

## Leadership Connection 2018 (15-18 September)

### Finding Our Voice Through Interdisciplinary Policy Teams: Strategies for Compelling Change

**Yvonne M. Smith, PhD, APRN-CNS**

Kimberly A. Cleveland, JD, MSN, RN, C-MBC

*College of Nursing, Kent State University, Kent, OH, USA*

Policy changes in the United States are occurring at record speed. Traditionally, nursing has not consistently been involved in health care policy discussions at all levels. As such, important policy decisions frequently lacked the perspective of nursing. Multidisciplinary contributions to health policy are required if policy is to advance the health of our nation. Policy teams provide the opportunity for faculty to use both the policy process and interdisciplinary collaboration to drive policy discussion, engage students and contribute to policy revision at the state level.

In the case at hand, the university's faculty provided a rich resource for research that supported policy initiatives. Faculty became mentors and role models to inspire students and colleagues to become active in policy work. Recognizing the need for greater presence in the policy arena, nursing faculty members identified opportunities to collaborate across the disciplines of Communication, English, Public Policy and Nursing to educate chapter members, students and the community about policy activities and engage in efforts to shape policy decisions at the state level. As a result, three initiatives were proposed in two venues: the local chapter of Sigma Theta Tau and the College of Nursing in which they were employed.

To form a foundation for the first initiative, chapter members were polled to determine policy work experience and current involvement. Members with experience were identified to determine core presenters for a program on policy initiatives. During an annual meeting, a continuing education program was used to highlight nurses' unique perspective on policy and showcase a range of policy opportunities. The event was digitally recorded and used as a presentation in graduate and undergraduate health policy courses to feature examples of nurses involvement in policy initiatives.

The combination of exposure of students to examples of policy examples and a controversial ballot issue sparked the second initiative. Faculty in the College of Nursing assisted students in reaching across disciplines to prepare the first interdisciplinary public debate on the ballot issues. Students worked together to ignite interested students from across the university to research the topic of affordable prescriptions in the state of Ohio. Faculty from the College of Nursing worked with the College of Communication to develop and prepare students in how to present the public pro-con debate. Students self-selected to form two teams to debate the issue. Each team contained one nursing student and one communications student. The students used social media within the university to build interest in the topic. The debate was attended by 110 students. Students were from the colleges of Nursing, Communication, Public Health and Business. Students attending the debate from the Colleges of Communication, Public Health and Business requested future debates regarding alternative topics of interdisciplinary interest with enhanced pre-debate exposure. Students from the College of Nursing consented to lead the endeavor in the following semester.

In the third policy team initiative, faculty formed an interest consortium around the review of state-level nursing regulations. When faculty were presented with new proposed rules regarding changes in nursing education in the state, they engaged students, faculty and graduate assistants to research areas of interest. The team established a network to reach out to colleges of nursing across the state as collaborators to inform the policy decision and ensure all levels of nursing education were represented in the discussions. Their work culminated in the ability of nursing faculty to have a clear voice in policy decision-making at the state level and resulted in a formal introduction of state and federal policy discussions at monthly faculty meetings. This initiative led the community of interest to recognize faculty as an untapped resource in policy discussions. Lead faculty identified an additional role in using their experiences to reinforce policy procedures and advocacy lexicon among their colleagues.

Speakers will discuss details about the three initiatives in this presentation. Speakers will address specific barriers including time commitment, perceptions of interdisciplinary relevance, competency with the policy process and support for communication within and around the community of interest. Policy team member roles, benefits of a policy team and barriers to policy involvement will also be addressed. This example of a interdisciplinary policy team occurred in an academic setting, but the principles of a policy team can be applied to health professionals in a wide variety of health care setting.

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**Title:**

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**Keywords:**

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**References:**

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**Abstract Summary:**

Policy teams provide opportunities for faculty to understand issues, engage students and drive policy discussions. Speakers will discuss three policy team initiatives, benefits, member roles, and barriers to faculty and student involvement. These policy team examples occurred in an academic setting, but the principles are applicable to non-academic setting.

