room Level)**

*Hosted by the AACN Program Committee*

1:30-2:30 p.m.

**Welcome & Opening Plenary\***

**Grand Ballroom**

**Integrating AI and Innovation: Uncovering the Critical Issues**

Academic and practice leaders will share their thoughts on how artificial intelligence is driving innovation in nursing pedagogy and practice. The panel will consider issues and opportunities connected to using AI to augment student learning, enhance faculty effectiveness, and improve the overall quality of healthcare services.

*Speakers: Kenya Beard, EdD, APRN, Dean and Professor, School of Nursing, Mercy University;*

*Susan Grant, PhD, RN, Chief Clinical Officer, symplr; Deborah Jones, PhD, RN, Senior Vice President and Dean, School of Nursing, UTMB Health; and Jerry Mansfield, PhD, RN, Vice President and System Chief Nursing Executive, UTMB Health*

2:30-2:45 p.m.

**Networking Break with Peers**

2:45-3:45 p.m.

**Plenary\***

**Grand Ballroom**

**Communicating the Value of Nursing Science to the Public and Policymakers**

Join a distinguished panel of thought leaders as they share their insights and expertise on communicating the value and impact of nursing science on shaping public policy and practice. This event will explore the [Vision for American Science and Technology \(VAST\)](#). Report framework and its role in informing both short and long-term policy discussions. Learn how these influential leaders use the VAST framework and other approaches to advance nursing science and its implications across academic programs.

*Speakers: Sudip Parikh, PhD, CEO American Association for the Advancement of Science;*

*Sarah Szanton, PhD, RN, Dean and Professor, School of Nursing, Johns Hopkins University; and Antonia M. Villarruel, PhD, RN, Dean and Professor, Penn Nursing, University of Pennsylvania*

3:45-4:15 p.m.

**Networking Break with Peers**

4:15-5:30 p.m.

**Rounds with AACN Leadership\***

**Grand Ballroom**

Join AACN leadership for updates on the association's priorities, strategic initiatives, and new developments. AACN Board Chair Jean Giddens and President/CEO Deborah Trautman provide an overview of the association's work to transform academic nursing and serve our members. Ask questions and learn more about how these initiatives can impact and elevate your school of nursing.

*Speakers: Jean Giddens, PhD, RN, Chair, AACN Board of Directors, and Dean and Professor, School of Nursing, University of Kansas, and Deborah Trautman, PhD, RN, President and Chief Executive Officer, American Association of Colleges of Nursing*

## Saturday, November 1

5:45-6:30 p.m.

**New Member Orientation and Wine&Cheese Social** *Penn Avenue Terrace (Lobby Level)*  
Hosted by AACN's Board of Directors and Membership Committee

6:45 p.m.

### Optional Networking Dinners

Looking to build meaningful connections beyond the conference sessions? Join fellow participants for an informal evening of networking over delicious local cuisine. This dinner offers a relaxed setting to exchange ideas, share experiences, and strengthen professional relationships. Simply choose from our list of recommended restaurants at the registration desk and sign up to join a group. Attendees are responsible for their own meals and any shared transportation costs.

*The dinners are scheduled for 6:45 p.m. – participants meet at 6:30 p.m. in the hotel lobby.*

## Sunday, November 2

6:30-7:30 a.m.

### Running and Walking Groups

Meet with other early risers at the hotel entrance on Pennsylvania Avenue for a 30-minute run or 60-minute morning walk.

7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

### Registration Open

*Grand Ballroom Foyer*

7:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

### Exhibitor Showcase Open

*Capital Ballroom & Foyer*

Explore a dynamic showcase of innovative products, services, and solutions designed to support your school of nursing. Discover new resources and connect with potential strategic partners who can help address institutional challenges and advance your mission.

*The Exhibitor Showcase is open only on Sunday.*

7:30-9:00 a.m.

### Breakfast with Exhibitors

*Capitol Ballroom & Foyer*

7:30-9:00 a.m.

