



Association for Leadership Science in Nursing

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

June 2022



member SPOTLIGHT



**An interview with Cindy Bacon, PhD, RN, CNE, NE-BC;
ALSAN JONA Column Editor; Associate Professor,
University of North Carolina Greensboro, School of
Nursing**

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

“I have been a nurse for 35 years. I received my nursing diploma program from Union Memorial Hospital School of Nursing in Baltimore, Maryland in 1987 and then completed my RN to BSN at Notre Dame of Maryland University in 1988. In 1987, my first job was at Johns Hopkins Hospital in the surgical intermediate care unit which was a terrific place to learn and grow as a new nurse. From the beginning, I loved leadership and knew I wanted to make an impact beyond direct patient care. In 1992, I was promoted to nurse manager and was recognized for innovative thinking and trying new things, such as peer review and Shared Governance. I loved the progressive environment at Hopkins and probably would have stayed there for my whole career had my husband's job not moved us to southeast Virginia. However, after 8 1/2 years at Hopkins, I moved to Newport News, Virginia and worked as a staff nurse for a few months as I finished my master's degrees (MA in Business Management and MS in Nursing Administration), commuting to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. After that, I worked as a nurse manager at Riverside Regional Medical Center, a traditional 300-bed community hospital. Following my experience at Johns Hopkins, it was quite a culture shock to transition to a non-academic medical center! It was at Riverside that I realized the importance of the nurse leader, the nursing work environment and its affect on nurse and patient outcomes, which has been the focus of my program of research ever since.

I moved several times after that, finally settling in Lewisville, North Carolina where I have been for 22 years. I was fortunate to work part-time while I raised my children and enjoyed being in the staff nurse role in PACU/surgical services at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. In 2005, I was awarded a full-time pre-doctoral fellowship and began work on my PhD in Healthcare Quality and Patient Outcomes at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and I moved into academia in 2013. I am currently the Interim Director of the MSN Programs at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and teach leadership and management courses in our MSN and PhD programs.

Leadership is my passion, and my research has explored the relationship between the nurses' work environment and nurse/team outcomes including safety climate, job enjoyment, resilience, and burnout as well as patient outcomes such as failure to rescue and hospital acquired infections, and falls. I believe strongly in Shared Governance and nurse leaders' abilities to design interventions and implement them to improve their work environment and patient care. To me, everything begins with effective leadership. All nurses have the capacity to be leaders within their sphere of influence, from their work with patients and families to a very broad scope of influence with large groups of nurses.”

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

“I learned about ALSN when I was a doctoral student back when the organization was known as CGEAN. I attended my first annual conference in Baltimore in 2013 where I presented my dissertation research and was delighted to feel a kinship with researchers and practitioners interested in leadership. However, I didn't become really involved in ALSN until 2020 when I was encouraged by my friend, past ALSN president Nora Warshawsky, to join a committee. I joined the Membership Committee where I was inspired by many ALSN leaders including Rose Sherman, who has become a valued mentor, and then in 2021 I assumed the position of JONA Column Editor and ALSN Board Member. I have been thrilled to work with so many talented leaders and researchers at ALSN.

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

Leadership has been my passion since I was a new nurse and has been the focus of my career ever since. From my first job as a staff nurse at Hopkins to my early master's classes in business management and nursing administration, I knew that nurse leaders were the glue that held together the nurses' work environment and supported and propelled nurses forward. I knew I wanted this to be the focus of my research.

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

Academics and practitioners need one another. Neither is whole without the other. Practitioners are out in the “real world” -- leading teams and patient care practices. Academic researchers are building new knowledge through research. Academics and practitioners must partner to answer research questions that advance the science of nursing leadership.

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

I am a proud mom to two wonderful twenty-something daughters, one of whom is in her first year of nursing school. I am an avid dog lover and mom to two rescue Doberman Pinschers. I believe nursing is the greatest profession there is. People ask, why would you want to be nurse in these turbulent times? I say, there is nothing else I would rather be.