AACN TASK FORCE OFFERS NEW ESSENTIALS TO MEMBERSHIP FOR VOTE

In 2018, the AACN Board of Directors appointed an Essentials Task Force with the charge of re-envisioning the Essentials, which delineate the expected competencies of graduates of baccalaureate, master's, and DNP programs as well as the essential curricular elements that are to be present in these programs. At the Business Meeting held during the 2021 Deans Annual Meeting on March 23, the Task Force brought forward to the membership The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education, which was approved by the Board of Directors in February 2021. Voting by membership on the endorsement of the new document will take place through April 6.

The Board of Directors had asked the Task Force to update the Essentials to reflect today's healthcare and higher education environment, begin a transition to competency-based education, and bring alignment across baccalaureate and graduate degrees. The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education is a carefully crafted document developed following a lengthy, inclusive, and iterative process with input from hundreds of faculty and deans as well as from multiple organizational stakeholders. The Task Force spent many months engaged in listening, discerning dialogue, and compromise to ensure quality, future-thinking standards for professional nursing education.

Information and resources on the Essentials Task Force, as well as the final version of The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education can be found on AACN's website.

Members of the Task Force Leadership Team are: Dr. Jean Giddens, Co-Chair, Dean, Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Nursing; Dr. Cynthia McCurren, Co-Chair, Dean, University of Michigan–Flint, School of Nursing; Dr. John McFadden, Co-Chair, Dean, Barry University, College of Nursing and Health Sciences; Dr. Jean Bartels, Consultant; Dr. Linda Caldwell, Consultant; Dr. Nancy DeBasio, Consultant; and Dr. Lin Zhan, Board Liaison, Dean and Professor, University of Memphis. Click here to review the complete roster of Task Force members.
DR. DONALD BERWICK DELIVERED BEDNASH LECTURE AT DEANS ANNUAL MEETING

At the Deans Annual Meeting held virtually March 21-23, the Geraldine “Polly” Bednash Lectureship Award was presented by Board Chair Dr. Susan Bakewell-Sachs to Dr. Donald Berwick, Lecturer of Health Care Policy, Department of Health Care Policy, at Harvard Medical School; President Emeritus and Senior Fellow at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement; and former administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Dr. Berwick is one of the nation’s leading authorities on healthcare quality and improvement.

In his presentation to AACN members, Dr. Berwick spoke on the moral determinants of health. He told members, “No scientific doubt exists that, for the most part, circumstances outside health care nurture or impair health. Except for a few clinical preventive services, most hospitals and physician offices are repair shops, trying to correct the damage of causes collectively denoted social determinants of health.” He shared a unique metaphor for social and health disparities: the “subway map” view of life expectancy, which shows the expected lifespan of people who reside in the neighborhood of a train or subway stop. As an example, Dr. Berwick cited statistics that metaphorically indicate for a person traveling on the subway from midtown Manhattan to the South Bronx in New York City, life expectancy declines by 10 years, 6 months for every minute on the subway. Between the Chicago Loop and west side of the city, the difference in life expectancy is 16 years.

During the Q&A portion of his presentation, in response to a member’s question on how academic nursing can be more engaged in addressing and combatting the effects of social determinants of health, Dr. Berwick responded: “Speak louder, speak consistently, and get everybody on board. Nurses, and all healthcare professionals, can speak out, write opinion pieces, work with community organization, and vote on Election Day and ensure that their colleagues vote as well.”

The Bednash Lectureship Award honors AACN’s previous Chief Executive Officer, who led the association for 28 years. Award recipients are chosen on the basis of their leadership and scholarly contributions to interprofessional education.

DR. PHILIP GREINER RECEIVES 2020 AACN ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR AWARD

During the Deans Annual Meeting, held virtually March 21-23, it was announced that Dr. Philip Greiner, Director of San Diego State University’s School of Nursing, is the recipient of the 2020 AACN Advocate of the Year Award. The award is granted annually during the Deans Annual Meeting to one distinguished member whose advocacy over the past year has promoted academic nursing’s priorities in the federal sphere.

