



Association for Leadership Science in Nursing

3416 Primm Lane  
Birmingham, AL 35216  
205-823-6106  
<http://alsn.info>  
[office@alsn.email](mailto:office@alsn.email)

July 2022



### **An interview with Tim Cunningham, RN, DrPH, FAAN**

Tim Cunningham is Co-Chief Well-Being Officer for the Woodruff Health Sciences Center, Emory University and Vice President of Practice and Innovation for Emory Healthcare

#### **What is your current professional role?**

I wear two hats, currently where I work. The "broadest" hat is in my service as Co-Chief Well-Being Officer, for the Woodruff Health Sciences Center, Emory University. Our team here supports the well-being of about 35,000 people. The other hat is that I'm Vice President of Practice and Innovation for Emory Healthcare. My other team supports the professional development of our 7,000+ nurses.

#### **Tell us a little about your career path and interest in advancing the science of nursing leadership.**

My career path began as a hospital clown. I worked for the Big Apple Circus Clown Care program at Boston Children's Hospital. I was moved by the resilience I experienced by the patients we served. I was also inspired by how compassionate, and creative the nurses were. So, I went to nursing school at the University of Virginia and spent about 7 years working as an emergency/trauma nurse in some hospitals on the east coast of the U.S. and also internationally. I was curious to learn more about compassion in healthcare and so I got my doctorate in public health. And over time, I've gratefully found myself in various leadership positions.

---

**How did you hear about ALSN and what has been your experience with this organization?**

I have colleagues who are members of ALSN and I am curious to always learn more about leadership science.

**How did you become interested in the study of nursing leadership?**

I see many opportunities for us to be better and stay relevant as nurse leaders. We have to keep challenging ourselves!

**One of our goals is to create a better balance between academic and practice partners. What are your ideas on how this could be accomplished?**

This work should be culturally specific to meet, first the needs of patients, second the needs of learners, and thirdly, the needs of the healthcare system. If all of these goals can align, then you see successful academic/practice partnerships.

**What are three things about you that you would like the ALSN membership to know?**

I'm an avid runner, I believe in community care, and I also believe that the pandemic has changed the way we need to think about leadership and most importantly, the way we practice leadership. The pandemic has shown us that the sky's the limit and also our old ways of leadership will no longer work. Change is scary, but also enlightening.