

# Advancing Academic Leadership for New Deans

2021-2022 Directory

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American Association *of* Colleges *of* Nursing

*The Voice of Academic Nursing*

# **Advancing Academic Leadership for New Deans**

Led by the Center for Creative Leadership in collaboration with AACN, Advancing Academic Leadership for New Deans is a program that provides participants with an in-depth assessment experience, a range of content and exercises related to successful leadership, and the opportunity to establish a peer network that fosters long-term partnerships and collegial support.

The purpose of the Advancing Academic Leadership for New Deans program is to enhance the executive leadership skills of individuals who seek a high-level skill set to maximize opportunities and meet challenges. This program was developed for deans new to their role or transitioning into a dean role at a new college or university.

This 13-month program features four face-to-face meetings with work done virtually between sessions. Individuals will conduct a Learning Development project at their institution, and the top four projects will be presented at an AACN Conference.



**Shanna Akers, EdD, MSN/MBA-HC, RN, CNE, NEA-BC**

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Dr. Shanna Akers is Dean and Professor at Liberty University School of Nursing (LUSON), where she has taught across all program levels since 2009. She is a former critical care nurse who served as the Director of the Cardiovascular Service Line of a two-hospital system prior to joining LUSON. Akers completed her nursing licensure program at Louisiana Tech University, her bachelors from Virginia Commonwealth University, and her Master in the Science of Nursing and Master in Business Administration. Her Doctor of Education (EdD) was completed and her dissertation assessed the relationship between clinical and simulation experiences and knowledge and self-efficacy. She is dedicated to impacting nursing through leadership, education, and personal relationships.

Akers is a member of several regional and national organizations including the Virginia Nurses Association, the Association for Leadership Science in Nursing, and Sigma Theta Tau International. She is certified in nursing education (CNE) and board certified as a Nurse Executive-Advanced (NEA-BC). Akers was a 2018 AACN-Wharton Executive Leadership Fellow. Her areas of research include spiritual care, forgiveness, and the impact of the nurse on patient outcomes, healthcare, and education.



**Amanda Anaya-Pierce, DNP, RN, CEN**

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I am the Director of Nursing at a private university in El Paso, TX. We have an ADN program that feeds directly to our RN to BSN program. The two part program was created to address the nursing shortages in a border town but also assist students in obtaining their BSN rather than leaving them at the ADN level. When I am not immersed in academic nursing I like to enjoy a good cup of coffee and a book and spend many hours at the baseball field with my boys. I also serve as a county commissioner for a busy emergency district in El Paso county. I got my start in nursing at a busy level one trauma center working in the ED as a staff nurse and transitioned into a leadership position before making the full time switch to academia. My journey in academia started at a large public university system where I become fluent in simulation and clinical education. I was asked to transition to the private university to start the college of nursing and have worked diligently to write the curricula and get approval from our state board of nursing as well as establish our CCNE accreditation for the BSN program.



**Adejoke Ayoola, PhD, RN, FAAN**

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Dr. Adejoke B. Ayoola is the Chairperson and Professor of Nursing at Calvin University. Dr Ayoola is a fellow of the American Academy of nursing and a nurse scientist with a research background that focuses on advancing the science of health promotion among women and girls from various economic, educational and ethnic backgrounds by focusing on increasing women's knowledge and understanding of reproductive physiology and contraception. She created the Preconception Reproductive Knowledge Promotion (PREKNOP) program for women and launched Health Education And Leadership Training for a Hopeful future (H.E.A.L.T.H.) Camp initiative for girls aged 9-15 years. Dr. Ayoola serves as a leader in the nursing profession and in the community. She served as the chair of the faculty development at Calvin University Nursing Department for over 10 years. She was the President of Sigma International Society of Nursing, Kappa Epsilon-at-Large Chapter (2013-2014). She also served as the Chair of the Midwest Nursing Research Society (MNRS) Women's Health & Transitions in Childbearing Research Section (2017-2018). She currently serves on the board of a college-wide committee, the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity at Calvin University. She is also the leader of the African Ladies Fellowship, Grand Rapids, MI.



