



Aligning the AACN Essentials Domains and ACE with UCF College of Nursing, Department of Nursing Systems: Annual Evaluation Standards and Procedures

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Abstract

Aligning the AACN Essentials Domains with UCF CON Department of Nursing Systems

In October 2025, the Annual Evaluation Standards and Procedures (AESP) Committee circulated an updated AESP through College of Nursing (CON) departments, Faculty Association, the Dean's and Provost's office where it was provisionally approved. It was a system of checkbox items and 1-page narrative. Leadership recommended a revision that emphasizes overall impact rather than reliance on a check box and points system. By November 2026, subgroups were formed in the Department of Nursing Systems to develop a novel AESP. The AESP is now aligned with AACN Domains 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10, is approved by department faculty members, the Dean and Provost.

Introduction

A novel AESP was designed to emphasize systems-level nursing, informatics, leadership, and professional development tailored for faculty across ranks. Developed by strategically layering AACN Essentials Domains with ACE, UCF CON Systems Expectations, CON Strategic Map (2023-2027), and UCF Unleashing Potential - Building the University for the Future (2022-2027). Department faculty responses contributed to identification of priority areas; online education quality and student connectedness, faculty mentoring and development, research and scholarly engagement, well-being and belonging, innovation and technology, and partnerships. These themes were integrated into the plan at the goal and AESP level to ensure shared ownership while maintaining alignment with college and university priorities.

Methods and Materials

- AACN Essentials Domains 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, and 10
- CON Teaching, Research, Service; UCF College of Nursing Systems Department Expectations
- Former Check box system of AESP
- CON Strategic Map (2023-2027)
- UCF Unleashing Potential Building the University for the Future (2022-2027)

Microsoft Copilot was used to reveal themes, layers, and alignment

Meetings (November 2025 – April 2026): Weekly/ bi-weekly mainly in-person to support creative ideation and clear communication.

Subgroup Composition: 1)*Department of Nursing Systems Chair & Professor; 2)*Associate Professor – Research, 3) Co-Director of Nurse Executive DNP Program & *Associate Professor; 4) Co-Director of Nurse Executive DNP Program & Lecturer; 5) Site Coordinator for SSC/USCF Concurrent Nursing Program & Associate Lecturer, and 6) Lecturer

* = tenured

Discussion

The strategic funnel emphasizes three priorities— Academic Excellence & Student Success, Faculty & Staff Development, Culture, and Organizational Effectiveness, and Research, Scholarship, and Community Impact—each mapped to an ACE pillar and aligned with UCF strategic pillars. Priority 1 centers on expanding accessible, asynchronous learning; Priority 2 focuses on building connection through onboarding and mentorship; Priority 3 targets growth in scholarship and partnerships.

Interpretation and Implications

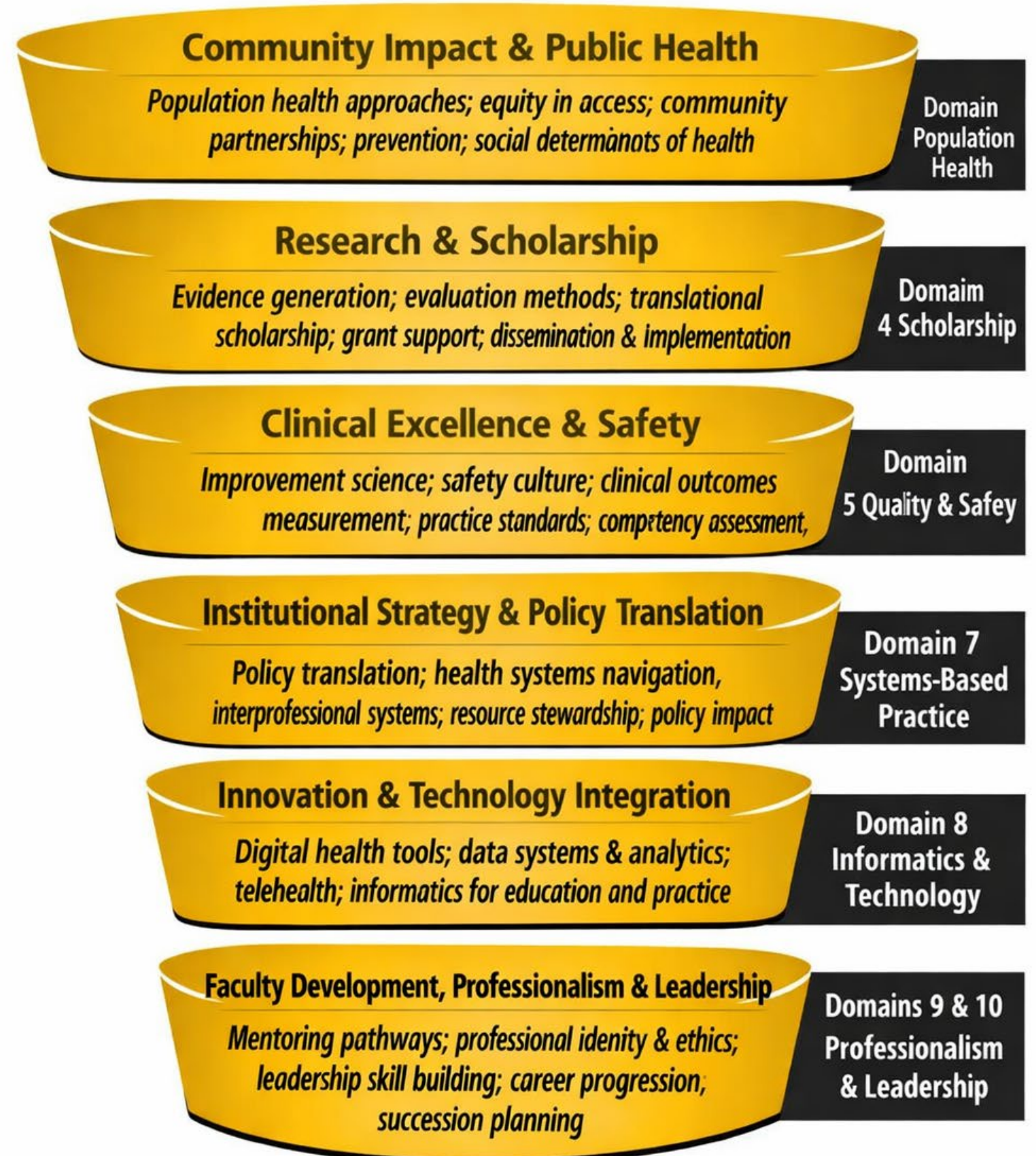
- The Department's funnel model tightly aligns its three priorities with UCF institutional pillars, the College of Nursing strategic pillars, and the AESP framework, creating a clear line from mission to measurable strategies and accountability.
- **This integration positions the department to leverage institutional resources for access, workforce development, and research impact while requiring explicit operational plans and metrics.**

