



2022 AACN Thought Leaders Assembly
Excellence in Academic Nursing: Addressing Well-Being to Prepare Tomorrow's Nursing Workforce

AACN initiated the Thought Leaders Assembly in 2016 to provide a forum for generative thinking by the Board of Directors, invited guests, member deans, practice leaders, and senior staff on emerging trends and issues impacting health, health care, and higher education. The day's dialogue is designed to stimulate fresh thinking and better position AACN to serve as a catalyst for excellence and innovation in academic nursing.

Reflecting the theme of *Excellence in Academic Nursing: Addressing Well-Being to Prepare Tomorrow's Nursing Workforce*, the 2022 Thought Leaders Assembly brought practice and academic leaders together to explore opportunities for sustaining the mental health, well-being, and resilience of all nursing professionals. The Assembly met the day prior to the AACN Summer Seminar at the Sonnenalp Hotel in Vail Colorado. Facilitated by Josh Mintz of CHP Mintz, panelists from practice and academia addressed the well-being of nursing students, faculty, and nurses practicing within healthcare systems. The panelists shared their experiences and perspectives on key issues and considered high impact actions that can spark innovation and positive change.

In her welcoming remarks, AACN Board Chair Cynthia McCurren underscored issues of "great importance to all of us in health care and higher education: Sustaining the mental health, well-being, and resilience of all nursing professionals." In her opening remarks, AACN President and CEO Deborah Trautman emphasized that "the nursing workforce across all domains of practice have met extraordinary challenges, stress, and demands over the past two years. We should be proud of what we have accomplished during this unprecedented time, but the fatigue, anxiety, and stress that many of us are now feeling are real. Together we must be thoughtful about how to best serve the health and wellness needs of all nurses to ensure that our noble profession continues to thrive."

The event was attended by the AACN Board of Directors and 10 invited nursing academic leaders from surrounding AACN member schools and registrants of the AACN Summer Seminar.

The program featured alternating presentations between practice and academic leaders with time for questions in between (see the Thought Leaders Assembly Agenda below). Key takeaways from the discussion included:

- Nursing students, bedside nurses, and nursing leaders must normalize help seeking as a foundational component to well-being and professional fulfillment that will contribute to sustaining and retaining those working in health care.

- Implementing peer support systems, both formal and informal, at all levels of experience and role, is an evidence-based approach for supporting healthcare workers and should be incorporated into nursing education.
- Well-being strategies that are identified as “false choice” - a strategy that is offered but does not have impactful results - need to be identified and evaluated.
- The leader plays an essential role in creating a culture of well-being, both through role modeling and in their communications. Schools should establish a process for leaders to “check in” with students, faculty, and staff to leverage communication and connectedness as a key tactic for supporting well-being.
- Compassion, for self and others, is an essential aspect of nursing. Development of evidence-based compassion skills should be a priority within the workforce and the curriculum.
- Nurse educators should identify opportunities to increase the integration of well-being strategies into the curriculum. Work-life balance, stress management, interpersonal conflict resolution, and embracing diversity are elements that should be introduced in a nursing curriculum.
- Critical opportunities exist and must be leveraged with interprofessional partners to support well-being across healthcare systems, thus building a culture of well-being in health care. The development of clear, shared language is needed to ensure a common understanding of well-being across the nursing profession. Well-being policies should include a clear delineation of terms such as burnout, compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, moral injury, stress/anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The responsibility for promoting well-being should not solely fall on the individual, and “resilience training” programs without investment in system and structural changes needed to support the workforce are unlikely to be successful. While we must continue to support reliance at the individual level, we also need to address the systemic challenges that are the root cause of much of the stress and burnout facing the nursing profession.

The Thought Leaders Assembly concluded with comments by Dr. Cynthia McCurren: “Though it’s clear that we are focusing on a real priority for the nursing profession, I’m sure we all recognize that there is so much more work to do. This is a journey, but together we can make a difference by working toward a common goal and a preferred future for the nursing profession.”



AACN's Thought Leaders Assembly Agenda

Excellence in Academic Nursing: Addressing Well-Being to Prepare Tomorrow's Nursing Workforce

Sonnenalp Hotel
 Kempten/Fischen Room
Facilitator: Josh Mintz, CHP Mintz

Saturday, July 16, 2022

8:30-9:00 a.m. **Breakfast**

9:00-9:30 a.m. **Welcome Remarks and Introductions**

Cynthia McCurren, PhD, RN
 Chair of the Board of Directors
 American Association of Colleges of Nursing

Deborah Trautman, PhD, RN
 President and Chief Executive Officer
 American Association of Colleges of Nursing

9:30-10:30 a.m. **Insight from Health System Leaders: The Current Landscape of Well-Being within Clinical Practice**

Hear from health system leaders about key issues and high impact actions addressing the well-being of clinicians and the nursing workforce. Panelists will pose critical questions to stimulate dialogue about the intersection of well-being, academia, and clinical practice.