**Wendy Bailes, PhD, RN**

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Dr. Bailes is an alumni of the University of Louisiana at Monroe, formerly Northeast Louisiana University. Upon graduating in 1993 with her BSN she practiced in dialysis, pediatrics and medical-surgical nursing. She began teaching at the University of Louisiana at Monroe in 2005 with a focus of beginning medical-surgical and management. In 2006, she received her MSN from the University of Phoenix with a concentration in Healthcare Education. In 2010, she began her journey to obtain her PhD in nursing from the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Her focus was on the Nursing Practice Environment and its impact on HCAPHS. After graduating in 2014 with her doctorate, she became the Associate Director of the Undergraduate Programs in the Kitty DeGree School of Nursing. In 2017, she transitioned to the Director for the School of Nursing, which includes both BSN and MSN programs. She has been happily married for 27 years and has one daughter, who is a college student. Her favorite activity is saltwater fishing with her husband in South Louisiana.



**Katrina Browning, DNP, RN, CNE**

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As a nurse for nearly two decades, Katrina (Katie) Browning has embraced women and children's healthcare throughout most of her career. She has a background in labor and delivery, postpartum, newborn nursery, neonatal intensive care, and gynecology. Prior to moving into an academic setting, she worked public health as a family case manager. The intersection of public health and women and children's health is an area that she has strongly embraced. In the transition to an academic setting, she has taught in maternal, pediatrics, and community health nursing. Her research area of focus centers on perceptions of poverty among nursing students as she strives to address the social determinants of health. As a fairly new academic nursing leader, Katrina oversees a pre-licensure programs (traditional and accelerated second degree tracks) in a small diocesan university setting. Her passion for social determinants is echoed in her oversight of curriculum and recognition of faculty development needs, as this is an essential element in the healthcare arena. She looks forward to continued growth in her academic leadership role.



**Marla De Jong, PhD, RN, CCNS, FAAN**

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Dr. Marla De Jong is Dean and the Louis H. Peery Presidential Endowed Chair at the University of Utah College of Nursing. She previously was Chair of the Division of Acute and Chronic Care.

Marla served nearly 29 years in the Air Force, holding key leadership roles as Associate Dean for Research at the Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing at the Uniformed Services University, Dean of the United States Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine, Executive Director of the TriService Nursing Research Program, and Air Force Program Manager for the Department of Defense Blast Injury Research Program Coordinating Office. Marla deployed to Iraq as Program Manager for the Joint Theater Trauma System.

Marla earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from Grand View College. She received her MS from the University of Maryland at Baltimore, and her PhD from the University of Kentucky.



**Yvonne Eaves, PhD, RN**  
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Yvonne D. Eaves, PhD, RN is the Thomas and Elizabeth Holder Endowed Chair, Director of the WellStar School of Nursing, and Associate Professor at Kennesaw State University, WellStar School of Nursing. Previously, Dr. Eaves was an Assistant Professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Schools of Nursing. While at UAB, she was Scientist in the Center for Aging and an Associate Scientist in the Minority Health and Research Center. Dr. Eaves earned her PhD in nursing from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; MSN from Northern Illinois University, and her BSN from Saint Xavier University.

Dr. Eaves' program of research is focused on caregiving, caregiving transitions, and long-term care decision-making in rural African American families caring for older adult relatives with chronic illnesses, stroke, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Eaves has methodological expertise in several qualitative research methods, mixed-methods research, health disparities research, and diverse ethnic aging research. Her research has been funded by the National Institute on Nursing Research and the National Institute on Aging at the National Institutes of Health as well as the National Alzheimer's Association.



