

From the *President*

American Academy of Nursing

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

LEADERSHIP

One of the truly rewarding features of active involvement in the American Academy of Nursing is the opportunity to observe firsthand the many leadership activities in which the organization and the individual fellows are engaged. More important, perhaps, are the efforts that are made to create opportunities to inspire and develop the leadership abilities of others within the profession. Clearly, we are not alone in such efforts nor should we be. Leadership and leader development are a part of the work of other nursing groups as well. The truth is, however, that we can never pay enough attention to this portion of our mission, especially during this chaotic time in health care when leadership is so critical to our ability to deliver care.

We can certainly take pride in a number of AAN programs that are explicitly concerned with leadership development and are thriving as a result of exemplary leadership by our colleagues, examples of which include:

- The John A. Hartford Foundation's Building Academic Geriatric Nursing Capacity Grant. As the director of this program, Claire Fagin is providing superb leadership in creating sufficient geriatric nursing expertise to meet the needs of our rapidly growing senior population. To date, 30 schools and 59 individual nurses have received funding to pursue academic preparation for this vital specialty practice. As a part of this grant, an annual two-day conference is



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held for all the recipients, the explicit objective of which is leadership development. In providing this specific focus, the signal is sent, loud and clear, that leadership as well as expert practice is an expectation of all the participants. In addition, the content is provided in an interactive environment with many formal and informal opportunities for discussion with some of our profession's most influential leaders.

- The Council for the Advancement of Nursing Science (CANS). This council owes its creation to the leadership efforts of several of our most dedicated fellows, notably William Holzemer, Virginia Tilden, and Barbara Given. They recognized that there was a void in opportunities for nurse researchers to come together at the national level, and they worked diligently, in their capacities as AAN board members, to plan and launch the new council. Today that group is comprised of more than 500 members, and implicit among their goals is the creation of professional growth and development opportunities for new and emerging leaders in nursing research. Because

membership in the council is open, expert researchers are able to share their wisdom and expertise with those who are less experienced, thus giving rise to mentoring and role modeling opportunities in abundance.

- AAN Living Legends. This program was developed under the guidance of Angela McBride during her tenure as our president. Her concern was that many of our most extraordinary leaders and their accomplishments might not be known to our more junior fellows unless we devised a strategy to bring the two groups together. The idea of honoring these giants during the course of the annual meeting each year was truly a stroke of genius. It has proven to be an inspirational experience for everyone in attendance. Of particular interest is the juxtaposition of our two ceremonies: Living Legends and New Fellow Induction.

In reviewing these special contributions, it becomes evident that we are fortunate to have fellows elected to the academy who understand the responsibility that leaders have for developing other leaders. As Joanne Disch noted in a recent editorial, beyond having a vision, leadership requires a real generosity, ie, a willingness to give the time and energy necessary to work with others to turn a vision into a reality.¹ The academy and the profession are fortunate to have so many fine, generous leaders among their ranks, working to ensure a bright future for the health of the nation.

REFERENCE

1. Disch J. Professional generosity. *Journal of Professional Nursing* 2002;18:185.

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