



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 2023**



**An interview with**

**Allison McHugh, DNP, MHCDS, MS, BSN, NE-BC**

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

I began my nursing career in cardiac surgery in 1995, caring for cardio-thoracic surgery and cardiac intervention patients. Step-down nursing was my specialty until I discovered my passion for leading and mentoring others. My academic trajectory began as I completed my BSN and MS. I first thought I wanted to become a nurse practitioner working in the OR. I decided to broaden my experience and pursued an MS in health policy, leadership, and program development at Boise State University. I've enjoyed teaching in every role I've had, having the opportunity to design/teach clinical, simulation and leadership development programs.

I accepted a senior leadership role as Associate Chief Nursing Officer of 4 major service lines at an academic medical center. I was given the opportunity to participate in Dartmouth College's Masters in Health Care Delivery Science program that allowed me the experience of a lifetime. I met amazing global colleagues and learned about healthcare in other countries. I've enjoyed working as a CNO for

---

the past 6 years. I recently moved back to New England and am pursuing an opportunity to further contribute to nursing leadership, closer to family. I currently teach remotely as an adjunct clinical assistant professor for the University of Kansas Medical Center School of Nursing.

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

I learned about ALSN through my networking on LinkedIn and through my membership with AONL. I wanted to learn more about the science of leadership to expand my background and knowledge. Angela Prestia helped introduce me to the Research Committee which I am LOVING! I definitely have “found my people” as they say!

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

I’ve always loved research and leadership and consider myself a lifelong learner. Two recent favorite books have been Steven Covey’s book “Trust and Inspire. .” and Heather Youngers’ book about the art of caring leadership. I completed my DNP in nurse executive practice (2022).

I have been on a journey to further infuse JOY in my life personally and professionally, and this has led me to examine the science of what it means to lead with JOY in the workplace. And a recent JONA article about setting the research agenda for nursing administration and leadership science (Chippis, E. et al) provided a springboard for further study.

To be better understood by others, specifically related to nursing leadership, we need more exposure in non-nursing journals (how about the Harvard Business Review!). Our profession HAS to continue to participate in and conduct research with other non-nursing colleagues specific to the work environment. Specific areas of research that interest me include: implicit rationing, the work environment, infusing JOY into the workplace, and personal stories on leadership.

**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?**

What I love most about ALSN is the exposure to more leaders in academia. Those of us in practice should have more exposure to better understand the science, evidence, and rigor in nursing research. Formal practice: academic partnerships create win-win relationships and provide opportunities for true innovation.

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

1. I love photography, art, dancing, and listening to music: classical, disco, and anything from the 60-80’s! And, of course, daily JOY SPOTTING! (those who aren’t aware of what joy spotting is, I encourage you to read Ingrid Patels Book: JOYFUL and use her Joyspotters Guide AoJ-JoyspottersGuide.pdf (aestheticsofjoy.com))
2. I have a desire to someday share my art in a more formal way that brings JOY to others.
3. It is my true passion to mentor others, recognize others’ talents, and help them follow their dreams.