Clinical Scholarship Worldwide

Presidential Charge

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Presidential Charge
for the 1995-1997 Biennium

Sigma Theta Tau International is committed to improving the health of people worldwide through the development, dissemination and deployment of nursing knowledge. In support of this mission, the Society advances nursing leadership and scholarship and supports the use of research in clinical practice and in public policy.

The 1993-1995 biennium was a time of enormous transition for the Society, both in organization and leadership. Under the guidance of President Fay Bower, the newly formulated governing boards stridently defined their roles and set the stage for the second half of this decade. The agenda for the 1995-1997 biennium, presented here, represents my goals for the Society as built upon the past Board’s collective wisdom, experience, and vision for the future.

The theme of leadership has shaped the labors of the Society during the past two biennia, the fruits of which have included the establishment of the Leadership Institute, the Leadership Extern Program, the completion of plans for the second Arista Conference, and the development of a leadership career trajectory program. Essential to our mission, the theme of leadership will continue to guide the activities of the Society during the next biennium as we fulfill the plans and dreams conceived during these critical years. With the commitment to leadership now a tangible reality, it is now time to re-visit the component of origin for Sigma Theta Tau’s mission — scholarship, specifically — clinical scholarship.

It is my belief that a renewed emphasis on clinical scholarship reaffirms our most fundamental goal, to use nursing knowledge to improve the health of people worldwide. It unites the diverse culture of our membership, the majority of whom are clinicians, and links us globally to other scientists and practicing nurses, through shared interests and endeavors in health and healing. Finally, clinical scholarship is perhaps the most visible and easily understood contribution that our nursing leadership can make to the public — the public to whom we must communicate the value and the promise of nursing.

As we enter the biennium that will culminate in the celebration of 75 years of nursing scholarship, I extend my sincere appreciation for the talent and energy that you have contributed to the achievement of greatness. Throughout this biennium, the richness of our past, blended with the vitality of the present and the promise of the future will be apparent in the Society’s activities. I hope that each of you will join me and the new Board of Directors as we celebrate the accomplishments of 75 years and assume the challenges of the 1995-1997 biennium

I. Advance The Concept of the Clinical Scholar, Unit ing Practice and Academia

When nursing education shifted from the hospital to academia, the separation of education from practice was requisite to the development of nursing as an intellectual endeavor. Now we have reached a new era in which practice is a scholarly undertaking, theory and research are grounded in clinical phenomena and the old distinctions between clinician academician are spurious, at best. With our chapters housed in universities and colleges while our membership is predominantly in the practice setting, the Society is well positioned to promote the scientific base of practice and advance the development and application of knowledge.

- Create a forum for non-academically based researchers, to identify the methodological, operational and ethical issues confronting clinical scholarship.
- Create a Clinical Scholarship Symposium Series convening leading scholars for discourse on selected
clinical topics.

- Advance the theme of clinical scholarship in regional assembly programs, showcasing the application of nursing research in clinical practice.
- Increase contributions to the Online Journal of Knowledge Synthesis for Nursing through education and mentoring.
- Promote the use of and contributions to the Virginia Henderson Library and the Online Journal of Knowledge Synthesis for Nursing in practice as well as academic settings.

II. Promote Sigma Theta Tau International as the Center for Nursing Scholarship and the Primary Source of Nursing Knowledge

Nursing research has, and has yet to make, profound contributions in generating effective, affordable solutions to common health problems. The time has come for Sigma Theta Tau International to expand its leadership role in assisting the public to acknowledge and apply nursing research. Educating society about nursing’s human and technological richness and potential is essential to promoting global health.

- Distribute the proceedings of Arista II to a broad audience, identifying the current and future contributions of the nursing community to global health care reform.
- Launch Arista III to identify the educational issues and the resolve needed to achieve those skills.
- Focus the Leadership Extern Program on preparing nurses for leadership in multi-disciplinary settings.
- Emphasize research that address health problems of widespread public interest and concern.
- Select topics for the proposed Clinical Scholarship Colloquium Series that are relevant to the health of the public and disseminate the proceedings in the popular media.
- Assure an interdisciplinary emphasis by inviting and involving those from related professions to participate in the activities of the Society.