### State Grassroots Liaison (SGL) Breakfast\*

*Russell/Hart/Cannon (Meeting Room Level)*

This event offers an opportunity for current State Grassroots Liaisons (SGLs) to gain additional insight as they prepare their state delegations for the ANLC Hill day. SGLs are dedicated Deans, Directors, or Chairs, who have been selected to serve in this role and who understand the importance of strengthening the connection between their members of Congress and AACN. If you are a Dean, Director, or Chair, interested in becoming an SGL, email Rachel Minahan ([rminahan@aacnnursing.org](mailto:rminahan@aacnnursing.org)) to learn more.

**Sunday, November 2**

8:30-9:30 a.m.

**Coffee & Connect\***

Start your day with us! Bring your breakfast and connect with colleagues while discovering new ways to engage with AACN.

- **Access, Connection, and Engagement Opportunities at AACN** *Congressional Room (Lobby Level)*  
Join colleagues to explore access, connection, and engagement opportunities through ACE programs, networking, and resources with AACN.
- **Leadership Development Opportunities at AACN** *Justice (Meeting Room Level)*  
Join colleagues to explore leadership development opportunities through LEADS programs, networking, and resources with AACN.
- **Volunteer Opportunities at AACN** *Longworth (Meeting Room Level)*  
Join colleagues to explore volunteer opportunities and member engagement with AACN.

8:30-9:30 a.m.

**Solution Circles\***

Join industry experts to consider strategies for addressing current challenges in academic nursing. In a collaborative and educational format, vendors will engage in interactive discussions to foster peer-to-peer dialogue and share new and innovative solutions.

*Disclaimer: AACN does not endorse any products, services, or views expressed by the presenters.*

- **AI's Role in Nursing Education Assessments** *State (Meeting Room Level)*

*Sponsored and presented by NurseAchieve*

This presentation reveals groundbreaking research from NurseAchieve on the role of AI in nursing education. The session will explore nurse educators' ability to discern between AI and human-generated NCLEX-style questions, compare the perceived quality of each, and quantify the significant efficiency gains possible with AI. Attendees will enjoy a live demonstration of NurseAchieve's AI Item Generator, a revolutionary new tool that automatically creates high-quality NCLEX-style questions and detailed rationales in minutes, empowering educators to build robust assessments and custom question banks with unprecedented speed.

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- **From Gaps to Gains | Using Technology to Transform Nursing Competency Alignment**

*Sponsored and presented by iDesign*

*Commerce (Meeting Room Level)*

Nursing programs nationwide are striving to implement and align with the AACN Essentials while advancing a shift toward competency-based education. Although the advantages of this transition are well recognized, progress is frequently hindered by faculty workload demands, variability in curricular mapping practices, and constrained institutional resources. This collaborative discussion will highlight shared challenges across institutions, surface innovative solutions, and give participants a tangible action plan to take back to their teams.

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**Sunday, November 2**

• **Redefining What's Possible**

**Treasury (Meeting Room Level)**

*Sponsored and presented by American Nurses Association*

The Advanced Practice Initiatives & Certification Outreach Team is dedicated to supporting Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) in achieving professional excellence and advancing their careers. This session will explore the expanding impact of APRNs, demonstrating how their expertise extends beyond direct patient care into leadership, advocacy, mentorship, research, academia, and other areas that shape the future of healthcare. Participants will gain insight into ANCC support, and certification pathways that facilitate role transitions and professional advancement. The session will also highlight educational focused webinar series, which provides free Continuing Nursing Education (CNE) and Pharmacology credits to APRNs. Attendees will discover opportunities to engage as leaders and learners to advance the APRN profession.

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9:30-10:00 a.m.

**Networking with Exhibitors**

**Capital Ballroom & Foyer**

10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

**AACN Community Conversations\***

**Grand Ballroom**

Connect with your colleagues in this dynamic session designed to enrich your conference experience. Through group conversations on topics of shared interest, you'll gain fresh insights, identify ways to address challenges, and build community. Whether you're seeking inspiration or navigating complex concerns, this is your space to engage, collaborate, and shape the future of academic nursing.

