CYNTHIA MCCURREN APPOINTED CHAIR OF AACN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cynthia McCurren, PhD, RN, dean and professor of nursing at the University of Michigan-Flint, has been appointed Chair of the AACN Board of Directors. Dr. McCurren began her two-year term as AACN’s highest elected official on March 28.

“As Board Chair, I look forward to helping to advance AACN’s mission and strategic priorities through thoughtful deliberation, generative thinking, and collaborative action,” said Dr. McCurren. “Together with colleagues on the Board, we will work to inspire excellence in nursing education, consider the needs of the next generation of nurse leaders, focus on relevant issues, and work toward creative solutions to the challenges before us.”

Dr. McCurren is a distinguished nurse leader and scholar whose work has had a significant impact on transforming academic nursing. She was appointed by the University of Michigan Board of Regents to serve as dean of the school of nursing at the University of Michigan-Flint in December 2020. She previously served for 13 years as dean of the Kirkhof College of Nursing at Grand Valley State University, where she led the school to many firsts, including the launch of the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree, the Clinical Nurse Leader program, and the creation of the Bonnie Wesorick Center for Healthcare Transformation, which was funded through a $1 million endowment. Prior to this appointment, she held a variety of leadership and teaching roles at the University of Louisville, including interim dean, associate dean for academic affairs, and director of nursing research for the University of Louisville Hospital.

Active in Michigan’s nursing community, Dr. McCurren currently serves on the Michigan Association of Nursing Leaders executive board, is the past president of the Michigan Association of Colleges of Nursing, and was an appointed member of the Michigan Task Force for Nursing Education. She serves as an appointed member of the Board of Directors for the University of Michigan Health-West and serves as the Chair of the Quality and Safety Committee.

Dr. McCurren has played an active leadership role in advancing many of AACN’s signature initiatives, including the development of new competency standards that will reshape nursing education. She has served the association as Board Member at Large, Chair of the Membership and Program Committees, State Grassroots Liaison, and in many other volunteer capacities. She was a member of AACN’s Vision for Nursing Education Task Force, which developed a white paper outlining priorities for professional nursing education into the foreseeable future. Dr. McCurren most recently served as Co-Chair of AACN’s Essentials Task Force, which developed The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education.

Joining Dr. McCurren on the AACN Board of Directors are these new and continuing members: Chair-Elect Jean Giddens from Virginia Commonwealth University; Treasurer Lin Zhan from the University of California Los Angeles; Secretary Julie Sanford from the University of Mississippi Medical Center; Pier Broadnax from the University of the District of Columbia; Stephen Cavanagh from the University of California-Davis; Deborah Jones from University of Texas Medical Branch; Jerry Mansfield from Mount Carmel Health System; Susan Mullaney from UnitedHealth Group; Victoria Niederhauser from the University of Tennessee Knoxville; Demetrius Porche from Louisiana State University Health Science Center; Ora Strickland from Florida International University; and Christine Verni from Niagara University. In addition, AACN’s President and Chief Executive Officer Deborah Trautman serves as an ex-officio member of the AACN Board.
2022 DEANS ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

**DR. JANIE HEATH NAMED AACN'S ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR**

At AACN’s Deans Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, Dr. Janie Heath from the University of Kentucky College of Nursing received the Advocate of the Year Award. This award is granted annually to one distinguished member whose advocacy over the past year has promoted academic nursing’s priorities in the federal sphere.

Dr. Heath has been a lifelong advocate for nursing students and the profession, including as a State Grassroots Liaison, as a leader during visits to Capitol Hill, and encouraging students to participate in AACN’s Student Policy Summits. Through her efforts to amplify AACN’s collective voice, she has been an inspiration to her colleagues, her faculty, and her students. Congratulations to Dr. Heath!

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**Former AACN CEO Polly Bednash** (right) was in attendance for the presentation of the Bednash Lectureship Award to **George Thibault**, former president of the Macy Foundation.

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**Tara Rynders** spoke on holding fatigue, grief, and joy through the arts.

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**Author Anna Quindlen** delivered a stirring keynote address on health care in the information age.

