



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Journey to Perianesthesia Excellence: Destination Succession Planning

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About three years ago I accepted a high school extern from a program in which students or new graduates work over the summer to explore professional possibilities in the health care profession. Each year since, my organization has hired other 17-19 year olds as summer externs and part-time PACU employees. These "young ones" are full of energy, respect, and a desire to do the job right. When asked by their instructor for feedback regarding the summer work program the externs replied, "We love working here because the preceptors continually teach us and help us, making our experience fun." The students who participated, whether interns or externs, told the instructor they felt a deep sense of fulfillment and enjoyment whenever working with the PACU staff. My unit also employs a few unlicensed assistive personnel who we encourage to pursue continuing education. Several continue to work part-time and attend pre-nursing schools, and we anticipate they will become great nurses. We have several other unlicensed personnel who worked with us for a number of years. Through perseverance and encouragement each finally achieved the dream of becoming a nurse. These work related stories describe the important concept of mentoring and coaching our young ones and each other.

My individual experience as an ASPAN volunteer involved the influence and efforts of other ASPAN volunteers who encouraged and invited continued participation. ASPAN activities have been very rewarding, enjoyable, and have helped me grow personally and professionally. As seasoned, experienced professionals we should prevent perpetuating the concept that nurses ignore or mistreat our young ones, which is not an appropriate culture of nursing to portray. Most nurses have a universal desire to grow, learn, and make contributions to this profession. Experienced nurses must improve the ability to support novice members and colleagues, including those who serve together in a volunteer capacity, by selflessly giving time, talents and energy to guide, mentor and encourage professional development. Mentors can guide and assist new volunteer members in defining a personal vision of meaningful contribution through professional association, and can further help to make that vision become reality. \

Throughout ASPAN's history, the organization has stayed committed to the education and development of members. ASPAN also values mentorship. In an effort to make the true value of mentorship become a reality, I asked Immediate Past President Meg Beturne to lead the Succession Planning Strategic Work Team (SWT) this year. This SWT will organize and develop a learning partner program that pairs less experienced members with a mentor colleague to actively cultivate ASPAN volunteer service at the component and national level. The health care industry is undergoing tremendous change while transitioning toward a reality not clearly defined. Nurses are indispensable players in this health care evolution. Our unique blend of knowledge combined with analytical insight, investigative resolve, and caring and compassion above all, is essential for researching and defining practice methods that work best for patients. Professional association membership and participation promotes a unified voice on issues of primary interest to nurses. For this unified voice to continue into the future, professional association leaders must mentor younger, less experienced nurses to become the voice of tomorrow. Within any professional organization, some members view involvement in leadership opportunities as a big membership benefit extending beyond the receipt of quality products and services, and this becomes a prime reason for annual membership renewal. Our ASPAN leaders require a comprehensive approach to identify volunteer nurses with an interest in leadership. Beyond identifying potential leaders we must facilitate a mentoring experience for those nurses to assume future ASPAN leadership roles.

Recognizing Leaders

How do we recognize potential ASPAN leaders at the component, district or local level? One Big Audacious Goal (BAG) for this year is in the area of succession planning and mentorship. I hear so many stories, at all levels of our organization, about how hard it is to find someone to replace an officer or committee chair, or to recruit members as committee volunteers. My goal is to evaluate and find solutions to enhance and expand member involvement beyond just paying membership dues. Uncle Sam increased personnel recruitment efforts in a time of need with the slogan, "I want YOU!"

I say, "ASPAN wants YOU" I envision ASPAN leaders taking bigger steps in mentoring component leaders to achieve our professional organization's goals. I see changing paradigms for our various components as each provides members with opportunities to develop skills in team leadership, public speaking and publishing, and to develop and conduct research or evidence based practice projects. New membership development activities will eventually lead us to flourishing succession planning in each component. We need YOU to become involved by joining a committee of particular interest, attending more perianesthesia seminars or conferences, and reading our newsletters and journals. Don't be a hitchhiker who merely goes along for the ride. Be a driver instead and steer ASPAN to a great destination. Mentorship is a gift that keeps on giving. We thank those who mentored before us and must now make a commitment to mentor others. As your leader, I ask each of you to take some time to reflect on component members and coworkers. Identify and encourage those nurses demonstrating leadership characteristics, for he or she may be a great potential candidate to nominate for leadership positions at the local, district, component, or national level. ASPAN mentorship is part of our toolbox, helping us build a strong organization to pass on to others. You, the members, are future leaders who will make our organization grow better and stronger. It is a great time to be an ASPAN member and to become an effective ASPAN leader of tomorrow!