Figure 1. AESP - Essentials – ACE Alignment

AESP Priority Area	AACN Essentials Domain	ACE Pillar	Integrated Interpretation
Community Impact & Public Health	3 – Population Health	Access	Access to population-health learning, community partnerships, prevention strategies, community well-being.
Research & Scholarship	4 – Scholarship for the Nursing Discipline	Engagement	Scholarly engagement where faculty, students, and staff participate in evidence generation, dissemination, and translational science.
Clinical Excellence & Safety	5 – Quality & Safety	Connection	Connections across clinical partners & shared safety culture
Institutional Strategy & Policy Translation	7 – Systems-Based Practice	Engagement	Engaged leadership, health-system; policy stakeholders to translate evidence into practice and navigate complex systems.
Innovation & Technology Integration	8 – Informatics & Healthcare Technologies	Access	Access to digital tools, telehealth, analytics, informatics, resources that strengthen education & practice.
Faculty Development, Professionalism & Leadership	9 & 10 – Professionalism; Leadership; Development	Connection + Engagement	Connection through mentoring and leadership pathways, fostering engaged participation, professional identity formation, succession planning.

Figure 1. AESP and CON Alignment with AACN - Funnel Model

AESP Alignment with AACN Essentials



Results

After approximately 5 months and numerous iterations, the final AESP was approved by the Department of Nursing Systems, the Dean, and Provost. Implementation will begin in 2026 - 2027

Conclusions

Alignment with AESP and AACN priorities

AESP alignment: The funnel model operationalizes AESP pillars — Access, Connection, Engagement — by mapping each priority to a pillar and specifying goals and strategies that drive measurable outcomes.

The plan aligns with AACN priorities by:

- Advancing academic excellence through evidence-based online pedagogy and simulation (education quality and competency-based outcomes).
- Strengthening the workforce via faculty development, mentorship, and shared governance (faculty well-being and professional development).
- Expanding research and partnerships to address population health and practice transformation (scholarship, interprofessional collaboration, and community engagement).

Contact

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Rebecca Koszalinski, PhD, MS, RN, CRRN, FIEL, FARN, FAAN

Biography

Dr. Rebecca Koszalinski investigates the relationships between air, water, the environment, and health outcomes supported by the Florence Nightingale's Environmental Theory (1860), which argues that optimal health and healing is gained through five "canons", including clean air and water. This research is further underpinned by Ray's Theory of Bureaucratic Caring (BCT) (Koszalinski, Wilson, & Schaefer, 2026) which guides practice, education and research in Human Health Outcomes research. The underpinning of Harmful Algal Bloom Research with BCT further aligns nursing practice, education and research with interprofessional scientists (oceanographers, epidemiologists, bench and clinical nurses, nursing students, biomedical science and biotechnology) to evaluate significant health care implications of potential toxin exposures. Rebecca is the primary investigator of the Human Health Outcomes of Exposure to Environmental Toxins Lab (HHOT) (<https://nursing.ucf.edu/research-faculty/research-areas/human-health-outcomes-of-exposure-to-environmental-toxins-lab/>) and the primary investigator of Health Outcomes Associated with Algal Blooms of Cyanobacteria (microcystis) and Red Tide (*K. brevis*) in Florida: Long-Term Health Impacts of Harmful Algal Bloom Exposure, Phase 2, study funded by the Florida Department of Health. She is also an expert in the use of smart technology in research including investigation of respiratory health outcomes in environmental workers who collect air, water and human samples during bloom periods and other patient-facing technological innovations.

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