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**Attendees visiting the Solution Provider Showcase**
NATION’S LEADING NURSING ORGANIZATIONS ISSUE URGENT APPEAL FOR SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE’S HEALTHCARE WORKERS

As Russia’s brutal, unprovoked military assault against Ukraine continues, the five-member Tri-Council for Nursing — American Association of Colleges of Nursing, American Nurses Association, American Organization for Nursing Leadership, National Council of State Boards of Nursing, and the National League for Nursing — joins the International Council of Nurses, the International Rescue Committee and other national and international nursing, medical and emergency response organizations worldwide in solidarity with the healthcare communities in Ukraine and across the eastern European region.

Not surprisingly, Ukraine’s healthcare workers are on the front lines of the deepening crisis. Reports of subterranean, makeshift wards in Kyiv and elsewhere reflect the increasingly chaotic circumstances of people desperate for emergency medical attention and treatment of chronic conditions. With military and civilian fatalities and injuries mounting amidst street fighting in Ukraine’s cities and the wanton destruction of civilian enclaves like apartment complexes, schools and hospitals, the need for critical care and emergency response teams is certain to increase in the coming days.

As during the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare professionals are once again called upon to make personal sacrifices, at grave risk to themselves and their families. Our Ukrainian colleagues remain steadfast in this latest test of fortitude, fulfilling their sworn oath as healers. But now, Ukrainian nurses, physicians, and other healthcare workers, as well as the facilities and resources required to provide safe, effective care are stretched to the breaking point.

We want them to know they are not isolated and alone, that humanity counts on their vital service in this dark time. We pledge to do whatever is within our collective power — including urging monetary and other material donations to assist the Ukrainian nursing workforce in providing urgently needed health care. The International Council of Nurses is collecting funds through its Humanitarian Fund to support nurses in the Ukraine and humanitarian efforts in the country.

We condemn in the strongest terms the violation of the Geneva Convention and international law that enshrines the protection of medical and healthcare workers. Safeguarding healthcare staff and facilities everywhere to maintain unfettered access to health care and the delivery of humanitarian assistance must remain a priority, over and above political interests and armed conflict anywhere.

The invasion of Ukraine has already taken the lives of so many of its citizens and displaced millions of others. We join the global community in working toward a speedy resolution to this deadly conflict, one that will facilitate the return of Ukrainian refugees to their homeland and restore Ukraine’s hope in a peaceful, prosperous, independent future among the family of nations.

To help provide food, medical care, and emergency assistance on the ground in Poland, where the majority of Ukrainian refugees have fled to date, donate to the International Committee of the Red Cross or the International Rescue Committee.

AACN AND SCRUBIN UNIFORMS LAUNCH NEW SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Scrubin Uniforms, a leading provider of medical apparel and scrubs, is partnering with AACN to launch a new scholarship for nursing students in baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral programs. Administered by AACN’s Foundation for Academic Nursing, this new program will provide $2,500 scholarships to nursing students from AACN member schools with a formal affiliation agreement with Scrubin Uniforms.

Since 2020, AACN has partnered with Scrubin Uniforms to offer a turnkey solution for nursing schools looking to ensure that students and faculty can easily order discounted scrubs and uniforms that meet individual program needs. From scrubs, lab coats, and corporate apparel to outerwear and PPE, Scrubin Uniforms provides a wide selection of products and a simple, stress-free ordering process. Participating schools receive, at minimum, a 15% discount off the lowest advertised price for scrubs and uniforms. To date, more than 250 schools have partnered with Scrubin Uniforms and are highly satisfied with the results.

The Scrubin Uniforms/AACN Scholarship will award $2,500 scholarships to nursing students in undergraduate and graduate programs three times each year. Scholarship deadlines are September 1, December 1, and March 1. One scholarship each year will be dedicated to funding a student interested in serving in a faculty role after graduation. With a minimum of three scholarship awards each year, Scrubin Uniforms is using an innovative mechanism – a percentage of all sales from programs affiliated with the company – to fund scholarships through 2025. Additional scholarship awards may be made each year depending on the overall volume of sales.