AACN recognizes Dr. Greiner’s steadfast advocacy for our nation’s nursing students and the profession by being a State Grassroots Liaison, a former member of AACN’s Board of Directors and Government Affairs Committee, attending biannual Capitol Hill visits, and encouraging students to participate in AACN’s Student Policy Summits. AACN applauds his leadership in strengthening the federal investment in nursing education, research, and practice. Congratulations to Dr. Greiner!

VIZIENT ACADEMIC-PRACTICE PANEL WEIGHS IN ON THE NEW AACN ESSENTIALS

On February 25, Vizient, the nation’s leading healthcare performance improvement company, hosted an expert panel to consider Bridging the Gap from Education to Practice in a Complex Pandemic World. During the presentation, an overview of AACN’s re-envisioned Essentials was presented, including an introduction to the 10 Domains and Concepts. The panelists addressed which Domains resonated with them and spoke eloquently and passionately about Person-Centered Care (Domain #2), Population Health (#3), Scholarship for Nursing Practice (#4), and Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development (#10). Click here to view the virtual event.

Hosted as part of the firm’s 2021 Nursing Leadership Series, panelists included:

- Debra Albert, Chief Nursing Officer and Senior Vice President, New York University Langone Health System
- Kimberly Glassman, Senior Associate Dean and Clinical Professor, New York University Rory Meyers College of Nursing
- Kathy McGuinn, Director of Interprofessional Education and Practice Partnerships, AACN
- Evy Olson, Associate Vice President for Nursing Programs, Vizient

Since 1999, AACN has collaborated with Vizient on an entry-into-practice Nurse Residency Program, which uses evidenced-based curriculum focused on leadership, patient outcomes, and professional development. To date, more than 93,000 nurses have participated in the Vizient/AACN Nurse Residency Program in 42 states, the District of Columbia, and two foreign countries. Currently, this collaboration encompasses more than 500 hospitals and health systems nationwide. At the residency sites, the nurse retention rate of first-year graduates on average was 91.5%, which is significantly lower than the national average.
Dr. Zenk was elected as a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing in 2013, received the President’s Award from the Friends of the NINR in 2018, and was inducted into Sigma Theta Tau’s International Nurse Researchers Hall of Fame in 2019. She has spent time as a visiting scholar in Rwanda and Australia. She earned her BSN from Illinois Wesleyan University; her master’s degrees in public health nursing and community health sciences from UIC; and her doctorate in health behavior and health education from the University of Michigan.

Dr. Zenk’s research focuses on social inequities and health with a goal of identifying effective, multilevel approaches to improve health and eliminate racial/ethnic and socioeconomic health disparities. Her research portfolio has included NIH-supported work into urban food environments, community health solutions, and veterans’ health. Through pioneering research on the built environment and food deserts, Dr. Zenk and her colleagues increased national attention to the problem of inadequate access to healthful foods in low-income and Black neighborhoods. They have since examined the role of community environments in health and health disparities. Recognizing that restricting empirical attention to the communities where people live and not the other communities where they spend time may misdirect interventions, Dr. Zenk led early research adopting GPS tracking to study broader “activity space” environments in relation to health behaviors.

These experiences woke me up to the role our communities play in shaping our health. This realization led me to pursue my PhD to better understand barriers to health—and ultimately to help eliminate them.

When did you begin your work and research on social determinants of health?

I began my PhD research by looking at how resources were distributed among communities, since differences in community environments are thought to drive some of the large and persistent health disparities observed across our country and even within our cities. This research quickly made clear the impact of social determinants on health.

