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For Immediate Release

Nursing's Centralized Application Service Expands to Accommodate Applicants to Both Graduate and Entry-Level Nursing Programs

NursingCAS Upgrades System to Permit Applications to Doctoral, Master's, Baccalaureate, Associate, and Diploma Nursing Programs

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 13, 2010 – Today, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) is pleased to announce that NursingCAS – the nation's only centralized service for students applying to nursing programs – is now accepting applications to graduate nursing programs. Students applying to any level of nursing program – from the doctorate to the diploma – may now submit applications to participating schools across the country through NursingCAS. When the service initially launched in March 2010, only students applying to entry-level nursing programs could benefit from this Web-based system.

“Moving to accommodate applications to graduate nursing programs is the natural next step for NursingCAS and a great leap forward in helping schools to expand enrollment in their graduate programs,” said AACN President Kathleen Potempa. “Schools with master's and doctoral nursing programs are encouraged to take advantage of this free service that provides access to a more diverse student applicant pool as well as a national platform to promote their programs.”

Similar to systems in place for medicine, pharmacy, dentistry and the other health professions, NursingCAS offers students a convenient way to apply to multiple nursing schools with a single online application. Through this service, students may apply to master's and doctoral nursing programs as well as the full spectrum of entry-level options, which includes diploma, associate degree, baccalaureate, and generic master's programs. NursingCAS reduces the burden on students by eliminating the need for duplicate application data, letters of reference, transcripts, and other admissions materials required when applying to multiple schools. Students can access the status of their application in real time from any computer with Internet access. Nursing school applicants will have one point of contact for customer service and technical support needs.

NursingCAS also serves as an important mechanism for addressing the national shortage of nurses and faculty by helping to fill all vacant seats in schools of nursing. Last year, AACN documented that more than 14,000 vacant seats were available in schools offering baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs. Institutions participating in NursingCAS will gain direct access to a larger pool of nursing school applicants and be able to announce when program space is available at any point during their regular application cycle.

The benefits of NursingCAS to schools, applicants, and the profession are many:

- Provides admission officers with secure, on-line access to track the progress of their applicants and view application details in real-time.
- Increases exposure to a larger applicant pool, including individuals from minority, rural, and disadvantaged populations.
- Schools receive verified and standardized applicant information for easier review, which cuts down significantly on this tedious administrative function.
- Allows schools to sort and customize the information received from applicants.
- Provides Web and dedicated phone support to admissions officers and applicants.
- Schools participate at no cost and receive the application management software for free.
- Provides applicants with a real-time portal to check receipt of applications, transcripts, etc.
- Compiles accurate statistics on the profession, including unduplicated number of nursing school applicants.
- Assists in developing workforce projections and recruitment strategies based on real data.

Since NursingCAS began operation, more than 60 schools of nursing have registered to use this service to accommodate students applying to their programs. Currently enrolled schools include a mix of top-ranked academic health centers, liberal-arts-focused schools, public and private institutions, religiously-affiliated schools, and a hospital-based diploma program. More than 300 additional schools of nursing have taken their first steps toward participating in NursingCAS by attending an overview Webinar, completing a technical assistance call, and initiating the process of submitting an intent-to-participate agreement.

For more information about NursingCAS, see the following Web links:

AACN's NursingCAS Resource Page

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CAS>

NursingCAS Frequently Asked Questions Sheet

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CAS/pdf/faq.pdf>

NursingCAS General Information Page for Applicants

<http://www.nursingcas.org>

*The **American Association of Colleges of Nursing** (AACN) is the national voice for university and four-year college education programs in nursing. Representing more than 645 member schools of nursing at public and private institutions nationwide, AACN's educational, research, governmental advocacy, data collection, publications, and other programs work to establish quality standards for bachelor's- and graduate-degree nursing education, assist deans and directors to implement those standards, influence the nursing profession to improve health care, and promote public support of baccalaureate and graduate nursing education, research, and practice. www.aacn.nche.edu*

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