The new scholarship program will open on National Nurses Day, May 6, 2022. Schools seeking more information about partnering with Scrubin Uniforms to give students access to the scholarship are encouraged to contact Matt PaneGasser at mattp@scrubin.com.
How would you best describe CastleBranch's portfolio of products and services?

CastleBranch’s portfolio combines managed services with a software as a service (SaaS) that manages the supply of clinical experiences in collaboration with the three primary stakeholders: the nursing program, hospitals, and the nursing students.

How has the pandemic impacted your operations and services offered?

Our first priority was to protect our team members and their families. We immediately took measures to build up our infrastructure to accommodate remote-work capabilities. When the time came, CastleBranch was able to transition our people to remote-work environments to reduce their risk of exposure to COVID-19, ensure their financial stability, and support our clients. Today, all our operations are thriving in both remote and on-site settings. Our people have complete flexibility to work where they are. We are proud that we did not downsize any of our people due to the pandemic, and that we did everything in our power to support our people, their wellness, and their careers as they lived through this extraordinary event.

With our people safe, CastleBranch began searching for ways to help its 17,700 healthcare education programs, 1 million students, and thousands of healthcare facilities and employers during the international crisis.

CastleBranch immediately began building a solution to help healthcare’s first responders, educators, and students. To help, we reached out to a team of international experts and leaders. Dr. George Astrakianakis was the first to join, an international expert on pandemic infectious disease policy and former Director of Disease Prevention of the Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare. Next were AACN President and CEO Deborah Trautman and Donna Meyer, CEO of OADN. More followed, and experts from across the healthcare, education, and legal communities lent a hand to help fight back against COVID-19. In less than a month, CastleBranch found and built a solution that helps screen individuals for COVID-19 symptoms.

Our COVID-19 Compliance solution includes symptom tracking, contact tracing, and quarantine and isolation management. CB Real Vaccination ID provides proof of vaccination status and can be used as an immunization tracking tool. We created these services and donated COVID-19 Compliance to all college and university healthcare programs, healthcare students, and associated healthcare facilities.

AACN and CastleBranch have been working together for 17 years. What has kept this partnership so strong?

CastleBranch strives to deeply understand the problems our customers face in order to create relevant, needed solutions that help solve significant problems for nurse education. Our solutions have three primary stakeholders: the nursing education program, the healthcare institution, and the nursing student. We are experts in creating, launching, and supporting software and managed service solutions to help facilitate the clinical experiences that are critical to a nursing student’s education and licensure. AACN is clearly the leader in baccalaureate, graduate, and post-graduate program nursing education, with a depth of knowledge and network to help us understand the entire scope of the problem facing nursing education. AACN’s partnership is vital in the how we create, validate, and subsequently launch our solutions.

How does CastleBranch benefit AACN’s member schools?

CastleBranch’s solutions significantly improve the clinical experience supply...
management process by alleviating administrative burden, creating a pathway for effective communication and collaboration, and allowing focus and attention to shift to education – not administration. Based on our large market share, we bring industry best practices to AACN members. We also bring a unique benefit to AACN member schools with our student help desk of 30 full-time team members. This demonstrates our commitment to helping students in their journey to professional life and allows us to take the burden of answering students’ questions away from the teachers and administrators of your member schools.

Does CastleBranch seek input from nurses when developing new products and services?

Yes. We spend a significant amount of time proactively and reactively seeking input from the entire nursing community, including nurse educators, practicing nurses, nurse leaders, and nursing students. We do this through structured faculty, student, and healthcare user groups, as well as by surveying our education, healthcare, and nursing student customers. We are privileged to work directly with our association partners, including AACN, and to attend conferences like the Academic Nursing Leadership Conference to ensure that we are informed by leaders in academic nursing.

What is the CB Bridges™ platform?

CB Bridges™ is a SaaS collaboration platform that manages the supply of clinical experiences for three stakeholders: healthcare education programs, healthcare students, and healthcare facilities. The platform is designed to help manage many major milestones, for all three stakeholders, along the student’s clinical journey, including compliance and immunization tracking, clinical placement, clinical scheduling, onboarding and orientation, time management, and evaluations.

