

## Leadership Connection 2018 (15-18 September)

### Getting Your Chapter to Connect and Collaborate for Membership Recruitment and Engagement

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A strong foundation for connection and collaboration is having a mission and vision that emphasizes engagement of members to share information and work towards common goals. It is important to encourage members to connect at board meetings, through newsletters, online through social media and email, and more. To keep members connected and updated with real-time information, the chapter must actively utilize The Circle to post information about member activity, chapter achievements, and upcoming events. On this site, members have the ability to participate in discussions, personalize their profile, access chapter news and much more. The Circle is one of many ways to introduce the newest members to networking and becoming involved in events and activities. In addition to The Circle, chapters can use social media to build an involved network and expand collaboration on Flickr, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.

Our chapter introduces nursing students to the history and membership benefits of Sigma as soon as they enter the nursing program by incorporating the information in introductory nursing courses and at Student Nurse Organization meetings, to which all nursing students are invited to attend. The chapter uses technology to provide a platform to engage in collaboration and networking opportunities with colleagues across organizations and disciplines worldwide. In addition to online outreach tools, the chapter holds monthly meetings/events for members and uses a monthly online newsletter through a chapter management system highlighting members and activities.

The chapter makes a concerted effort to include newly inducted members or those in their first year feel welcome as part of all the chapter efforts. In addition to the Membership Ambassador efforts to stay connected with newly inducted members, times were offered at meetings for networking. These informal but planned times were appreciated by the members and leads to very active members and future leader interns. The chapter also shows appreciation to mentors and colleagues by offering support for local, regional, and international Sigma conferences. Appreciation is shown in an effort to create a legacy by nominating members for awards, such as the Nightingale Award for outstanding efforts that went above and beyond their expected duties.

The annual Membership Appreciation night is a way to celebrate active, inactive, and potential members. The opportunity to newly form and reignite collaborative relationships, offer appreciation, and embrace the spirit of giving is cultivated in this informal gathering. The chapter collaborates with the University's Nursing Alumni Network to bring together former graduates, chapter members and promote munificence. Each year there is a different theme such as global health, recognizing past presidents, celebrating the chapter's fortieth anniversary, and recognizing and renewing our livacy with creative writings on individual thoughts, feelings and vision for the future of the nursing profession. Members were also asked to bring personal hygiene items for a future donation to the Newark Empowerment Center, which supports those who are in need.

There are many local organizations that share similar missions and values as the chapter. Our members and nursing students participate and support the Special Olympics each year offering sun safety education. When disaster arises in the community locally, or nationally, the chapter is there to offer assistance in various ways. Outreach efforts are local, national, and international. These outreach events foster membership collaboration and connection. Locally, we help the Newark Empowerment Center and Mid-Atlantic Behavioral Health. Also, there are many efforts internationally including Books for Uganda,

Flip Flops for Haiti, and a UNICEF water pump. The chapter supports its members in need and also the Red Cross when disastrous events occur.

A Wine Tasting Benefit Event supports Newark Empowerment Center, a shelter for the homeless. One member donated the venue, and the chapter provided food. Members came out to support the event and donated hygiene products. The chapter received a percentage of the sales proceeds that were used to complete over 75 hygiene packs for the many homeless in Delaware.

For over 15 years, the chapter has sponsored a holiday outreach for 40 chronically mentally ill adults through a collaboration with Upper Bay Counseling. The agency provides a personalized wish list to the chapter. In addition, each client receives a hygiene pack from a local collaborator, MidAtlantic Behavioral Health. Members bring the wrapped gifts to the center where the chapter hosts a festive holiday luncheon. Staff remark how they have come to rely on this event and clients express great joy and appreciation.

