

Staying Connected: A Pilot Study of New Alumni Engagement and Database Development in a School of Nursing

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BACKGROUND

- Maintaining connections with nursing graduates post-graduation is challenging
- The first year after graduation is critical for professional identity and belonging
- Alumni serve as resources for mentorship, preceptorship, and faculty development

PURPOSE

- Evaluate a 12-month alumni engagement initiative
- Maintain connection with new graduates
- Develop a centralized alumni database
- Strengthen professional identity and belonging
- Build a pipeline for mentors, preceptors, and faculty

SPECIFIC AIMS

1. Develop and implement a centralized alumni database
2. Evaluate participation in alumni outreach over 12 months
3. Explore alumni perceptions of connection and belonging

SIGNIFICANCE

- Early alumni engagement supports professional transition, belonging, and workforce development
- Potential to create a sustainable network of engaged alumni
- Addresses gap in nursing education literature on alumni engagement

INNOVATION

- Combines digital and relational strategies
- Centralized database + LinkedIn alumni group
- Structured email outreach
- Optional virtual/in-person events
- Low-cost, scalable model



METHODS

- Design: Descriptive pilot study
- Participants: Recent nursing graduates (within one year)
- Intervention: 12-month engagement including database completion, LinkedIn group, quarterly emails, and optional networking

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

- Quantitative: Database completion, survey responses, LinkedIn activity, event participation
- Qualitative: Open-ended feedback on connection and engagement
- Analysis: Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis

EXPECTED OUTCOMES & NEXT STEPS

- Demonstrate feasibility of early outreach
- Increase alumni connection to SLU
- Identify potential mentors and faculty
- Expand to mentorship programs and city-based networks

REFERENCES

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IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING EDUCATION

- Intentional alumni engagement supports graduate transition
- Strengthens long-term academic and clinical partnerships
- Provides a replicable framework for schools of nursing



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Biography

Cristina McGroarty, PhD, RN, CNE, is an Associate Professor at Saint Louis University's Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing, where she serves as the Traditional BSN Coordinator for Junior and Senior Level students. Her clinical practice has focused on pediatric hematology/oncology and public health for over 35 years. She teaches pediatric nursing and senior synthesis courses and is deeply committed to supporting students' professional identity formation and transition to practice.

Dr. McGroarty's scholarship focuses on Jesuit nursing education, professional identity development, alumni engagement, and innovative strategies to strengthen the nursing workforce. She is a proud graduate of two Jesuit institutes of higher education and her work integrates the Jesuit principle of cura personalis to foster meaningful connections among students, graduates, and the nursing profession.

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