



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Impact of Research on Diversity and Cultural Competence

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Meg Beturne MSN, RN, CPAN, CAPA
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The focus of my graduate studies was an education track which gave the opportunity to perform eighty hours of practice teaching at a small, urban Catholic college. This was a wonderful experience that solidified my desire to explore the diversity existing in an academic setting. It was apparent on the first day of class, during introductions, that collegiate student body diversity is alive and well. A broad generational representation was evident from a newly graduated twelfth grader to a second career, sixty-plus individual. One fifth of the students were male and one quarter had experienced recent travels to foreign countries. As the semester progressed, the diverse maturity levels of individual students were visible in their varying ability to clearly articulate and confidently share information with peers. The final assignment for *Nursing 105: Introduction to the Culture and Context of Nursing* included presentations and discussions about cultural phenomena of diverse groups, and specific examples illustrated how nursing care and interventions could safely and holistically accommodate cultural norms. Students' comments revealed that a cookbook approach to care delivery is not believed to be most beneficial. Students learned to appreciate variations within and across cultural groups that must be acknowledged and understood in order to promote wellness behaviors and to alter health seeking attitudes.

Faculty meetings analyzed and discussed diversity in education practice. Professors at all grade levels collaborated on best practice strategies to meet the diverse needs of nursing students preparing to take the NCLEX examination. Suggestions made during brainstorming sessions targeted strategies that would potentially help the visual, auditory, and tactile learner. Fresh ideas articulated by novice instructors became widely accepted by more seasoned nursing educators. The positive outcome achieved from better prepared faculty members is a better prepared student body capable of accessing and utilizing diverse instructional aids. As graduation from my master's program moved to distant memory, and I assumed the ASPAN presidency, my desire to promote a diversity initiative in the educational domain took priority. One of ASPAN's core values is diversity; therefore, a next natural step was to incorporate diversity initiatives into our strategic plan. During early planning phases for the 2006 National Conference, attention and support for diverse keynote speakers occurred. This was quickly followed by educational offerings targeting novice and advanced perianesthesia practitioners. A call for abstracts on clinical best practice poster presentations emphasizes the need for practitioner representation from diverse practice sites such as office-based practices, radiology suites, and obstetrical units.

The Leadership Development Institute, held last September, was also responsive to the call for diversity. Vital information and diverse, creative strategies provided to current and potential leaders drew upon different perspectives of past and present ASPAN experts and mentors. While offering a safe atmosphere in which to learn, grow, and develop, ASPAN successfully identified varying degrees of tremendous talent existing throughout our organization. No cookie cutter approach existed, and a realization and celebration of diverse interests led to the selection of an "Up and Comers" pilot cohort, representing an ASPAN grassroots initiative to enhance succession planning. The momentum continued with the Diversity Strategic Work Team meeting, which convened in October. Equipped with enthusiasm, knowledge, and commitment, the team brainstormed the format and design for a Diversity Summit to be held in Orlando. Emphasis was placed on various means to educate national conference attendees regarding the importance of this strategic goal. The foundation for our work plan includes lectures, breakout and discussion groups, and a networking forum.

As I reflect on ASPAN's accomplishments regarding diversity in the educational domain, I am quite pleased. Our organization is reaching out and simultaneously meeting needs of colleagues in major medical centers, tiny hospitals, and free-standing surgery centers across the nation. Our varied, updated educational offerings are accessed throughout the country, and diverse learning avenues regularly appear on the ASPAN website with further enhancement planned for the days ahead. As I look forward to the remainder of my term, I am more determined than ever to have all perianesthesia nurses increasingly aware of the diverse educational opportunities we offer. ASPAN is poised and ready to serve you, our members. We care for and respect your varied thoughts and ideas, and want to acknowledge your unique contributions. We desire to bring to fruition the Traditional Chinese words, "Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend!"