



Building an Academic Practice Partnership to Improve Graduate Nursing Recruitment

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Background

- NP/DNP enrollment growth slowed after COVID-19.
- >439 DNP programs nationally increase recruitment competition.
- AACN supports academic-practice partnerships to improve recruitment, retention, and workforce development.
- Shared Catholic mission alignment may strengthen sustainable nursing pipelines.

Frameworks

Systems Theory:

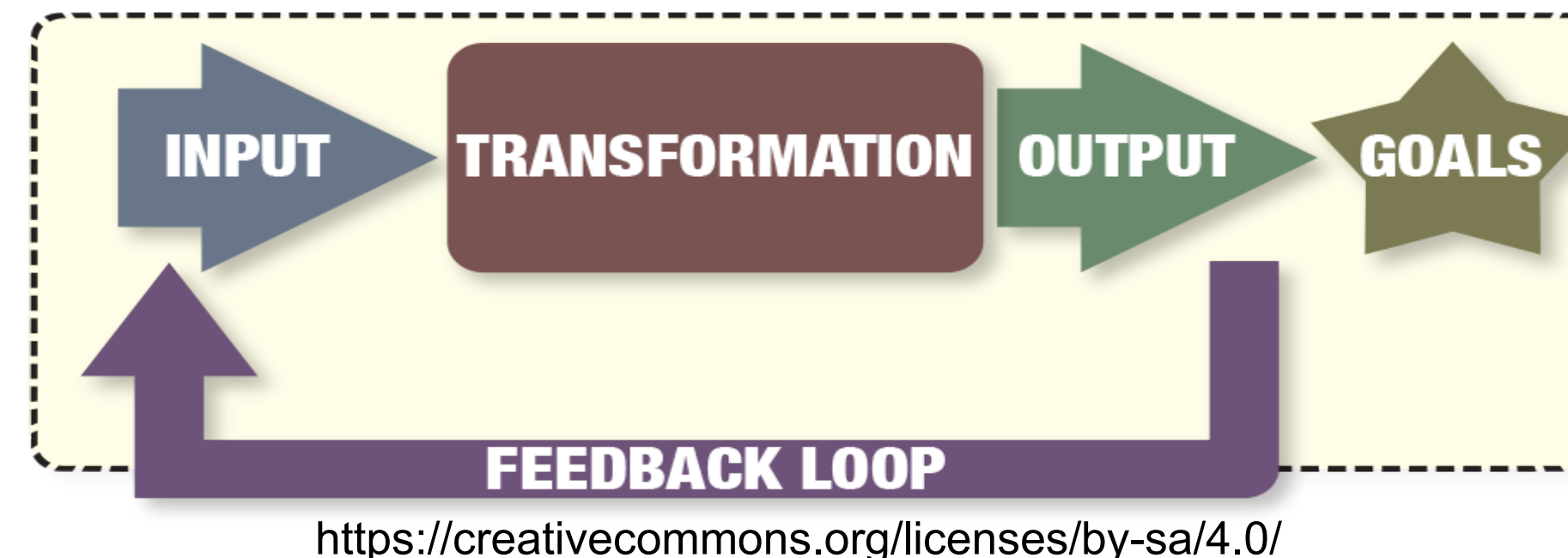
Inputs (Resources & Goals): The organizations have a shared vision, mutual investments (time, staff, money), one has practice resources the other academic resources.

Transformation (Processes): Collaboration to fill nurse practice gaps in their healthcare system, with meeting recruitment and retention goals for the school of nursing.

Outputs (Desired Results): Increased bedside nurses, nurse leaders, and APRN retention rates across their healthcare system, and improved and sustained student recruitment for the school of nursing.

EPIS Framework:

Exploration, Preparation, Implementation, Sustainment



Project Aims

1. Develop an academic-practice partnership with a Catholic Healthcare system.
2. Support workforce development and graduate recruitment.
3. Improve recruitment of diverse graduate nursing students.

**Academic-
Practice
Partnership**

Planned Outcomes

- Cohort size
- Enrollment trends
- Retention rates
- Graduation rates
- Workforce retention
- Diversity recruitment metrics

Methods

- Leadership meetings were initiated April 2026.
- Strategic planning event held with both entities at the school on nursing May 2026.
- Key stakeholders and shared goals identified.
- Recruitment priorities and timelines established.
- Current phase: Exploration & Preparation.

Discussion / Conclusions

- Literature strongly supports academic-practice partnerships.
- Early collaboration demonstrated mission and workforce alignment.
- Shared leadership and structured collaboration appear foundational for sustainability.
- Future implementation phases will evaluate recruitment outcomes.

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References





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Biography

Mary “Cari” Selzer is an acute care nurse practitioner, academic leader, and clinician educator with more than 30 years of experience in emergency, trauma, critical care, and advanced nursing education. She currently serves as Associate Dean for Online Learning, Program Director for the Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP) program, and Clinical Assistant Professor at the The Catholic University of America Conway School of Nursing.

Dr. Selzer earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from Missouri State University and her Master of Science in Acute Care Nursing from Loyola University Chicago. Her clinical career has focused on trauma and emergency care, including roles as a flight nurse, trauma nurse practitioner, emergency department clinician, and EMS educator. She currently practices part-time as a Trauma Nurse Practitioner at John Peter Smith Health Network, where she previously served as Director of Surgery and Surgical Specialty Advanced Practice.

A passionate advocate for graduate nursing education, Dr. Selzer has led the development of competency-based curricula, simulation initiatives, and innovative academic-practice partnerships designed to strengthen nurse practitioner preparation and workforce readiness. Her teaching experience spans undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral nursing education, with expertise in acute care, pathophysiology, pharmacology, clinical reasoning, and advanced practice leadership.

Dr. Selzer is actively engaged in scholarship, research, and professional service. She has authored and contributed to multiple textbook chapters focused on shock, trauma, burns, and critical care, and has presented nationally on geriatric trauma and advanced practice provider leadership. Her work also includes grant-funded initiatives supporting workforce development, simulation, and healthcare innovation.

Throughout her career, Dr. Selzer has remained committed to mentorship, interprofessional collaboration, and advancing the role of nurse practitioners in complex healthcare environments. Her leadership combines extensive frontline clinical expertise with a deep dedication to preparing the next generation of advanced practice nurses.

Contact Information



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