

How to Start a New Campus Chapter

Amy Bond TNSA Editor



Texas Nursing Students Association (TNSA) is a great opportunity to voice your opinions, network, and make lasting friendships as well as to enhance your educational experience. To be a part of TNSA your school must first have a local chapter. Creating a chapter offers many opportunities by creating leadership opportunities for students, community service projects and really a chance for students to bond together and voice their opinions and critically think of ways as students to help their communities and patients not only for today, but for the future.

To renew an existing chapter membership or to create a new membership, each student must send in annually an Official Application for TNSA Constituency Status and an application for National Student Nursing Association (NSNA). Your school cannot be recognized by TNSA without being recognized by NSNA. TNSA applications are due in early January of each year and NSNA applications are due in April of each year. All forms must be filled out by individual students, not by the faculty. The goal is that students run the

organizations; faculty is present to support the students.

To have a local Student Nursing Association (SNA) chapter you will need to have a faculty advisor. TNSA recommends this person be a member of Texas Nurses' Association (TNA). An advisor is of great value to your chapter as questions arise about the general workings of the organization, procedures at convention, House of Delegates, and be able to offer guidance and advice for creating and submitting resolutions. Only one advisor is necessary, but TNSA recommends having two.

Next, it is important to read through TNSA's bylaws which can be found at <http://tnsa.org/bylaws.html>. At the top of the page click "download a full copy of the bylaws here. From TNSA's bylaws, your local chapter will adopt its own bylaws which will need to be approved by TNSA. Bylaws will be adopted and revised as your local chapter holds meetings and will need to be sent in to TNSA.

Meetings are important to help your chapter succeed and are required. Post signs, e-mail or even create a Facebook page for your local chapter to see when the best time for your chapter to meet is. One meeting a month is sufficient to take care of business without interfering with school schedules, as long as there is communication throughout the month. A good resource from NSNA on beginning a chapter can be found at <http://www.nsna.org/Membership/RecruitmentTools.aspx>. Tips for creating a chapter, a sample agenda, sample bylaws, and a

sample script for the first chapter meeting can be found by navigating through this link.

At the first or second meeting, a board of directors should be elected including a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, NSNA Recruiter, Fundraising Chairperson, Break Through to Nursing Chairperson, Volunteer Coordinator, etc. as well as adopt bylaws. Article IV Section 2 D of TNSA bylaws describe what your bylaws should include. Bylaws can be prepared by a committee, but must be approved by the chapter as a whole. Your first meeting must be on a date at least 8 weeks prior to the first meeting of the Annual House of Delegates which is usually mid to late February each year. Your first meeting must be on or before December 30th of the preceding year. Collect dues from each member and have them fill out an NSNA membership form. NSNA and TNSA dues are combined. Only collect the dollar amount shown and send it all to NSNA. NSNA will then distribute each states portion back to the appropriate states. This would be the time to decide if your chapter is going to collect dues and how much they should be.

Finally, plan for the future. Not only will you be able to network and voice your opinions at the local chapter level, plan on attending state and national conventions. The next TNSA event is Council of Schools and will be held September 28th and 29th 2012 in Austin, Texas at the Doubletree by Hilton Austin Hotel. The 2013 65th Annual House of Delegates will be held in Houston, Texas from February 28th- March 3rd 2013 at the Omni Houston Hotel Westside. For more

information on TNSA's upcoming events or for more information on starting a local chapter, please visit our website at www.TNSA.org.

Why TNSA and NSNA?

Jordan Shield TNSA Western Regional Director



Why join TNSA or NSNA? That is the question I get asked every time I promote joining one of the two groups. The answer is, that the National Nursing Students' Association and the Texas Student Nurses' Association mentors the professional development of future registered nurses and facilitates their entrance into the profession by providing educational resources, leadership opportunities, and career guidance.

I just recently went to the National Student Nurses Association Convention in Pittsburgh, PA. The theme was *60 Years of the Evolving Nurse*. With this convention being the 60th Anniversary I was amazed to hear how far nurses have come in the past 60 years. We had some wonderful speakers that had great advice for nursing students on what to expect once you are out of school. Not only were the speakers great to hear from, but there was also some amazing focus sessions and plenary sessions. One of my favorite things was the exhibit hall, a room filled with booths from a wide variety of vendors. Each booth had information about different schools, programs, and more from all over the U.S.