Panelists

Anne Pendo, MD
 Senior Medical Director, Provider Experience and Well-Being Intermountain Healthcare
Perry Gee, PhD, RN
 Nurse Scientist and Associate Professor of Research
 Intermountain Healthcare

Respondents

Teri Pipe, PhD, RN
 Professor and Dean Emerita, Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation
 Arizona State University
 Founding Director, ASU Center for Mindfulness, Compassion and Resilience
Sherry Chesak, PhD, RN
 Nurse Scientist

Department of Nursing, Division of Nursing Research
Mayo Clinic

10:30-10:45 a.m. **Break**

10:45-11:30 a.m. **Group Discussion**

11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. **Luncheon**

12:45-1:45 p.m. **Excellence in Academic Nursing: A Focus on Well-Being in Schools of Nursing**

Academic nursing leaders will address critical issues and priorities around well-being in nursing schools and other learning environments. Panelists will pose questions for dialogue addressing the intersection of well-being, academia, and clinical practice.

Panelists

Teri Pipe, PhD, RN

Professor and Dean Emerita, Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Arizona State University

Founding Director, ASU Center for Mindfulness, Compassion and Resilience

Sherry Chesak, PhD, RN

Nurse Scientist

Department of Nursing, Division of Nursing Research

Mayo Clinic

Respondents

Anne Pendo, MD

Senior Medical Director, Provider Experience and Well-Being Intermountain
Healthcare

Perry Gee, PhD, RN

Nurse Scientist and Associate Professor of Research

Intermountain Healthcare

1:45-2:00 p.m. **Break**

2:00-2:45 p.m. **Looking Ahead: Well-Being as a Cornerstone to Prepare Tomorrow's Nursing Workforce**

Group Discussion, Summary, and Wrap-Up

Facilitator: Josh Mintz

2:45-3:00 p.m. **Closing Comments**

Dr. Cynthia McCurren

Chair of the Board of Directors

American Association of Colleges of Nursing

3:00 p.m. **Adjourn**

Participants

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Excellence in Academic Nursing: Addressing Well-Being to Prepare Tomorrow's Nursing Workforce

AACN Board of Directors

Cynthia McCurren, PhD, RN, Chair, AACN Board of Directors, and Dean, University of Michigan-Flint

Jean Giddens, PhD, RN, Chair-Elect, AACN Board of Directors, and Dean, Virginia Commonwealth University

Lin Zhan, PhD, RN, Treasurer, AACN Board of Directors, and Dean, University of California, Los Angeles

Julie Sanford, DNS, RN, Secretary, AACN Board of Directors, and Dean, University of Mississippi Medical Center

Pier A. Broadnax, PhD, RN, Member at Large, AACN Board of Directors, and Program Director, University of the District of Columbia

Stephen Cavanagh, PhD MPS, RN, Member at Large, AACN Board of Directors, and Dean, University of California-Davis

Deborah J. Jones, PhD, RN, Member at Large, AACN Board of Directors, and Dean, University of Texas, Medical Branch

Jerry Mansfield, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, Practice Member at Large, AACN Board of Directors, and Chief Nurse Officer, Mount Carmel Health System/Trinity Health

Sue Mullaney, DNP, APRN, Practice Member at Large, AACN Board of Directors, and Vice President, UnitedHealth Group

Victoria Niederhauser, DrPH, RN, Member at Large, AACN Board of Directors, and Dean, University of Tennessee Knoxville

Demetrius J. Porche, DNS, PhD, APRN, Member at Large, AACN Board of Directors, and Dean, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center

Ora Strickland, PhD, RN, Member at Large, AACN Board of Directors, and Dean, Florida International University

Christine Verni, EdD, APRN, Member at Large, AACN Board of Directors, and Dean, Niagara University

Deborah Trautman, PhD, RN, President and Chief Executive Officer, American Association of Colleges of Nursing

Invited Attendees

Julie M. Anderson, PhD, RN, Dean, College of Health Sciences, Winona State University, Winona, MN

Theresa Buxton, PhD, RN, Chair, Associate Professor, Department of Nursing, Metropolitan State University, Denver, CO

Terrica Durbin, PhD, DNP, APRN, Director, Associate Professor, School of Nursing, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC

Lucy Graham, PhD, RN, Interim Director of Nursing Education programs, Assistant Professor, Nursing, Department of Health Sciences, Colorado Mesa University, Grand Junction, CO

Peggy Jenkins, PhD, RN, Senior Assistant Dean Academic Operations, Assistant Dean MS Programs, College of Nursing, University of Colorado, Aurora, CO

Catherine Lovecchio, PhD, RN, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Program, Clinical Associate Professor, M. Louise Fitzpatrick College of Nursing, Villanova University, Villanova, PA

Laura McLaughlin, PhD, RN, Associate Professor, Coordinator of Accelerated Baccalaureate Nursing, Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing, Saint Louis University, Saint Louis, MO

Susan M. McLennon, PhD, APRN, Executive Associate Dean and Professor, College of Nursing, Texas A&M, Bryan, TX

Melissa Nunn, DNP, APRN, Coordinator BSN-DNP, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner-Primary and Acute Care Concentrations, School of Nursing, Louisiana State University, New Orleans, LA, Director of Advance Practice, Children's Hospital, New Orleans, LA

Virginia Wolgemuth, PhD, RN, Associate Dean, School of Nursing, Colorado Christian University, Lakewood, CO