12:00-1:30 p.m.

**Lunch (on your own) & Networking with Exhibitors**

12:15-1:15 p.m.

**Brown Bag Lunch & Conversations\***

**Treasury (Meeting Room Level)**

**Deans of Minority Serving Institutions**

This session explores opportunities and challenges of Deans of nursing schools with high enrollment of students of color.

12:15-1:15 p.m.

**NursingCAS Luncheon**

**Russell/Hart/Cannon (Meeting Room Level)**

**A Demonstration of the Student Application and Admissions Management Portal**

Discover NursingCAS, AACN's free student application service that provides member colleges with an online platform to efficiently manage all aspects of the admission process. Using this service, schools are able streamline their recruitment operations, gain access to powerful enrollment management software, expand their customer service capacity, and reach a national applicant pool. Learn why nearly 300 colleges of nursing used NursingCAS during the last enrollment cycle to process more than 115,000 nursing school applications.

*Pre-Registration required [here](#). Limited seating. Those who register after 10/22 may not have special dietary requests honored.*

Sunday, November 2

12:15-1:15 p.m.

**Solution Circles\***

Join industry experts to consider strategies for addressing current challenges in academic nursing. In a collaborative and educational format, vendors will engage in interactive discussions to foster peer-to-peer dialogue and share new and innovative solutions.

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• **From Data to Decisions: How Nursing Programs Use Benchworks to Drive Results**

*Sponsored and presented by Benchworks by Elentra Longworth (Meeting Room Level)*

Collecting survey data is the easy part. Using it to tell a story that proves results, guides curriculum decisions, and supports accreditation is where Benchworks makes the difference. This session features real examples of nursing programs tracking progress over multiple years, making informed changes, and producing clear evidence of success. You'll learn how programs are finding more value in their data—because they're using Benchworks, not just running surveys.

*Bring your own lunch.*

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• **Restoring the Nurse Educator Within**

*Commerce (Meeting Room Level)*

*Sponsored and presented by ATI*

In the evolving landscape of nursing education, faculty well-being is not a luxury—it's a necessity. Restoring the Nurse Educator Within invites participants to reconnect with their professional purpose, strengthen their inner resilience, and engage more meaningfully with their roles as educators. Grounded in current evidence, this presentation explores the state of well-being in nursing education, highlighting the personal and systemic factors that shape faculty engagement. Participants will examine how cultivating resilience, moral courage, and a sense of purpose can positively impact professional fulfillment. Strategies to support personal well-being will provide educators with a restorative space to realign, recharge, and reimagine their role in nursing education.

1:30-2:30 p.m.

**AACN Community Conversations & Reflections\***

*Grand Ballroom*

Continue the conversation with your peers in this interactive afternoon session. Building on insights gathered from the morning dialogue, you'll synthesize ideas, deepen understanding, and strengthen professional connections. Together, we'll generate practical ideas for moving forward as a community of engaged leaders.

2:30-3:00 p.m.

**Networking with Peers & Exhibitors**

*Capitol Ballroom & Foyer*

3:00-4:00 p.m.

**Plenary\***

*Grand Ballroom*

**Bridging the Gap: Leadership in Academic Nursing and Higher Education**

This session delves into the dynamic landscape of higher education, emphasizing unique challenges and trends affecting leadership in higher education. Drawing from their extensive experience, the presenters will discuss key issues and emerging trends in the field. Attendees will gain valuable insights into strategies for fostering resilience, adaptability, and excellence in nursing education and leadership roles.

*Speakers: Susan Resneck Pierce, PhD, President of SRP Consulting, LLC, President Emerita of University of Puget Sound and Lee Gardner, Senior Writer, The Chronicle of Higher Education*

## Sunday, November 2

4:00-4:30 p.m.