In the city of Chicago, life expectancy varies by as much as 30 years. Average life expectancy is 90 years in Streeterville—a affluent community—and 60 years in Englewood—a low-income community. Some of my early research found that low-income Black communities have poor access to supermarkets, which tend to offer the widest selection of healthy foods. For example, in the Detroit area, my team showed that supermarkets were located 1.1 miles farther away from Black, high-poverty communities than from White high-poverty communities. This was one of the first studies in the US on what we now commonly refer to as “food deserts.”

We also found even when high-poverty communities of color have access to grocery stores, these stores tend to carry fewer healthy foods (e.g., prepared salads) than do stores in other communities, and that healthier options tend to be more expensive when they are available. Our research confirmed my observations as a home health nurse and student working in the community, and what far too many Americans face on a daily basis. We found convincing evidence that low income, Black communities had less access to healthful foods and greater access to unhealthy food options than higher income, White communities. There is now a lot of evidence that not only healthy foods but other resources like safe places for physical activity, as well as hazards are unequally distributed across communities. High income communities tend to accumulate resources, whereas low income communities tend to have fewer and lower-quality resources, as well as more hazards.

What has been the effect of COVID-19 on social determinants of health?

We’ve seen sobering systematic differences by race/ethnicity in risks for infection, serious illness, and death related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Compared to non-Hispanic White individuals, American Indian or Alaska Native individuals are almost twice as likely to be infected with the virus, Hispanic/Latino individuals are...
There are many implications of business closures and unemployment including lost income and increased financial stress, hunger, and the widening of the already extreme racial wealth gap—all of which affect people’s health.

Have you set any strategic goals for NINR?

My vision for NINR is to use nursing’s holistic perspective to improve individual and population health and advance health equity by bridging biomedical science and healthcare delivery with the realities of peoples’ lives and living conditions. The ultimate goal is to identify practice and policy solutions to our most pressing health problems and stubborn health disparities across the wide variety of community and clinical settings where nurses practice. That said, developing a new strategic plan is a major focus at NINR over the next year, and I’m excited to see where the planning process takes us. In addition to the vision I just outlined, there are several key principles that will guide this process. We want to think boldly, think differently, and think about the end at the beginning—that is, plan for translation. We want to demonstrate impact, embrace change and opportunity, and mentor the next generation. We also want to hear from the community. We encourage all who are interested in providing feedback to visit our website (ninr.nih.gov) and email us at NINRStrategicPlan@mail.nih.gov to share your thoughts on a bold new agenda for nursing research.

How does NINR support schools of nursing?

The large majority of NINR funding is awarded to universities and other institutions across the U.S. This funding, awarded through a variety of different grant mechanisms (large and small), is intended to support outstanding science in areas of interest to NINR. We also support a significant number of research training awards at schools of nursing, at all career stages—from pre-docs through established investigators—because continued development of the research workforce is one of our highest priorities.

How can schools of nursing best advance and elevate nursing research?

Established researchers should share their knowledge and experience with more junior researchers via mentoring, which is associated with increased research productivity, career development, leadership skills, and self-efficacy. Interdisciplinary research and collaboration are essential to the growth and success of nurse researchers. Whenever possible, collaborations between universities—including non-research-intensive institutions—and different programs within universities should be implemented to encourage new ideas and out-of-the-box thinking. We also need to better track, analyze, and document the impact of nursing science training and career development programs.

What advice do you have for investigators pursuing research funding?

First, I encourage you to be passionate about the topic you’re researching. Be bold and creative in all aspects of your study: the ways you’ll reach the people involved in the study, the methods you’ll use to collect and analyze data, the interventions you might implement, and everything in between.

Second, be sure to consider how your research will inform practice and policy. The research we do is vital, but communities won’t benefit unless we ask practice- and policy-relevant research questions and until we translate our research findings into changes in practice and policy. Have a plan for this right up front.

Third, work with other disciplines and find the right partners. Just as none of us as individuals can do everything, we should look to integrating the strengths of other disciplines to make our research pro-
posals as strong as can be. NIH has many resources for those writing grants for the first time to help explain what reviewers are looking for in a successful application. I encourage you to check those frequently, especially the NIH Grants and Funding website: https://www.nih.gov/grants-funding.

