



American Association
of Colleges of Nursing

The Voice of Academic Nursing

ACCESS CONNECTION ENGAGEMENT

PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

A GUIDE TO AACN'S ACCESS, CONNECTION, AND ENGAGEMENT (ACE) OFFERINGS

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) is a leading advocate for inclusive excellence in nursing. AACN offers programs and resources to help nursing schools develop, promote, and advance initiatives focused on access, connection, and engagement for all.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

ACE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

This transformative enrichment experience is designed for those committed to enhancing access, strengthening connection, and facilitating engagement within higher education and academic nursing.

Who Should Attend?

Individuals committed to:

- **Advancing** ACE initiatives to support your institution's strategic plan, vision, and mission.
- **Developing** new community connections.
- **Connecting** research, assesment, and experience to excellence in academic nursing.
- **Building** new knowledge and skill in change theories to enhance ability to lead, manage, and adapt to evolving organizational needs.

Time Commitment

Fellows will meet via a virtual platform for 10 hours per month. Support by the dean or supervisor is required. Participants are encouraged to commit the required time to complete pre-session assignments and develop a capstone project of their choice. Projects will be presented in person at the ACE Symposium pre-conference.



ACCESS, CONNECTION, AND ENGAGEMENT LEADERSHIP NETWORK (ACELN)

ACELN serves as a convening body that brings together expertise, experience, and guidance for those responsible for nurturing environments that create access for all, foster authentic relationships, and shape academic nursing communities where every individual is heard and respected. ACELN provides opportunities for:

- **Sharing** evidence-based promising practices
- **Engaging** with peers nationwide
- **Providing** consultative services
- **Convening** network forums

COMMITTEE & VOLUNTEER SERVICE

The **Access, Connection, and Engagement Committee** provides strategic guidance to AACN, playing a key role in shaping its programs and priorities. Appointed by AACN's Board Chair, committee members work to advance the organization's strategic goals while identifying new initiatives that promote excellence within academic nursing.

Who Should Join?

ACELN is open to all faculty, deans, and staff with an interest in advancing excellence in academic nursing. The network connects change-makers who share the values and goals of access, connection, and engagement.



AACN offers a variety of **Volunteer and Engagement Opportunities** for deans, faculty, staff, and graduate students. Those wishing to explore committee and other volunteer options are encouraged to complete an online interest form using the QR code.



RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE, BELONGING, AND SUSTAINABILITY IN NURSING EDUCATION AWARD

This annual award recognizes a school of nursing that demonstrates exceptional leadership in promoting inclusive excellence, belonging, and sustainability in nursing education. The award is presented at the ACE Symposium where

the selected school will have the opportunity to showcase their achievements.

For criteria and more information:



MISSION-ALIGNED ADMISSION PROCESS (MAAP)

As part of its commitment to advancing excellence in academic nursing, AACN supports schools in designing admission processes that are mission-driven, evidence-informed, and aligned with the institutional values. The MAAP process focuses on alignment, balance, and fairness and helping schools evaluate applicants consistently across experience, attributes, and metrics. AACN offers a tiered series of three workshop and consultation options to support schools from foundational knowledge to full implementation support.

To find out more about setting up training on the MAAP process, contact Christine Downing at cdowning@aacnnursing.org.

ECOSYSTEM OF EXCELLENCE

The **AACN Ecosystem of Excellence in Academic Nursing** is a strategic, evidence-informed framework that helps nursing programs align mission, people, and systems to create environments where all students, staff, and faculty can thrive.

Built on Humanistic Conditions—**healthy, psychologically safe, connected, valued, supported, and prepared**—the Ecosystem integrates five institutional dimensions: **infrastructure and capacity, climate and intergroup relations, education and scholarship, access and success, and community engagement.**

Each Ecosystem dimension is addressed in an **online tool kit** designed to translate the framework into actionable strategies and measurable outcomes.

The tool kit provides:

- **Strategies** to strengthen policies, practices, and systems.
- **Scenarios** that illustrate real-world challenges and solutions.
- **Reflection questions** to guide dialogue and planning.
- A **self-assessment dashboard** to evaluate progress and map growth.

The framework is intentionally adaptable, honoring each program's mission, values,



traditions, resources, and partnerships. By centering people and aligning institutional priorities, the Ecosystem equips schools of nursing to strengthen academic excellence, workforce readiness, and contributions to healthcare and community well-being.



THE CONNECTOR

The Connector is a quarterly newsletter highlighting excellence in academic nursing initiatives and resources, summarizing the latest research, and featuring a spotlight on how a member school is advancing access, connection, and engagement within the academic nursing community.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

ON-SITE WORKSHOPS AND CONSULTATIONS

AACN offers a wide range of programs designed specifically to meet individual schools' unique needs as they seek to advance efforts focused on access, connection, and engagement. These programs can be delivered on-site or virtually, and are customized to address the professional development needs of your faculty, staff, and students. AACN's expert staff and consultants are available to lead workshops, consultations, and offer follow-up sessions to support sustained progress and impact.

To find out more and to schedule a workshop or consultation, contact Dr. Wanda Thruston at wthruston@aacnnursing.org.

ACCESS, CONNECTION, AND ENGAGEMENT (ACE) SYMPOSIUM

This national forum invites academic nursing administrators, faculty, and staff to engage with leading experts committed to excellence in nursing education. The event features nationally recognized thought leaders and peers who share practical strategies for moving from



awareness to action, equipping schools to prepare students to deliver quality care and promote health equity.



WEBINARS

AACN provides a variety of webinars covering various inclusive excellence topics, all of which are free for faculty, staff, and students from AACN member institutions. To explore past webinar recordings or register for upcoming sessions, visit AACN's website.



ACE STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT PACKAGE

To support your efforts to meet your organization's mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities, AACN has developed a package that will take your program from assessment to strategy development to evaluation with the goal of creating an environment that enhances the concepts of access, connection, and engagement.

COST OF ACE PACKAGE

The cost of the ACE package is \$15,000.

LEADING ACROSS MULTIDIMENSIONAL PERSPECTIVES SURVEY (LAMPSM)

Assessing Your Organization

Provides qualitative and quantitative baseline data on the experiences of students, staff, and faculty

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF ACE FOCUS GROUPS

Opening the Dialogue

Use LAMP survey data to develop deeper dive questions for focus groups of students or faculty

CONSULTATION

Identifying Priorities

Explore LAMP and focus group data to identify areas that will benefit from process improvement

AACN WORKSHOPS AND FIRESIDE CHATS

Moving from Strategy to Action

Over the course of a year, address those areas identified in consultation that will support process improvement

START THE CONVERSATION

For questions about the ACE Strategic Assessment Package, contact Dr. Brigit Carter at **202-463-6930, ext. 299** or via email at bcarter@aacnnursing.org.



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For more details on AACN's programming
in the area of access, connection, and engagement,
see www.aacnnursing.org/ace