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May 21, 2015

Dr. Ann Cary
Chair, AACN Membership Committee

Re: AACN Innovations in Professional Nursing Education Award

Dear Dr. Cary:

On behalf of Pace University Lienhard School of Nursing and our Quality Improvement Team, I am pleased to submit the enclosed nomination for the AACN Innovations in Professional Nursing Education Award.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sophie R. Kaufman, DPS
Assistant Dean for Grants and Strategic Initiatives

Lin Drury, PhD, RN
Professor
Department of Undergraduate Nursing

Lucille Ferrara, EdD, MBA, FNP, RN
Associate Professsor
Department of Graduate Studies

Joanne DeMarco, MS
Assistant Director of Assessment

1. **Description of the programmatic innovation, including outcomes achieved and a project title**

Title: *Appreciative Inquiry: Change and Innovation in a School of Nursing's Quality Improvement Process*
Description: In April 2012, a QI team was created which was comprised of two faculty members, one staff member and the assistant director of assessment at the Pace University Lienhard School of Nursing. The initial team meeting included developing goals, defining roles and establishing communication. During this process, the concept of reframing the QI process was introduced. One of the QI team members had experience with the appreciative inquiry (AI) framework in our Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program. All courses in the DNP program were evaluated within the AI framework. The DNP students also learned how to conduct interviews and inquiries using the AI framework and found that the data gleaned from this method were rich, comprehensive and extremely useful. The DNP program director found the data retrieved from the AI surveys contributed greatly to the overall evolution of the DNP program, including changes that enhanced and improved the quality of the student and faculty experience, the program of study, and the program overall. Based on the success of the DNP experience with AI, the QI team redesigned all of the course, and performance and satisfaction surveys using the AI framework. Additionally, the new surveys were shortened, fewer in number, and non-anonymous. While self-identification goes beyond the AI framework, the goal of asking participants to self-identify came from the belief that it may encourage greater accountability in the comments offered and could lead to more substantive comments to support the overall goals of QI. The new AI surveys are meant to help students and other stakeholders to develop their skill at giving and receiving constructive feedback and fostering quality improvement. Responses are reported in the aggregate. Recognizing that initiating this new method of QI would pose some challenges, the QI team decided to pilot the course surveys in summer 2012. One graduate course and two undergraduate courses were evaluated using the new surveys. In preparation for the change, students received information about the new format and were given opportunity to ask questions and clarify the process. Initial concerns about non-anonymity were addressed, providing the rationale for the change. The response rate and quality of the data retrieved from the pilot provided the QI team with the needed evidence to bring to the faculty and staff in the fall with the intent to transition the QI process to the new AI framework. The key core questions for students for all the revised surveys include:
• What did you contribute to your learning experience in this class?
• What do you value most about this class?
• In your view, what has been your greatest academic achievement in this class?
• What factors do you think contributed to your academic success?
• After reflecting on this achievement/success, if you had three wishes that could help improve or enhance this class and allow you to have more of these successes, what would they be for you?
• I would recommend my instructor(s) to others who will take this course (yes/no).

In September 2012 the QI team presented the findings of the pilot study to the faculty and staff at the Faculty Association meeting. After much discussion, review and input from these stakeholders, the surveys were further refined and faculty voted unanimously to implement them for the fall end of semester evaluation. Initially, faculty and staff expressed concerns with regard to the non-anonymity, not only for students completing the surveys but also for themselves.

When the rationale was provided, these stakeholders were in agreement that this approach had merit.

Outcomes: 1.**Improved process/feedback loop**: The QI team reviews all comments and solicits feedback on those comments from individuals within the Lienhard School of Nursing and the university based on areas of responsibility. This may result in department level discussions or singular actions by the involved individuals. Assessment and determination of the need for appropriate planned changed generally occurs in a very short period of time.

2. **Actions based on feedback**: The following is an example of an improvement in course structure that is based on student feedback. At the end of summer 2013 semester, one of the themes that emerged from the graduate student "wishes" for courses in advanced pathophysiology and pharmacology was the desire to extend the summer semester from 10 weeks to 13 weeks. This feedback was brought to the faculty and after graduate department discussion, led to a change from a 10-week to 13-week semester.

2. Summary: In April 2012, a Quality Improvement (QI) Team made of faculty and staff took on the challenge to design a groundbreaking plan that would enhance "just in time" quality improvement in the School of Nursing at Pace University. One year later, all evaluation surveys of courses, faculty, overall student satisfaction, faculty satisfaction, administrative performance, and staff satisfaction were entirely redesigned in an appreciative inquiry framework, streamlined to a handful of essential questions, and with the requirement that those who complete the survey provide their names. The QI team developed a video tutorial on the new evaluation model that was shared with students, faculty, and staff, with special emphasis on how to provide feedback in an appreciative inquiry framework, the rationale behind the lack of anonymity, and how feedback will be used.   Following a successful pilot of three course surveys in summer 2012, all new surveys to baccalaureate and master's nursing students were launched in fall 2012 and yielded a 34.3% response rate (n=640/1,877). Since then, the response rate has been increasing steadily to a record 46.1% in fall 2014 (n=1,045/2,266). The surveys yield rich qualitative data, which the QI team analyzes and directs to the appropriate stakeholders for action. Following action, the dean communicates each semester with students, apprising them of changes made to address the wishes and suggestions they have made.