What can nursing schools do to attract more students into PhD programs?

I encourage schools of nursing to enhance awareness of opportunities in nursing research as early as possible in nurses’ educational experience. Undergraduates, particularly underrepresented minorities, should have early exposure to nursing research and its impact on patient and population outcomes. We should be encouraging undergraduates to enter doctoral programs early in their careers or directly after graduating with their BSN.

What advice do you have for students considering a career in nursing science?

First, I can’t encourage students strongly enough to pursue careers in research. We need your new ideas for research that will lead to evidence-based solutions for our most pressing health problems and most stubborn health inequities. I encourage future nurse scientists to focus on methodologic preparation. It is important to be proficient in the most sophisticated methods. Develop a full understanding of team science and take advantage of every learning and mentoring opportunity available to you. Strive to be as innovative as you can be to make the next big scientific breakthrough. And it goes without saying, prepare yourselves to address the health inequities that continue to plague our nation.

What are the greatest opportunities and challenges facing the nursing research community?

We need to attract more nursing students to research earlier in their careers and ensure that the makeup of the nursing research community mirrors that of our nation. However, this is also the root of some of the greatest opportunities in the field. With a nursing research workforce that knows our patients, their families, and their circumstances—by having cared for them as well as having lived alongside them—nursing research is almost limitless in its possibilities. I am honored and energized to be leading NINR at a time when our work can have a transformative impact on the health of our nation.

AfterCollege RELAUNCHES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM THROUGH AACN’S FOUNDATION FOR ACADEMIC NURSING

Since 2012, AfterCollege, the largest independent career network for college students and recent graduates, has partnered with AACN to provide support to students seeking baccalaureate, masters, or doctoral degrees in nursing. AACN has announced that the AfterCollege-AACN Nursing Scholarship has been renewed and will be administered by AACN’s Foundation for Academic Nursing. This annual $10,000 commitment will provide the opportunity for nursing students to complete their education and enter the nursing profession.

“AfterCollege is thrilled to continue this scholarship through AACN’s Foundation. We believe this relationship has helped many deserving students during their college career by facilitating their pathway to the nursing workforce,” said Roberto Angulo, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder of AfterCollege.

To apply for the AfterCollege-AACN Nursing Scholarship, students will need to complete an online application form. Special consideration will be given to students in a graduate program with the goal of becoming a nurse educator; those completing an RN to BSN or MSN program; and those enrolled in an accelerated nursing program.

“We are grateful for this continued support from our long-time partner AfterCollege,” said Dr. Deborah Trautman, AACN President and Chief Executive Officer. “This scholarship is an investment in future nurses and ensures that many promising nursing students have access to higher education.”

Scholarships in the amount of $2,500 will be awarded each quarter. Winners will be announced within 30 days of each submission deadline (March 31, June 30, September 30, December 31). This scholarship is non-recurring and will be awarded to individual students for one semester only.

For more details on scholarship programs available through the Foundation for Academic Nursing, visit the Foundation’s scholarship page or contact Marta Okoniewski, AACN Director of Student Engagement at mokoniewski@aacnnursing.org.
CASTLEBRANCH EXPANDS SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT FOR NURSING STUDENTS THROUGH AACN’S FOUNDATION FOR ACADEMIC NURSING

AACN has announced that CastleBranch, Inc., a leading provider of customizable screening and clinical experience solutions for health profession students, has committed $250,000 in new funding to provide scholarships to nursing students in baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral programs. Now under the administration of AACN’s Foundation for Academic Nursing, the Geraldine “Polly” Bednash Scholarship and the CastleBranch-GNSA Scholarship will provide support to 60 promising nursing students through 2025.

