Position Statement

THE NEED FOR FUNDING FOR NURSING EDUCATION RESEARCH

Board of Governors
May 18, 2007

The National League for Nursing believes that there is an urgent need to provide significant funds to support research that will build the science of nursing education. Such a science should address questions related to new pedagogies, graduate competencies, faculty preparation and development, best practices in teaching and learning, innovative clinical teaching models, recruitment and retention strategies, and other elements of excellence in nursing education. In addition, the approach to building the science should be multi-method, multi-site, and multi-paradigmatic, and it should be built in a systematic way.

A science of nursing education will be built only if all the following components are in place. First, we must have nurse educator scholars who can design and conduct programs of research that address one or more of the NLN's *Priorities for Research in Nursing Education*. Second, those scholars must have substantial funding from governmental agencies and other institutions and organizations to support their pedagogical research in nursing. Third, institutions of higher education must value and support pedagogical research and view it as a legitimate form of scholarship. Finally, we must have a well-prepared cadre of faculty whose teaching practice is evidence-based and who continually demonstrate a spirit of inquiry.

The Voice for Nursing Education

NLN
National League for Nursing

BACKGROUND

Just as the health care arena is changing at an unprecedented pace, so, too, is higher education. Learners are increasingly diverse; technology is altering the way learners and teachers interact with one another and with the disciplinary knowledge, skills, and ways of thinking to be learned. The amount of information nurses are asked to integrate has increased at a phenomenal rate. The public is demanding greater accountability from the discipline and from the institutions of higher learning: graduates must be capable of providing safe and effective care.

There has been an increase in the number of doctoral programs preparing researchers with expertise in nursing education (Ironside, 2006). While this is encouraging, additional support for educators to engage in pedagogical research is imperative. For instance, in a survey conducted in 2006 by the NLN's Task Group on Funding for Nursing Education Research, 84 percent of the 1,600 faculty respondents indicated they had never participated in the conduct of funded pedagogical research and 80 percent had never submitted a proposal to any funding source as a principal or co-investigator.

For nearly three decades, the NLN has been a leader in advancing the science of nursing education. To increase the evidence base for pedagogical practices, priorities for research in nursing education have consistently been promulgated, a grants program has been sustained, and partnerships with other organizations have been developed to conduct multi-site, multi-method projects. An online nursing education research repository is under development along with a nursing education minimum data set to standardize terminology. To expand the disciplinary capacity for pedagogical research, annual institutes and workshops are sponsored. Despite these foundational efforts the need is great to continue and expand nursing education's research agenda.

Research is needed to transform nursing education and document the effectiveness and meaningfulness of reform efforts. Yet, as Diekelmann noted (2001, p. 340), "when the Act of Congress granted funding to the National Center for Nursing Research (now the National Institute for Nursing Research or NINR), it specified that no funding could be used for research in nursing education." New funding sources must be established to ensure that pedagogical practices keep pace with changes in contemporary health care systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The NLN is committed to providing leadership in promoting evidence-based teaching in nursing and in the ongoing development of research that informs and improves nursing education. In light of this commitment, the NLN will continue to provide its own funds to support nursing education research and will continue to seek extramural funding to support nursing education research. Additionally, the NLN recommends that:

- Faculty advocate to policy makers, stakeholders, and the public about the need to fund research in nursing education
- The federal government, other organizations, foundations, and other supporters of research reevaluate their initiatives to include support for pedagogical research in nursing
- Faculty establish robust programs of research to advance the science of nursing education
- The NLN's *Priorities for Research in Nursing Education* continue to be the focus for building the science of nursing education
- Schools of nursing and educational institutions provide resources to support pedagogical research in nursing
- Schools of nursing establish a culture that values and supports pedagogical research in nursing

REFERENCES

Diekelmann, N. (2001). Funding for research in nursing education (Guest Editorial). *Journal of Nursing Education, 40*(8), 339-341.

Ironside, P.M. (2006). Reforming doctoral curricula in nursing: Creating multiparadigmatic, multipedagogical researchers (Editorial). *Journal of Nursing Education, 45,* 51-52.

National League for Nursing (2003). Priorities for Research in Nursing Education. Available at http://www.nln.org/research/priorities.htm