



Association for Leadership Science in Nursing

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member SPOTLIGHT

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An interview with

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

I originally studied to be a teacher, but I couldn't find one subject I liked well enough to teach in the K-12 school system. I switched to nursing because I thought it would be exciting. I wasn't wrong! Nursing is such a unique profession with many different specialties and so many ways to contribute to patient care. After various nursing roles in OR,

ER, urology, and spine care, I went back to school for my MSN in nursing leadership and organizational management. Then I became a nursing instructor at South Dakota State University, where I currently teach in the undergraduate program (I went full circle on the teaching part). I just finished my PhD in nursing education from the University of Kansas; my dissertation was looking at academic nurse leadership behaviors that impact nurse faculty job satisfaction. I've been able to combine my two passions of leadership and education! As an advocate for leadership, I truly believe that effective leadership can transform an organization, so that is why nurse leadership research is needed. The work of those within ALSN really proves that effective leadership creates environments where patients, nurses, and others can thrive. I believe it's important to continue this work.

How did you hear about ALSN and what has been your experience with this organization? What committee are you a member of?

My dissertation chair and ALSN member, Dr. Heather Nelson-Brantley, told me that this is where she found “her people.” And goodness she was right! ALSN is full of nurse leaders who want to grow and support one another in leadership, mentoring, research, and more. It has been a wonderful experience to join the membership committee and begin networking with like-minded nurse leaders. I attended my first ALSN conference this year and met everyone in person. What a great experience! I also recently joined the research committee.

How did you become interested in the study of nursing leadership and how has ALSN influenced this interest?

I’ve always been interested in leadership, even before I pursued nursing. Earning a master’s degree in leadership nursing and using that foundation for research in my PhD further ignited my interest. Like I said before, effective leadership is one key element of successful organizations; I want to do my part to contribute to creating environments where people can learn, grow, and thrive. ALSN has influenced this interest by surrounding me with people who have similar goals. It can be difficult to find people who are doing leadership research and who have the same passion for it, so ALSN has really provided me with a group of people who are as nerdy as I am about research.

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

I think the best way to increase ALSN membership is to personally invite people to join, sharing your experiences with ALSN and the positive impact it’s had on your own professional journey. We can ask members to invite their academic or practice partners to join and discuss the work they could do together to grow nursing leadership. Whether you are currently in academia or practice, you have a partner on the other side. That personal invitation goes a long way.

What would you say to nurse leaders in academia or practice who are considering joining ALSN right now?

Do it! This truly is where you will find “your people.” I also requested to be a mentee when I joined ALSN and got paired with an incredible mentor with so much leadership experience. I would never have had the opportunity to have such a distinguished mentor had I not joined ALSN. There are so many people in ALSN who want to help you succeed!

What are 3 things that others may not know about you that you would like to share?

- My family are big hockey fans, Anytime we travel, we try to catch a hockey game. Nothing like a nice cold hockey game while vacationing in Florida or Arizona.
- My husband and I have 2 kids, so we stay busy with our son playing hockey and our daughter’s dance.
- I like to play volleyball. I’m not very good at it, but it helps keep me active and provides entertainment for those watching me try to play.