“Our commitment to nursing education is central to our mission of helping individuals transition to and through professional life, and to elevating healthcare education and the profession by working with the industry to solve its most enduring challenges,” said Gregory Larnder, CastleBranch President. “We welcome this opportunity to support the work of the AACN Foundation, and are inspired by the passion, dedication, and courage displayed by the next generation of registered nurses as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The Geraldine “Polly” Bednash Scholarship Program provides $5,000 in funding to outstanding students in baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral programs at AACN member institutions. Eligible applicants must be admitted to a nursing school affiliated with CastleBranch or have submitted an application through AACN’s centralized application service, NursingCAS. Applicants must submit a brief essay on personal goals and career aspirations in nursing. Funding is awarded each quarter with deadlines set for January 31, April 30, July 31, and October 31 each year. For more information and to apply, click here.

The CastleBranch-GNSA Scholarship Program awards $2,500 in funding to master’s and doctoral students who are advancing the nursing profession through a commitment to innovation, leadership, and mentoring. Applicants must be members of AACN’s Graduate Nursing Student Academy (GNSA) in order to be eligible. The application deadlines are September 30 and December 30. For more information and to apply, click here.

“AACN applauds this generous support from CastleBranch and for the company’s commitment for providing creative solutions that serve some of academic nursing’s most pressing needs,” said Dr. Deborah Trautman, AACN President and Chief Executive Officer. “We encourage other corporate partners to follow this example and provide the support needed to help ensure that our nation sustains a robust supply of nursing providers, researchers, and educators.”

Since 2005, CastleBranch has been a preferred vendor of AACN and a leading provider of student background checks, immunization tracking services, and other screening solutions. CastleBranch has a proven track record for serving the specific needs of nursing schools, working with 70 percent of nursing programs offered at colleges and universities nationwide. In 2017, AACN expanded its partnership with CastleBranch around the CB Bridges solution, which is designed to streamline each phase of a student’s clinical journey from compliance tracking, clinical placements and scheduling, site orientation, skills assessment, and evaluation. Most recently, Castle Branch has joined nursing schools in the fight against the pandemic by offering the COVID-19 Compliance Tracker and Real Vaccination ID Cards.

To find out more about AACN’s collaboration with CastleBranch and our other corporate partners, click here. For more details on scholarship programs available through the Foundation for Academic Nursing, visit the Foundation’s scholarship page or contact Marta Okoniewski, AACN Director of Student Engagement at mokoniewski@aacnnursing.org.
AACN’S FACULTY LEADERSHIP NETWORK

The Faculty Leadership Network (FLN) provides a forum for nursing faculty to explore real world issues, pose pedagogy questions, and exchange ideas related to teaching and curriculum in professional nursing education. The primary purpose of the FLN is to facilitate faculty networking and foster development of its members through webinars, conference sessions, and electronic communications that support the evolution of teaching and learning.

Who Should Join?
Faculty whose main focus is teaching didactic and clinical courses in baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs.

Why Join?
Whether you are just starting out in the profession or you are proudly looking back at a lifetime of achievements, membership in the FLN Leadership Network is of extraordinary value.

As a member, you can take advantage of the following benefits:
• Be involved and share experiences in a national network of leaders and subject matter experts through an exclusive FLN Community, a new online community platform just for FLN members.
• Participate in conferences geared around subjects of common interest.
• Serve on working groups such as AACN conference programming and advisory groups.
• Opportunities to earn (or receive) CEU credits with a network member discount.

Click here for more information and to join the FLN.
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The University of North Florida is seeking interested candidates for faculty positions in the School of Nursing. These are entry level positions at the Instructor, Clinical Assistant Professor and Assistant Professor levels. Specific areas of interest are mainly Medical-Surgical and Pediatric experience. Certification as a Nurse Practitioner is required for the Clinical Assistant Professor. The successful candidate will:

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• Conduct research in an area of expertise
• Participate in School, College and University committees

For specific information regarding each position, including educational and experience requirements, please go to www.unfjobs.org and click the Faculty/Adjunct tab.

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