**Mary Koithan, PhD, RN, CNS-BC, FAAN**  
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Mary S. Koithan, PhD, RN, CNS-BC, FAAN is Professor and Dean at Washington State University College of Nursing. Her undergraduate education was at the University of Cincinnati; MSN from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and PhD from the University of Colorado. She completed a post-doctoral fellowship in Complementary and Alternative Medicine Research at the University of Arizona in 2005. She is certified as a CNS and has focused much of her work on improving the care provided to chronically ill adult populations, including those with HIV/AIDS and cancer. Dr. Koithan is recognized internationally for her interprofessional scholarship on integrative healthcare delivery and symptom management. She has numerous funded studies, most recently Core PI for Arizona's All of Us, Project Director for several HRSA-funded projects including the Arizona Nursing Inclusive Excellence Program and Co-PI for IHS-funded Indians into Nursing Scholar projects. She is the 2019 recipient of the Arizona Edith Sayre Auslander Established Visionary Award and the AACN Diversity Lectureship Award.



**Sandra Larson, PhD, CRNA, APN, FNAP**

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Dr. Sandra Larson is Vice President of Partnerships and Interim Dean, College of Nursing at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science (RFUMS). She is also the Director of the RFUMS Center for Interprofessional Evidence Based Practice: A Joanna Briggs Affiliate Group and an Associate Professor in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia.

Dr. Larson earned her BSN from the University of Illinois, MS in Nurse Anesthesia from Rush University, and PhD in Public Policy Analysis from the University of Illinois.

Dr. Larson's professional nursing career includes 35 years of patient care experience (ICU RN and CRNA), 20 years of clinical precepting, and 10 years in higher-education administration and didactic teaching. Her clinical and teaching expertise is in cardiovascular and thoracic anesthesia and she is distinguished to be the first CRNA to lead author research published in the Journal of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Anesthesia. Additional practice and research interests include anesthesia patient safety, and nursing scope-of-practice regulation.



**Usha Menon, PhD, RN, FAAN**

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Usha Menon, PhD, RN, FAAN is Dean and Professor at the University of South Florida College of Nursing, and Senior Associate Vice President at USF Health. Previously she was Associate Dean of Research and Global Advances in the College of Nursing and co-PI of the NIH-funded All Of Us Research Program at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona. A major emphasis of her research culturally sensitive health promotion and illness prevention behaviors among under-represented populations focusing on cancer and diabetes with a strong emphasis on transdisciplinary implementation science. She has garnered over \$60 million in total research funding with her team. Her leadership focus is on diversity of thought and scholarship in nursing as well as equity across faculty development. She has taught in programs across the nursing curriculum from the BSN to the PhD, and mentors junior faculty across health sciences in medicine, microbiology, and pharmacy, in the U.S. and Ethiopia, with a focus on translational research and team science. Dr. Menon is a recognized expert in behavior change theory, interventions, and health equity.



**Sandra M. Olguin, DNP, MSN, RN**

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Sandra M. Olguin, DNP, MSN, RN received her Bachelor's and Master's in Science degree from the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) and her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from Touro University Nevada. In 1989, she relocated from Campbell, California, to Reno, Nevada. She works as an Assistant Dean of the BSN and LPN programs at Unitek College. In her tenure as a Nevada nurse, she has held nursing positions as a staff nurse, nurse leader, and nurse educator. As a member of the Nevada State Collaborative against Workplace Incivility and Bullying, she provides workshops to individuals and Health Care Organizations. After receiving a Nevada Nurses Association (NNA) scholarship, she asked Betty Razor how she could give back to NNA. While she is passionate about and grateful for being a nurse, giving back to her community and the profession of nursing through the Nevada Nurses Foundation has been most rewarding.



**Mary Ellen Santucci, PhD, RN**

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Dr. Santucci has over 30 years experience as a nurse educator. She obtained all of her nursing degrees part-time while working full-time. Her interest in curriculum development and faculty development have led her to positions of middle management within nursing education. For the last 9 years, she has held titles of director and chair. She has led the Nursing Department through 3 CCNE accreditation visits. Her present University is creating a School of Nursing and Health Professions and she is interested in being part of the school's academic administration. She wants to be part of the creation of a premier school of nursing and health professions that results in nursing programs that will create vibrant, respected graduates.