One of the most beneficial things at the Convention was the plenary sessions. A group of extraordinary nursing leaders sat on

a stage and reflected on the past and pondered the future of nursing. They would answer any question you had about nursing no matter what it was. It was a very interesting and informational session. A few topics that were mentioned at the first and second Plenary Sessions by the panel were, "Get involved in organizations, and take advantage of the opportunities." The nursing leaders stressed many times how important it is to be involved in different organizations and the importance it will have on your future. Another important topic mentioned by the panel was, "Write out a plan." Writing out a plan is very important and the fact is that plan may change three or even five times but it is important to have a direction. If you do not have a direction or know where you want to be, jot some ideas down and eliminate them as you decide what is, and is not for you. The nursing leaders also had some great advice on how to prepare for an interview once you graduate nursing school. The panel mentioned three main points for a good interview. The first point is, "Practice your conversation." Knowing what you are going to say is important even though you may not know exactly what they are going to ask. Second, "Be able to explain why you want that job." The importance of why you want the job cannot be underestimated, because they are looking for someone who is going to be passionate about that job. Third, "Do your homework." Know the organization's mission statement and know what they stand for and their values. Be honest, be a leader and sell yourself if you want them to feel like there is not one person better for the job than you. All of these topics that were addressed are important information and only a small layer of the information you are given. There is so much more that you learn at Conference, and it is all beneficial.

When I went to the exhibit hall I told myself I was going to stop at every booth even if it was not something I was interested in. By doing so I found so many exciting opportunities that I would have never had known in the first place. There were over 120 different vendors in the exhibit hall, all of them spanning from the West Coast to the East Coast of the U.S. The exhibit hall had so many opportunities to offer and not to mention free stuff. It was an awesome experience that I think everyone should get an opportunity to experience.

Not only were the exhibit hall and the plenary sessions remarkable but so were the focus sessions. There were 28 different focus sessions that spanned over the three days. One of my favorite focus sessions was about the environment and how it affects our patient's health and ours as well. The speaker talked about how different pollutants in the environment cause the different health issues that people have today. Asthma being one of the biggest concerns affected by our environment, reproductive disorders, ADD and ADHD, and many more were also addressed in the focus session. The speaker explained by being the advocate for our patients we need to set the example for a healthier lifestyle, and with one step at a time start eliminating the factors in our environment that are causing health issues. Another focus session that I went to was about therapy pets and how you can get involved with therapy pets as a nursing student and the benefits that a pet might have on an ill child or an elderly person.

Overall my experience at the National Convention was very informational and was a great opportunity. Not only does NSNA have so much to offer but TNSA at the state level is also very beneficial. The TNSA conventions have similar opportunities, so you can see what Texas has

to offer. With Texas being such a big state area wise, it is important to explore what all we have to offer and to attend the conventions. I highly recommend being a part of any organization whether it be NSNA, TNSA, ANA, or any other organization, because we are the voice for future health care, and without these organizations, our voice would not be able to be heard.

The Trusted Profession

Paul Gonzales TNSA Vice President



The day to day grind of nursing is very meticulous, especially with the fulfilling of doctors' orders, prescriptions, putting in IVs, Foleys, cleaning ostomy bags, blood, vomit, urine, etc. The list of responsibilities can probably go on forever. It is a heavy weight to bear, so why do what we do? For most of us, it's not money, prestige, or great insurance benefits that attract people towards nursing. No, it's something more than that. I believe that we are compelled to nursing because we genuinely want to help people. Our job is to be the best possible advocate we can be for our patients.

No other profession gets to help people in the way nurses do, even within the other healthcare disciplines. As we all know, nurses essentially provide the fundamental care for patients. What has become so important to me is that, when the patient's family and friends are away, they know that their loved ones are cared for and safe. Nurses are unique because we develop a more extensive relationship with our patients. This relationship allows us to keep the patients interest as the primary objective. In essence, nurses administer a personal touch to professional care.

According to Gallup's annual Honesty and Ethics survey, nursing has been named number one for being the most honest and ethical profession for 11 years. It's no wonder why this is true, nursing has a

distinguished reputation for assisting the sick, injured, and vulnerable. Nursing has a reputation that we continue to uphold. What this proves to me is that nurses have worked very hard to become trusted, and this trust is what I revere most about nursing. What we do with this trust is transform it into something greater. We transform it into care, inspiration, and ultimately, healing. I will never take this for granted because without this trust, none of this is possible.

As students, we are the future of our profession, and the actions we take will define us for not only the rest of not only our careers, but also our lives. This is where TNSA comes in, for it is an organization whose focus is to further the education of student nurses. Whether you are participating on the local or state level, TNSA presents itself as an opportunity to diversify your nursing experience and outreach into other facets of the field. In the end, it is my hope that after reading this article that you reach out and continue to develop the reputation of trustworthy nursing.