Books for Uganda was a project where several members, who are nursing faculty, gathered new or gently used nursing textbooks. Then the faculty and the School of Nursing supported the cost of shipping overseas. Dozens of books were collected and shipped in support of increasing access to updated educational materials for Registered Nurses working in orphanages and clinics throughout the country. In collaborating with a local church, members donated hygiene bag items and the chapter provided a cash donation for the purchase of additional items. Over 125 bags were assembled and shipped to Haiti in support of the protracted relief efforts. Another effort to help Haiti was a Flip-Flops initiative. This was a collaborative event with the school's Student Nurses Organization. Members and nursing students donated new flip-flops which were taken to Haiti. One year, a new inductee requested we consider supporting the UNICEF Water pump. The chapter empowered her to think creatively for a way to raise the funds. She decided to sell "Blow Pops" to all nursing students. This money, along with donations from members and a matching donation from the chapter, was sufficient to purchase a water pump that will provide clean water to a community in a developing country. The chapter continues with outreach efforts in Kenya and recently donated pens and other items to a hospital in Rwanda.

The chapter's support of vulnerable populations also extends to its own members. Student scholarships are provided each year. In addition, new member subsidies are available if invited candidates are unable to join due to financial barriers. The chapter works with these students to help them complete the Edith Anderson subsidy application. The chapter agrees to finance the remainder of the membership and induction fees not covered by the Edith Anderson subsidy. The chapter also provides free individual tutoring to ALL nursing students, saving them approximately \$12 per hour.

The chapter is dedicated to involvement and outreach initiatives for nurses as demonstrated by member collaboration and networking locally, regionally, and globally. There are many events held to continue to engage and recruit members to the chapter while also incorporating a community service component. The outreach endeavors are initiated by, coordinated by, and include a variety of members. Members have formed strategic collaborations with numerous community agencies to conduct these efforts, which help publicize the unique contributions of Sigma. Community collaborations also help to increase the impact of our service efforts and ensure the sustainability of efforts over time. The ability to maintain a vibrant service outreach orientation that responds to the needs of vulnerable populations locally, regionally, and internationally, helps catalyze members with passion, dedication, and enthusiasm.

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**Title:**

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**Keywords:**

Membership Engagement, Membership Recruitment and Outreach Initiatives

**References:**

Chapter Poster: Rubric indicates that they are not necessary and scored as excellent.

**Abstract Summary:**

A strong foundation for connection and collaboration is having a mission and vision that emphasizes engagement of members to share information and work towards common goals. Through chapter meetings, philanthropy, and chapter events, members are reminded of the chapter's mission and work together towards these goals.

**Content Outline:**

Introduction - collaboration and engagement

Recruitment & Retention Strategies

Membership Appreciation

Outreach Initiatives fosters Connection and Collaboration

- Wine Tasting
- Annual Holiday Outreach
- International efforts: Haiti, Uganda, UNICEF

Conclusion

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**Professional Experience:** Dr. Graber is currently an Assistant Professor at the University of Delaware. She is a Board Certified Psychiatric Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist and has her doctorate in Educational Leadership. Jennifer has worked for over seventeen years as a psychiatric nurse in many roles and has taught psychiatric nursing for varying colleges. She is the recent Past-President of the Beta Xi Chapter and serves as a member on several committees within the chapter. In 2013 she received the Excellence in Teaching Award from Delaware Technical Community College. In 2014 and 2015 she was nominated by Delaware Today's Top Nurses for her work as a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Mental Health. In 2015 she was nominated by Delaware Today's Top Nurses for her work in Nursing Education. In 2016 she was the winner of Delaware Today's Top Nurses as a Mental Health Nurse.

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**Author Summary:** Dr. Saylor is an Assistant Professor at the University of Delaware and earned her PhD at University of Maryland. Currently, she is the Beta Xi Chapter first faculty counselor, International Governance Committee Member, and Co-chair of the Sigma Charter Review Task Force. She is also a founding member of the Campus Advisory Council Committee for the College Diabetes Network. Dr. Saylor received the Delaware Today Top Nurses award for Academic Excellence in 2016 and 2017.

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