



Emerging areas of science: Recommendations for Nursing Science Education from the Council for the Advancement of Nursing Science Idea Festival

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ABSTRACT

The Council for the Advancement of Nursing Science aims to “facilitate and recognize life-long nursing science career development” as an important part of its mission. In light of fast-paced advances in science and technology that are inspiring new questions and methods of investigation in the health sciences, the Council for the Advancement of Nursing Science convened the Idea Festival for Nursing Science Education and appointed the Idea Festival Advisory Committee (IFAC) to stimulate dialogue about linking PhD education with a renewed vision for preparation of the next generation of nursing scientists. Building on the 2005 National Research Council report *Advancing The Nation’s Health Needs* and the 2010 American Association of Colleges of Nursing Position Statement on the

Author Note. Susan J. Henly was Chair of the CANS Idea Festival Advisory Committee (IFAC). She and Donna O. McCarthy were the primary writers of the paper. Jean F. Wyman was Chair of the Steering Committee, Council for the Advancement of Nursing Science, and had significant roles in the conception and implementation of the Idea Festival for Nursing Science Education. The order of authors in positions 4–12 was determined at random. All authors met criteria for authorship. IFAC members Jerilyn K. Allen, ScD, RN, FAAN, Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, Baltimore, MD and Suzanne S. Prevost, PhD, RN, COI, University of Alabama, Capstone College of Nursing, Tuscaloosa, AL were non-author contributors.

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Research-focused doctorate
Nursing scientist training
Research-focused doctorate

Research-Focused Doctorate *Pathways to Excellence*, the IFAC specifically addressed the capacity of PhD programs to prepare nursing scientists to conduct cutting-edge research in the following key emerging and priority areas of health sciences research: omics and the microbiome; health behavior, behavior change, and biobehavioral science; patient-reported outcomes; big data, e-science, and informatics; quantitative sciences; translation science; and health economics. The purpose of this article is to (a) describe IFAC activities, (b) summarize 2014 discussions hosted as part of the Idea Festival, and (c) present IFAC recommendations for incorporating these emerging areas of science and technology into research-focused doctoral programs committed to preparing graduates for lifelong, competitive careers in nursing science. The recommendations address clearer articulation of program focus areas; inclusion of foundational knowledge in emerging areas of science in core courses on nursing science and research methods; faculty composition; prerequisite student knowledge and skills; and in-depth, interdisciplinary training in supporting area of science content and methods.

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Nursing science is the science of health (Donaldson, 2003a). Nursing science concerns the “conditions necessary and sufficient for the promotion, maintenance, and restoration of health in human beings” (Donaldson, 2003a; Donaldson & Crowley, 1978). Nursing research addresses the health and illness experiences of individuals, families, and communities in context over time; nursing interventions and outcomes; mechanisms of health and illness; nursing systems and quality of care; and translation science, health policy, and economics related to nursing practice and nursing care outcomes (Henly et al., 2015). Nursing science overlaps with the biological, behavioral, and social sciences at levels from molecules to societies considered in context and over time (Diez-Roux, 2007; Glass & McAtee, 2006; National Institute of Nursing Research [NINR], 2011; Wyman & Henly, 2011). Thus, interdisciplinary perspectives on health and health care have long been valued in nursing science (American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN], 2006; Carper, 1978; Donaldson & Crowley, 1978; Stevenson & Woods, 1986).

Rapidly developing advances in the life sciences and technology (AACN, 2010; Henly, 2013; Henly et al., 2015) are stimulating nursing scientists to consider how the science and methods of other disciplines can inform nursing science and how nursing science can inform these related fields. In nursing, now more than ever, PhD education must also prepare nursing scientists to lead and participate in interdisciplinary team science to address complex issues that affect health and the delivery of health care (Begg et al., 2014; Bennett & Gadlin, 2012; Grey & Mitchell, 2008; Kneipp et al., 2014). Addressing these issues requires that the education of the next generation of nursing scientists be qualitatively different from the past in science content, methods of science, and research training.

The CANS Idea Festival for Nursing Science Education

The CANS Idea Festival for Nursing Science Education was proposed as an advisory committee of creative experts in nursing science charged with crafting the provocative questions needed to stimulate dialogue about linking PhD education with emerging and priority areas of science impacting preparation of the next generation of nursing scientists. The CANS Idea Festival Advisory Committee (IFAC) was asked to (a) pose the questions for dynamic and vigorous dialog about the content essential to preparing PhD students for the future of nursing science; (b) design a time line and forums for generation, dissemination, and evaluation of ideas; and (c) create an action plan for the transformation of nursing science education incorporating emerging areas of science and technology needed to prepare PhD students to launch and sustain competitive careers as nursing scientists.

Composition

Members of the IFAC are listed in Table 1. Expertise of the members ranged from bench science and biobehavioral research to translational research and health economics. Most were senior members of faculties of schools of nursing or deans; researchers from practice were also represented. Dr. Yvonne Bryan served as the liaison from the NINR.

Activities

Initial Meeting

The IFAC first met at the 2012 CANS State of the Science Conference where the Idea Festival for Nursing Science

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