Why is streamlining the clinical education of nurses important?

Using a common tool creates collaboration with healthcare partners and a process that is measurable, leading to true business discussions about what works well, and allowing for refinements in best practices and business processes. Improved communication can, and will, lead to better efficiencies related to existing clinical experiences and open the opportunity to create new clinical experiences, leading to the opportunity to admit more students. The opportunity to admit more students is a critical key to alleviating the nationwide nursing shortage.

Further, streamlining the process frees up educational resources to help nursing educators focus on the curriculum rather than the intense clinical experience administrative management process.

Why did CastleBranch launch a 10-year longitudinal study focused on nursing students and what outcomes do you hope to achieve?

CastleBranch’s study was motivated by our more than 20 years of experience listening to and creating solutions for complex problems within the healthcare industry. As we worked with our three stakeholders over time to understand their problems, we saw an opportunity to help the industry by better understanding one of them: the individual nursing student. The problems articulated in studies/literature, as it relates to nursing, are from the perspective of the impact to healthcare and education institutions.

Although the nursing shortage has persisted for decades, it was severely compounded during the COVID-19 pandemic. This motivated us to look at the same problem but in a different way: through the lens of nursing students and professionals. We engaged the University of Kansas to do a global literature review to determine if studies are available from this perspective and this confirmed that there are not.

We believe that if we can understand and address nursing students’ most impactful professional problems, this will lead to more nursing students fulfilling course programs and higher retention once they become professionals.

Because we work with 70% of nursing programs, our ability to reach nurses across the nation is significant, and because of our position within the industry, we feel a great responsibility to understand and improve the problems these students face so that we may improve, and give back to, our industry.

As a leader in data-driven strategy and innovation, do you have any advice on how practice and academic leaders can address the ongoing nursing shortage?

There are two distinct groupings related to the nursing shortage, supply and demand. Demand is represented by the healthcare industry while supply is represented by the education industry. This functions similarly to how supply and demand work for manufacturing, where the demand side works tightly with the supply side to maintain balance. We see an opportunity for education and healthcare to do the same. Education can help healthcare better leverage the clinical experience for hiring purposes in a very collaborative manner, using common process and data-generating tools that will prove a return on investment (ROI) for the healthcare partner. This ROI will allow healthcare to invest in more clinical experiences, which will increase supply and allow education to increase their program size, more nursing students.
What does the future hold for CastleBranch in working with academic nursing?

CastleBranch will continue to collaborate with academic nursing by looking for new ways to empower individual nursing students and help them improve their pathways to and through professional life. We will also continue to focus on solutions that can help strengthening the business partnerships and improving relationships between higher education and healthcare institutions.

**EXCELLENCE HONORED AT 2022 CNL SUMMIT**

AACN and the Commission on Nurse Certification (CNC) are pleased to announce the latest winners of the annual Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) Awards, which recognize exceptional CNLs in academia and practice. The awards were presented during the virtual CNL Summit held February 17-19, 2022.

The first CNL Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Margorie Wiggins, DNP, MBA, RN, the chief nursing officer for MaineHealth. Dr. Wiggins has been a champion for the Clinical Nurse Leader since she was appointed by the AACN Board to the first CNL Task Force. She went on to serve on the CNL Implementation Committee from 2004-2007, the CNL Steering Committee from 2007-2011, and the AACN Board of Directors since 2020 as an inaugural Practice Representative.

Dr. Wiggins is a visionary leader and innovative thinker who has distinguished herself as a national champion for CNL education and practice. At the initial CNL Implementation Conference in 2004, she presented the keynote address, titled Health Care Today: The Perfect Storm, which outlined the gaps, challenges, and opportunities that then existed in health care, setting the stage for the advancement of the CNL role. She was instrumental in developing AACN’s *White Paper on the Role of the CNL*, which provided the foundation for current CNL competencies and curricular expectations. As vice president for Patient Care Services at Maine Medical Center, Dr. Wiggins was one of the first nurse executives to integrate the CNL into nursing practice, provided consultation to multiple healthcare sites, and she continues to speak passionately about the CNL as a catalyst for improving patient outcomes and reducing costs of care.