**Content Outline:**

1. Introduction
2. Overview of policy teams
  1. Formation
  2. Members
  3. Barriers
  4. Compelling Opportunities
3. Review of three initiatives
  1. Chapter initiative - Getting Your A Game On: Influence Through Advocacy
    1. Survey
    2. Continuing education
    3. Results
  2. Student initiative - Issue 2 Affordable Prescriptions in Ohio Policy Debate
    1. Debate on active ballot issue
    2. Preliminary interdisciplinary work
    3. Results
  3. Faculty initiative - The Health Policy Network
    1. Team development
    2. Team member roles
    3. Results
4. Summary/Conclusion
  1. Benefits of policy teams
  2. Implications for advancing policy discussions

First Primary Presenting Author  
**Primary Presenting Author**

Yvonne M. Smith, PhD, APRN-CNS  
Kent State University  
College of Nursing  
Assistant Professor  
Kent OH  
USA

**Professional Experience:** 2009 - present -- Faculty, Kent State University, College of Nursing, Kent OH 12/06-8/09--Assistant Dean, Nursing Operations, Kent State University, College of Nursing 05/99-8/05-- Program Coordinator, Kent State University, College of Nursing 11/92-5/99--Instructor, Aultman Hospital, School of Nursing 2001 - 2005 Served on the Ohio Board of Nursing (Gubernatorial appointment) Presentations: 20 podium presentations, 10 invited presentations and 10 poster presentations over the past 7 years Author or coauthor of 8 newsletter and journal publications Numerous awards and recognitions for leadership

**Author Summary:** Dr. Smith holds a BSN and MSN from the University of Akron and a PhD Kent State University. As a faculty member, she has taught graduate and undergraduate levels. Dr. has over 15 years of experience in nursing education, conducts research on education and policy issues, has presented at state national and international conferences on nursing education and research, and consulted on teaching with technology at Hung Kuang University in Taiwan.

Second Secondary Presenting Author  
**Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author**  
Kimberly A. Cleveland, JD, MSN, RN, C-MBC  
Kent State University  
College of Nursing  
Lecturer  
Kent OH  
USA

**Professional Experience:** Education Date of degree completion Institution & City, State Degree Major 8/2000-5/2003 Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, Cleveland, OH Juris Doctor Law 8/1997-5/1998 Kent State University, Kent, OH Post-graduate Nurse Practitioner Certificate Nursing 8/1989-5/1991 Case Western Reserve, Cleveland, OH MSN Nursing 8/1983-5/1987 Ursuline College, Pepper Pike, OH BSN Nursing

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Professional Work Experience Dates of Employment Institution & Address Position 8/2014-present Kent State University College of Nursing, Kent, Oh Lecturer 3/2013-present 7/2012-8/2014 Law Offices of Kimberly A. Cleveland, Canal Fulton, OH Vibra Health Attorney/Health Care Administrative Consultant Regional CEO, LTAC Division Attorney 8/2008-7/2012 Select Specialty Hospitals of Akron, Akron, OH Chief Executive Officer 5/2000-5/2003 University Hospitals of Cleveland, Cleveland, OH Registered Nurse/PRN 1/1998-4/2000 Lakewood Hospital, Cleveland Clinic Health System, Cleveland, OH COO/CNO 1/1997-1/1998 Northeast Ohio Transitional Hospital, Cleveland Clinic Health System, Cleveland, OH Administrator 5/1986-8/1996 Cleveland Clinic Health System, Cleveland, OH Clinical Nurse Specialist, Nurse Manager, Staff Nurse, Nurse Intern

**Author Summary:** Kimberly Cleveland is a nurse-attorney admitted to practice law in the State of Ohio and the United States Supreme Court. Kimberly is a PhD student and lecturer at Kent State University where she assists faculty in formally responding to changes in nursing regulation, develops health policy and graduate level healthcare administration and legal curriculum. She speaks at the state, national and international level on various critical care, legal, regulatory, health care policy and administrative topics.