Importance of Teamwork

Britni Nichols TNSA Secretary-Treasurer



Teamwork is an important component of adequate healthcare in today's society, especially in nursing. Quality teamwork has shown to improve quality of care, increase patient safety, and leads to higher patient and job satisfaction. An effective team is an inclusive environment that gives nurses a sense of belonging and understanding of what they should be doing. In order to obtain this environment nurses must be willing to accept and value each other, no matter how different they are.

Relationships bind members into a cohesive group and are built when individuals share and confide in one another. As nurses it is important to set aside time to participate in relationship-building activities and to spend time getting to know one another. Often, people do not want to invest their time in these activities; however the trust, cohesion, and affiliation built by these experiences assist with future issues that may arise.

Team participation increases awareness and understanding of individual differences. Nurses share many commonalities, including goals, tasks, and outcomes, but it is the differences between nurses such as education, experience, and influential life events that provide variety. Collaborating team members can utilize differences to be more effective and productive.

Teams work towards mutually satisfying goals and resolutions to conflict. It is important for a team to build trust as it serves as the strong foundation that will allow the team to achieve their goals and respond collectively to the unexpected. Nursing is too complex to expect immediate results on all issues, but a team with a foundation of trust and increased cohesion motivates individuals to strive and search for constructive solutions.

Teamwork must be cultivated and grown in an organized fashion. Cultivating teamwork provides individuals with a sense of belonging and the opportunity to value diversity. By accepting and appreciating diversity, team members can combine their experiences and values, which aids in the development of mutual trust. Over time diversities offer a range of views and knowledge, which produces increased innovation and productivity. Teamwork demands a high level of effort and commitment to ensure its success and sustainability.

Learning to Care

Amy Bond TNSA Editor



Evidence based practice suggest that a nurse's role in patient care is linked to improved quality of life for newly diagnosed cancer patients (Lehto, 2012). Research suggest that nurses educated in death awareness are better equipped to console patients dealing with life altering diseases and impending death (Lehto, 2012). The disease process is very exhausting and overwhelming for the patient as they go through the 5 stages of grief as well as for their families, caregivers and particularly their nurses.

Nurses in oncology experience a high turnover rate, particularly from the stress of taking care of dying patients (Lehto, 2012). It takes a special person to become a nurse, and even a more special person to take care of the dying on a daily basis. Oncology nurses need to be patient, compassionate and strong. Oncology nurses need to especially be able to listen and be educated so that they in turn can educate their patients.

In a study conducted on newly diagnosed lung cancer patients with non-small cell lung cancer, patients were asked what their main concerns and thoughts were and asked to put them in order (Lehto, 2012). Patients responded with "Time left to

live and loss of a productive future", "Impact of death on loved ones", "Behavioral preparation", "Death acceptance", "Experiences with others who have had died from cancer", "Post death issues", and "Future disease fears" (Lehto, 2012). What is suggested by this study is that if the nurse is educated in death awareness, the nurse will be better able to adapt to her duties with less stress and emotional turmoil, thus the nurse is better able to take care of their patient (Lehto, 2012). The end result and main focus is that patients are better educated and able to learn and talk about their fears and concerns ultimately leading to less stress for the patient and better outcomes.

As nursing students, we may or may not experience death in clinicals, but we are taught about death in our text books. It is instilled in our head, "thinking, doing, and caring", "be empathetic, not sympathetic". The truth is at some point in our careers we do to a point (not intentionally), become desensitized, and that is a survival skill. Seeing our patients hurt, sick or dying becomes personal and we become slightly desensitized so it does not hurt so bad. What Lehto is saying in her article through her research is the more educated nurses are about death, the better they can help themselves as well as others (Lehto, 2012). Lehto suggest 3 nursing implications for practice:

1. Patients with newly diagnosed localized lung cancer have existential-related concerns about an uncertain future, the potential of

disease spread, and the possibility of disability and death.

2. Identifying strategies that foster resolution of existential and death-related concerns in the early post diagnostic period and during the acute treatment process is essential.
3. Nurses who are comfortable with listening for and discussing existentially related concerns during the acute phases of treatment may be in a better position to promote the patient's psychological adaptation.

To carry out these implications a nurse must be educated in culture, religion, death as well as have an extensive knowledge in the patient's treatment plan, advanced directive and know where to refer a patient to for further counseling. The most important aspect of taking care of a newly diagnosed cancer patient is listening and scheduling the time to listen (Lehto, 2012). If a patient's fears can be addressed, understood and explained the patient will have a stronger foundation to stand upon when facing their battle.

Reference:

Lehto, R. H. (2012, February). The Challenge of Existential Issues in Acute Care: Nursing Considerations for the Patient with a New Diagnosis of Lung Cancer. *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing*, 16(1), 1-8. Retrieved April 14, 2012, from <http://ons.metapress.com/content/811345557211h50/fulltext.pdf>