CNC’s [CNL Innovation in Practice Award](#) recognizes current CNLs, faculty, and practice partners who have showcased innovate practice projects. Each project receives a monetary award of $5,000. This year’s award winners are Anita Catlin, PhD, FNP, CNL, FAAN, Kaiser Permanente, Vallejo, CA; Brianna Bagalio, MSN, RN, CCRN, CNL, Dartmouth–Hitchcock Medical Center; and Kimberly Hill, MSN, RN, CNL, CCRN, Dartmouth–Hitchcock Medical Center. Learn more about the honorees here.

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**ER. PHILIP GRENIER RECEIVES AACN EMERITUS MEMBERSHIP AWARD**

At AACN’s Deans Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, Dr. Phil Greiner from San Diego State University was bestowed Emeritus Membership for his outstanding contributions to AACN.

Dr. Greiner has served AACN on various committees, task forces, and as a member of the Board of Directors. He began his involvement with the Organizational Leadership Network in 2007, and then served on the Planning Subcommittee from 2008-2012.

He has made significant contributions through his participation on The AACN Futures Task, Nominating Committee and Governmental Affairs Committee, and as a State Grassroots Liaison. In 2017, Dr. Greiner was elected to the AACN Board of Directors and in 2020 he received The Advocate of the Year Award.

Congratulations to Dr. Greiner!
AACHN LAUNCHES NEW CAMPAIGN TO ADDRESS VACCINE HESITANCY AND HEALTH MISINFORMATION WITH FUNDING FROM THE CDC

AACHN has been awarded $1 million in funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to launch a new initiative titled Building COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence Among Nurses and in Communities. Although COVID-19 vaccines have been widely available for more than a year, only 64% of the US population is fully vaccinated. As part of this project, AACHN will award funding to 10 schools of nursing nationwide to launch targeted campaigns to build confidence in the COVID-19 vaccines and dispel health misinformation.

This initiative was developed to help nursing school faculty and students have effective conversations about COVID-19 vaccinations in order to boost consumer confidence. Participating schools of nursing will undertake a variety of education and outreach activities to reach individuals and populations at risk. These activities include engaging with faculty and staff on how best to share credible COVID-19 vaccine information and respond to misinformation (including on social media); developing learning resources and nursing curricula to improve vaccine confidence; and connecting with health departments and community organizations to reach target populations.

Following a call for letters of intent issued last fall, AACHN identified 10 schools to participate in this important work:

- Emory University Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing (GA)
- Fayetteville State University School of Nursing (NC)
- Florida State University College of Nursing (FL)
- Loma Linda University School of Nursing (CA)
- McKendree University Division of Nursing (IL)
- Tennessee Tech University Whitson-Hester School of Nursing (TN)
- The University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing (AL)
- University of Houston College of Nursing (TX)
- University of Missouri Sinclair School of Nursing (MO)
- University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (PA)

To support the work underway at the local level, AACHN will provide technical assistance, including strategic guidance and communication support in the form of training, message development, social media outreach, and video production in collaboration with our partners at AACHN-TV. This work includes gathering vaccine confidence “success stories” and disseminating these broadly to all nursing schools and healthcare institutions. AACHN will create a central online clearinghouse to highlight the work of participating schools, post videos from the funded sites, and share learnings and best practices with the higher education and healthcare communities.

For more information on this project, please contact AACHN’s Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Joan Stanley at jstanley@aacnnursing.org.
AACN AND NURSETHINK® LAUNCH NEW SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM TO HELP ADDRESS THE NURSE FACULTY SHORTAGE

AACN and NurseThink® have launched a new scholarship program focused on preparing future nurse faculty. Open to students enrolled in master’s and doctoral programs at AACN member institutions, this program will provide $5,000 scholarship awards to students twice a year through 2026. NurseThink® has committed $50,000 to support this program, which will be administered by AACN’s Foundation for Academic Nursing.