3. An explanation of how the award criteria were met:

Served as a catalyst for change within the curriculum and/or educational mission of the institution: Since its inception as a tool for evaluation, the way we use AI for evaluation continues to evolve. We are advancing in the following ways:
- Learning to use our new AI lens for data review and interpretation
- Expanding curricular integration, such as the threading AI across the graduate nursing programs
- Providing ongoing faculty, staff and administration development in AI practice
- Spreading the AI framework to other programs in the College of Health Professions

   As we continue to advance this initiative we will include reframing across faculty, administration, staff, and students the perspective of "AI quest for quality" as opposed to the former "problem hunter" approach. This initiative has truly served as a catalyst for change in the School, College, and, more recently, the University.

Has the potential for replication and dissemination: Our team has presented its work to the University's Deans' Council and at the annual meeting of University Leadership to share our experience and discuss possible replication. Last spring, we were asked to share our broader experience with AI at the Pace University Faculty Institute. We produced a webinar on AI, which was followed by a presentation to the nursing leadership at a major medical center in New York City. Our work in AI was published in a peer-reviewed journal, and presented at several conferences. The following list highlights our publications and presentations on this initiative:

Ferrara, L., Drury, L., DeMarco. J., Kaufman, S. R., & Singleton, J. (2014). *Appreciative Inquiry: An Innovative Initiative for Continuous Improvement in Nursing Education.* Abstract presented at the Assessment Network of New York's Second Annual Conference, Rochester, NY.

Ferrara, L., Drury, L., DeMarco. J., Kaufman, S. R., and Singleton, J. (2013). *Changing the Culture of Assessment Through Appreciative Inquiry.* Abstract presented at the Assessment Institute, Minneapolis, MN.

Feldman, H. R., DeMarco, J., Drury, L., Ferrara, L., Kaufman, S.R., & Singleton. J. K. (2014). *Appreciative Inquiry: Key to Improving Your Leadership Skills.* New York Presbyterian, School of Continuing Education for Nurses, New York, NY.

Ferrara, L., DeMarco, J., Drury, L., & Kaufman, S.R. (2014). *Changing the Culture of Assessment Through Appreciative Inquiry.* Pace Leadership Forum, White Plains, NY.

Ferrara, L., Drury, L., Kaufman, S.R., & DeMarco. J. (2014). *Unlearning Assessment.* Eleventh Annual Faculty Institute, Pace University, Pleasantville, NY.

Has involved teams of faculty when possible (e.g., across programs, disciplines): The original AI Team has been serving for 3 years and includes one faculty member from the Department of Undergraduate Nursing, Dr. Lin Drury; one faculty member from the Department of Graduate Studies, Dr. Lucille Ferrara; the Assistant Dean for Grants and Strategic Initiatives for the College of Health Professions, Dr. Sophie Kaufman; and the Assistant Director of Assessment for the Lienhard School of Nursing, Ms. Joanne DeMarco.

Is consistent with AACN's mission and vision: Through the AI method of evaluation, the School of Nursing embraces and promotes open and responsive communication between faculty, staff, and students. The AI approach is grounded in a philosophy of positive reflection and continuous feedback, which in turn fosters professional accountability and leadership. In addition, the AI method is threaded throughout the curriculum by encouraging all students to participate in the evaluation process. This is an excellent opportunity for increasing student engagement and assisting students to understand quality improvement. The AI evaluations are non-anonymous, creating an environment of mindfulness and acceptance of divergent views and cultural nuances in which faculty, staff, and students function as colleagues.

Demonstrates advancement of professional nursing education: The AI method promotes cultural change from one of "problem hunter" to "quest for quality". Students, faculty, and staff are continuously involved in recognizing and celebrating what they do well and create opportunities to improve the educational experience, interprofessional practice, and the organization. Feedback is given regularly to the stakeholders of changes made based on their input. This has application beyond the classroom as it simulates real world experiences that students will encounter in professional practice settings. AI promotes professional development for faculty and staff in the areas of leadership and communication. In summary, these attributes promote the advancement of nursing education by incorporating the values, opinions, and perspectives of everyone involved in guiding the educational journey toward positive outcomes.

4. Institutional category of the nominee: Private School without an AHC