**Sherrill J. Smith, PhD, RN, CNL, CNE**  
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Dr. Smith has been Dean and Professor, Fay W. Whitney School of Nursing, since 2019. She previously was a fulltime faculty/administrator at Wright State University in Dayton, OH from 2008-2019. Her graduate degrees include an MS in nursing education and community/public health nursing (1997) and a PhD in nursing education (2008). Dr. Smith served for 26 years as an active duty and reserve nurse in the U.S. Air Force, retiring at the rank of Colonel in 2011. Her scholarship is in the area of simulation in nursing education, with a special focus on disaster simulation.



**Lachel Story, PhD, RN**  
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Dr. Lachel Story is a Professor as well as the Dean at The University of Southern Mississippi College of Nursing and Health Professions. Dr. Story has taught at Southern Miss for 16 years in the baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral programs. She has also served in various administrative capacities. Dr. Story started her nursing career 25 years ago as an LPN. She received her BSN and MSN from Southern Miss and her PhD in Nursing from the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Her program of research includes funded community-based participatory research projects with a focus on Community Health Workers and health disparities. She has multiple publications and presentations regarding her research, innovative teaching strategies, and program evaluation. Additionally, she has a pathophysiology textbook reflecting her unique pedagogy with its fourth edition being released later this year and an advanced pathophysiology textbook in its first edition. Dr. Story participated in the Leadership for Academic Programs Fellowship through the American Associations of Colleges of Nursing in 2015 and the Management Development Program through Harvard's Graduate School of Education in 2019; both were competitive processes.



**Maria van Pelt, PhD, CRNA, FAAN**

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Maria van Pelt, PhD, CRNA, FAAN is Dean, School of Nursing /Associate Dean, Bouve College of Health Sciences and Clinical Associate Professor at Northeastern University. Dr. van Pelt is widely regarded as an expert, scholar and leader in patient safety. Her seminal impact has been through national and international advancement of the healthcare profession through advocacy, education, research and policy development related to clinician peer support and wellness. She is a 2012 American Association of Nurse Anesthetists Foundation Doctoral Fellow, a 2014 American Hospital Association / National Patient Safety Foundation Patient Safety/Leadership Fellow and a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing. Dr. van Pelt earned her BSN from Holy Family University, her MS from St. Joseph's University and her MSN and PhD from Villanova University.



**Danny Willis, DNS, RN, PMHCNS-BC, CNE, FAAN**

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Danny G. Willis, DNS, RN, PMHCNS-BC, CNE, FAAN, is Dean and Professor of the Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing at Saint Louis University. He has served in progressive academic leadership positions at Boston College, William F. Connell School of Nursing and the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Nursing. Dr. Willis has worked throughout his career to champion student and faculty success, advance diversity within the profession, and promote nursing science. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and has published widely in the areas of qualitative research methodology, disciplinary philosophical and theoretical development, and boys and men's mental health in the aftermath of trauma, violence, and abuse.



**Connie Zak, DNP, MBA, FNP-BC**

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Dr. Zak is the Dean for the College of Nursing at Resurrection University. Prior to her recent move Dr Zak was the Associate Dean of online programs at Purdue University Global. Prior to her last two academic roles she was the Vice-President for Healthcare Management for the Community Care Alliance of Illinois (CCAI). In this role she developed the division of Healthcare Management and was a leader in building a Managed care organization with an innovative model of care that specialized in adults and seniors with disabilities. In addition, she led the establishment of 8 Nurse Practitioner lead Anchor Health Homes. Her department's work has been featured on the front page of the Chicago Tribune, and they have received a Platinum Award from URAC for exemplary work done with the psychiatric population. Dr Zak received her BSN from the University of Illinois at Chicago, MBA from Keller Graduate School of Management and DNP from Rush University. Dr Zak is a member of several organizations including the American Association of Nurse Practitioners and the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties. Dr Zak's research interests are diabetes, heart disease, and education. She was the co-investigator and faculty of several training grants in nursing education granted by HRSA.