III. Embrace Fully the Global Mission of Sigma Theta Tau International

To truly fulfill the international scope of the organization, we must employ a sense of wholeness and completeness in blending our efforts outside of the United States into every entity and activity of the Society. We must strive to be inclusive and to broaden the community of nurse scholars and leaders throughout the world.

- Increase participation of international members and chapters in the governance of the Society through committee membership.
- Continue to emphasize the resolution of problems of international significance in the activities of the Leadership Institute.
- Implement an International Scholar-in-Residence Exchange program.
- Develop a world-wide network of member correspondents to Sigma Theta Tau to encourage information and knowledge sharing from all countries represented in our membership.
- Encourage the induction of nurse scholars from around the world into existing chapters.
- Develop and maintain a membership registry of expert consultants for international dissemination.

IV. Strengthen the Leadership Potential of Members through the Enhancement of Chapters

The chapters are the primary organizational units of the Society. We must advance initiatives that are responsive to the needs of the chapters and their constituents and engage them in setting the direction for the future of the Society.

- Continue to develop strong and comprehensive communication between the Board of Directors, the chapters and members.
- Embark on an evaluation and analysis of member
and chapter needs.

- Design incentives that focus on the career goals and needs of new and sustaining members.
- Develop incentive programs to retain and increase active membership in Sigma Theta Tau International.
- Promote inter-chapter collaboration with a specific emphasis on small chapter alliances within and across regions.
- Expand the chapter mentoring program for honor societies both domestically and abroad.
- Assist chapters to augment and diversify membership.
- Promote the role of Deans and department chairs in supporting chapters, such as the establishment of a New Deans Program and acknowledging those who have been exceptional in chapter development.

V. Invest in the Future of Sigma Theta Tau International by Replenishing Human and Material Resources

The measure of financial success in a not-for-profit organization rests in the prudent oversight of resources. As the Society continues to grow, its fiscal health and security will be evidenced by the growth of a general endowment (or of its endowed resources).

- Develop services and opportunities, in addition to the basic membership benefits, that bolster the economic health of the Society.
- Expand development activities with both internal and external constituents for long-term philanthropic participation.
- Celebrate seventy-five years of scholarship and leadership by exceeding the 7.5 million dollar goal.

Melanie Creagan Dreher, PhD. RN, FAAN, is Dean and Professor at the University of Massachusetts School of Nursing at Amherst. She is a graduate, magna cum laude, of Long Island University School of Nursing and holds a doctorate in anthropology from Teachers College and Columbia University where she completed her dissertation with distinction.

In addition to her role as Dean, Dr. Dreher has a distinguished research career as the principal investigator of several community based studies examining the health and development of women and children in Jamaica. Her other research interests include cross-cultural studies of the health care systems, the organization and financing of community health care and the effects of substance use on the health, development and task performance of adults and children. Dr. Dreher's clinical interests lie primarily in the public health nursing and the influence of the culture in patient-provider communication.

Her post-doctoral career began at Columbia University where she held faculty appointments in both the School of Public Health and to the School of Nursing. In 1984, she became Dean and William Ryan Distinguished Professor of Transcultural Nursing at the University of Miami School of Nursing. In addition, Dr. Dreher has received honorary and adjunct appointments in departments of anthropology, psychiatry and most recently as a visiting professor at the University of West Indies Faculty of Medical Sciences. She serves on the editorial review boards of many journals in the fields of nursing, anthropology, and related fields. She is past president of the Council on Nursing and Anthropology. Dr. Dreher received the May A. Brunson Award for outstanding achievement in the advancement of University of Miami and the CASE Award for her contribution to Public Health Nursing in Florida. In 1988 she was elected to the American Academy of Nursing.

Dr. Dreher was inducted into Sigma Theta Tau International in 1985 and currently is a member of Beta Zeta Chapter. She has served on the International Program Committee, the International Public Relations Committee and the International Task Force. As President elect during the 1993-1995 biennium, she Chaired the Leadership Institute and the International Chapter Development Task Force.

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