NurseThink®, a leading provider of student and faculty development tools, approached the Foundation for Academic Nursing about providing support for graduate students with a desire to teach. The NurseThink®-AACN Scholarship was created and is open to all students who are members of the Graduate Nursing Student Academy. To apply, students must complete an online application, provide demographic information and details on their academic achievement, and submit a short essay outlining their plans to teach after graduation.

Applications are now being accepted for the first award, which will be presented in May 2022. Click here to apply. The application deadline for the first award is April 25.

Partnering to Support Nursing Students

AACN actively seeks opportunities to partner with corporate sponsors and other stakeholders to offer scholarship programs for nursing students in baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral programs. The association currently administers scholarship programs in conjunction with CastleBranch, Liaison International, AfterCollege, Hurst Review Services, and Uniform Advantage. Those interested in establishing a scholarship program and/or partnering with AACN are encouraged to contact Foundation Director, Dr. Katie Fioravanti, at kfioravanti@aacnnursing.org.

Click here for more details on programs available through the Foundation for Academic Nursing.

UPCOMING WEBINARS

April 13 | 2:00-3:00 PM (ET)
Opportunities for Cross Curricular Collaboration: Implementing Competency-Based Learning

April 27 | 2:00-3:00 PM (ET)
Partnerships Between Academic Health Departments and Schools of Nursing

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

GRADUATE NURSING ADMISSIONS PROFESSIONALS (GNAP) CONFERENCE
APRIL 4-5 | SALT LAKE CITY, UT | REGISTER NOW

BUSINESS OFFICERS OF NURSING SCHOOLS (BONUS) ANNUAL CONFERENCE
APRIL 20-22 | DENVER, CO | REGISTER NOW
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They may forget your name but they will never forget how you made them feel
- Maya Angelou
Opportunities

AACN is hiring!

Apply now to become the Implementation Director – AACN Essentials

Become a key member of the AACN team and provide academic, strategic, technical, operational, and managerial leadership focused on the transition to the 2021 Essentials.

Learn more about the position and apply at aacnnursing.org
ELNEC UPATE

Some helpful updates have been added to the End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) project website. The updates are dedicated to faculty and program directors desiring to learn more about teaching innovation and evaluation of learning in palliative care education. As schools become more familiar with The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education, faculty are eager for resources to support the “hospice/palliative/supportive care across the lifespan and with diverse populations” sphere. ELNEC is excited to launch a new feature on the website – ELNEC Schools of Nursing Faculty Corner.

Along with the website resources, ELNEC is holding regional webinars open to all, highlighting various elements of palliative care education through recorded Faculty Spotlights’ featuring the excellent and creative work provided by passionate nursing faculty.

In addition to the inspiring work shared by committed educators, ELNEC has engaged in dialogue and reflection on evaluating learning and competence within our schools. The overarching goal of this work is to stimulate ideas, network, collaborate, and move forward in advancing palliative care in nursing education and ultimately improve the care of patients with serious illnesses and families.

Through its consortium of schools, ELNEC hopes to build a cohort of faculty interested in multi-site research examining best practices in palliative care education. If you would like to participate, please email us at pallcareed@up.edu

Online Programs for Undergraduate/New Graduate/Graduate

ELNEC’s Undergraduate/New Graduate and ELNEC Graduate online programs provide primary palliative care education. Six one-hour modules provide students with the foundational education needed in caring for seriously ill patients and families. These modules align with the AACN-endorsed primary palliative competencies for undergraduate/prelicensure (2016) and graduate nursing students (2019), respectively. Since fall 2021, the number of undergraduate programs enrolling students to complete the ELNEC Undergraduate/New Graduate curriculum is up nearly 5%, increasing from 675 to 704. Comparatively, graduate program enrollment has risen 7%, from 267 to 287 students completing the ELNEC graduate curriculum. To support your efforts in enhancing and standardizing your palliative care education, ELNEC can provide you with free access to the curricula to review. Contact elnecoh.org to request access.

AACN CARES and G-CARES Competencies

For faculty interested in more information or not familiar with the AACN CARES and G-CARES competencies, please visit the website or contact Dr. Andra Davis, associate professor, University of Portland and ELNEC Project co-investigator, davisa@up.edu.