**Networking with Peers & Exhibitors**

**Capitol Ballroom & Foyer**

4:30-5:30 p.m.

**John P. McGovern Lectureship Award\***

**Grand Ballroom**

**Advancing Health Through Public Policy: Lessons Learned from a Nurse's Career**

*This award honors John P. McGovern for his noted clinical practice and research, and distinguished record of scholarship, skill, and service.*

Join one of nursing's most impactful advocates who will recount meaningful experiences in nursing education and practice that guided her toward a career in public policy. Dr. Wakefield will touch on the importance of nursing expertise in the high-stakes health policy arena, along with current opportunities and challenges in public policy engagement.

*Speaker: Mary K. Wakefield, PhD, RN, Former Acting Deputy Secretary, U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services*

5:30-6:30 p.m.

**Academic Nursing Leaders Networking Reception**

**Capitol Ballroom**

Join us for our Networking Reception to enjoy light refreshments and engage in conversation with friends, colleagues, and exhibitors.

## Monday, November 3

6:30-7:30 a.m.

**Running and Walking Groups**

Meet with other early risers at the hotel entrance on Pennsylvania Avenue for a 30-minute run or 60-minute morning walk.

6:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**Registration Open**

**Grand Ballroom Foyer**

7:00-9:00 a.m.

**Light Continental Breakfast**

**Capitol Ballroom Foyer**

7:30-8:30 a.m.

**Coffee & Connect\***

Bring your breakfast and join your colleagues for informal networking and dialogue. Come share your insights while listening to and learning from your peers serving in similar leadership roles.

- **Associate and Assistant Dean Dialogue**

*State (Meeting Room Level)*

Associate and Assistant Deans are invited to this informal dialogue to discuss current and relevant issues unique to the role. Come ask your questions, connect with peers, and embrace the unique opportunity to engage in thought-provoking in-person conversation.

**Monday, November 3**

- **Experienced Dean Dialogue** *Treasury (Meeting Room Level)*  
Experienced deans are invited to this informal dialogue to collect and discuss current and relevant issues informed by the experienced leader. Come connect with peers and embrace the unique opportunity to engage in thought-provoking in-person conversation.
- **New Dean Dialogue** *Commerce (Meeting Room Level)*  
New deans are invited to this informal dialogue to hear about the AACN resources helping you boost your leadership journey. Come ask your questions, connect with peers, and embrace the unique opportunity to engage in thought-provoking in-person conversation.

8:45-9:45 a.m.

**AACN Membership Meeting & Award Recognitions**

*Grand Ballroom*

9:45-10:30 a.m.

**Networking with Peers**

10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

**Preparing for Today's Capitol Hill Visits**

*Grand Ballroom*

**Tips and Tools for Effective Advocacy**

Join us for practical information, insights, and guidance in preparation for your Monday afternoon Capitol Hill Visits with Members of Congress and their staff. Attendees will be seated with their state delegations. This session is facilitated by AACN Government Affairs and Policy Staff and our partners at Soapbox.

1:00-5:00 p.m.

**Capitol Hill Visits**

Join academic nursing leadership and advocate for the top issues impacting nursing education on Capitol Hill.

*Bus service to Capitol Hill begins at 12:00 p.m. from the JW Marriott (Pennsylvania Avenue entrance) with continuous loops until 6:00 p.m.*

1:00-5:30 p.m.

**Caucus and Connect**

Enjoy light refreshments and snacks in-between your Capitol Hill Visits at Caucus and Connect.

## PROGRAM ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Program Planning Committee

Donna Havens, PhD, Villanova University (*Chair*)  
Pamela Jeffries, PhD, Vanderbilt University  
Cynthia Rubenstein PhD, Randolph-Macon College  
Versie Johnson-Mallard PhD, Kent State University  
Rhoberta Haley, PhD, Pacific Lutheran University (*Board Liaison*)

### AACN GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS:

#### VISIONARY



#### CHAMPION



#### ADVOCATE

