



Association for Leadership Science in Nursing

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An interview with Kimberly Delgado, PhD(c), BSN, RN

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

I began my career in 2003 as a certified nursing assistant (CNA) in Rochester, NY. I fell in love with caring for the older adult and learning from their years of wisdom. I became a licensed practical nurse (LPN) in 2007, a registered nurse (RN) in 2012 and completed my BSN in 2016.

Nine years ago, I decided to relocate to North Carolina from New York to enjoy the green trees and spacious yards. Over the last seven years, I have worked in nursing leadership roles as Staff Development Coordinator/Nurse Educator, Nurse Manager, and Infection Preventionist in long-term care (LTC). I currently work as a Nurse Consultant in LTC and Interim Nursing Assistant Program Coordinator at Pitt Community College in Greenville, NC. I am a Certified Dementia Care Practitioner, an NC AHEC Scholar, a member of Sigma Theta Tau's International Honor Society Beta Nu Chapter, a committee member of ECU's Circle of Omicron Delta Kappa's Leadership Honor Society, and a member of Koinonia Christian Center's First Responder ministry. I have also been accepted into the North Carolina Nurses Association Leadership Academy Class of 2022.

I am a PhD candidate in the BSN to PhD program at East Carolina University (ECU), in Greenville, NC. My research focuses on nursing's role in the identification of urinary tract infections in skilled nursing facilities. An integrative review focused on this topic was recently accepted for publication in the Journal of Gerontological Nursing. My lifelong goal is to improve the care provided to older adults in the United States by instilling in students, clinicians, and organizational leaders a sense of responsibility for and accountability to those that we serve, and each other. Older adults should be loved, honored, and respected. The care we provide should be reflective of this, and not dependent on how much "care" they can afford. Everyone in a LTC facility should receive exceptional care all the time!

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

Being a novice researcher, in my last year at ECU, I have been very intentional about utilizing every opportunity available to prepare myself for a career in leadership, research and academia. When ECU faculty shared the ALSN October 2021 conference information, I jumped at the opportunity to learn and network with experienced nurse leaders/researchers. The 3-day conference was insightful and thought-provoking. I even started a list of nurse researchers that I would love to collaborate with! I look forward to attending future conferences!

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

While working in nursing leadership roles, I realized that no matter how hard I worked, my contributions were only of value if my goals were in alignment with those of my nursing staff members. A nursing leader is only as effective as the staff they lead! Many of the staff concerns that I tried to address at the facility level are experienced on a system-wide level. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many of these pre-existing issues to the attention of the public, including challenges with staff retention, workload, and available resources. Studying nursing leadership and nursing staff in LTC will be necessary to build a stronger evidence-base and impart system-wide change.

4. 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?

I believe that we can strengthen collaboration across settings if we first recognize and acknowledge that the common goal is to improve healthcare. Next we must develop mutual respect for each setting's contributions. In healthcare, we have a history of learning in silos and then expecting professionals to be able to function collaboratively. While we have seen some improvements, this continues to take place within nursing as well as across disciplines. To facilitate effective collaboration we must invest time, energy, and resources into shared learning experiences for leadership, faculty and staff members in both settings. Collaborative learning experiences could shift perspectives, allow participants to recognize the value of other's contributions, and create a sense of unity between settings and professional roles. As Staff Development Coordinator, I expected members of management, frontline staff and/or other disciplines to be present when I discussed new policies and procedures, or other changes. This established a sense of teamwork, assisted in the clarification of roles, responsibilities, and expectations for all, and improved communication and collaboration.

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

1. In everything that I do, I strive to set a great example for my five amazing, beautiful, and intelligent children.
2. If I had to choose another career in life I would be lost! No matter how hectic things may get, nursing is still my passion.
3. When I enrolled in the BSN to PhD program, I had a fear of research, but I knew I had to face my fear to make a difference in LTC. Five years ago, I never would have imagined I would one day be completing a PhD program!