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Gamma-O-Ramma: A Chapter Engagement Strategy to Disseminate Scholarship

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The Gamma Phi chapter of Sigma at Rush University College of Nursing is a robust chapter with 455 active members. In 2017, our fiscal year chapter acceptance rate was 97.2 % while retention for the same year was 71.5%. Part of this success is due to the fact that Gamma Phi is located in a highly ranked nursing school that is affiliated with a premier academic medical center. Chapter leaders believe that our high acceptance and retention rates are also due to regular membership engagement activities such as the monthly Gamma-O-Ramma.

Gamma-O-Ramma is an educational nursing forum that meets eight to ten times a year. It was developed ten years ago in an effort to bridge the academic and practice environments between Rush College of Nursing and Rush University Medical Center through regular opportunities for scholarship dissemination. Presenters include nursing faculty, practicing nurse leaders, and nursing students from both the DNP and CNL programs. As such, topics presented are varied and may include a description of grant funded work, an evidence-based practice initiative, an innovative academic program, or successful community programs.

Gamma-O-Ramma is a venue for DNP graduates to serve as a practice scholar where they can “share their knowledge to support the delivery of safe, cost efficient, evidence-based quality health care” (Buchholz, et al., 2013). In this way, the Gamma Phi chapter exemplifies the Sigma position statement on evidence based practice which states “As a leader in the development and dissemination of knowledge to improve nursing practice, Sigma supports the development and implementation of evidence-based nursing (EBN)” to reduce the gap between knowledge development and knowledge use to improve the health of people (Sigma, 2005).

The Gamma-O-Ramma educational forums are an opportunity to showcase the collaborative work of DNP and PhD-prepared nurses. According to our Gamma Phi colleagues Murphy, et al., (2015), disseminating the successful efforts of DNP and PhD-prepared nurses through publications, presentations at national conferences, and professional meetings, will serve as next steps to effectively promote continued collaborative efforts. Gamma-O-Ramma is an exemplary strategy to promote these collaborative efforts which are the hallmark for nursing to manage diverse teams and coordinate complex systems (Murphy, et al., 2015).

Gamma-O-Ramma also demonstrates a commitment to lifelong learning on the part of the Gamma Phi chapter. The fact that these sessions continue to be well attended shows a likewise commitment to learning on behalf of our members and the nursing community at large. Translating and integrating scholarship into practice is an expectation of Sigma, as symbolized by the lamp of knowledge in the society coat-of-arms. Luther Christman, a former Dean and founder of Rush University College of Nursing believed this as well. Christman said “Knowledge is power and professional practice means a lifetime of commitment to learning” (Houser & Player, 2004).

These regular offerings provide the chance to engage members, recognize individual member contributions to nursing practice and education, recruit nurse leaders and potential student candidates, develop leaders, and provide opportunities to volunteer. These are all criteria for the Chapter Key award, which Gamma Phi has proudly been awarded ten times.

Chapter leaders attribute the success of Gamma-O-Ramma to its regular meeting time and place, the fact that it has been “branded”, the variety of topics presented, the opportunity to earn CEs, and the fact that they are offered in two locations, the Rush College of Nursing and our community partner, Rush Oak Park Hospital. These educational offerings are well attended, with an average of 25 members per month.

This chapter initiative could be easily replicated. The Gamma Phi chapter has developed a committee with volunteers to recruit speakers, send out a flyer to all GammaPhi membership as well as targeted audience members depending on the subject, introduce speakers at the forums, and send completed attendance record and CE forms to continuing education office. In addition to the role of presenter, opportunities for leadership are evident in all these responsibilities.

Chapter leadership recognizes that this initiative needs to evolve in order to be sustained. Future considerations include teleconferencing the sessions to the expanding health care system, providing food and beverage, and presenting collaborative work with community members/global partners as well as other health care professionals.

Title:

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Keywords:

Chapter Key Award, membership engagement and scholarship dissemination

References:

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Abstract Summary:

The Gamma Phi chapter provides a regular, ongoing opportunity for nurses, faculty, and students to present their work. These monthly "Gamma-O-Ramma educational sessions have been an effective way to engage members, promote leadership, provide opportunities to volunteer, role model presentation skills, disseminate scholarship, while meeting several chapter key award criteria.

Content Outline:

I. Gamma-O-Ramma is a monthly educational offering provided by the Gamma Phi chapter developed to bridge academia and practice

A. Purpose of Gamma-O-Ramma

1. Member engagement
2. Disseminate scholarship
3. Rapid translation of evidence to bedside
4. Leadership development
5. Meet chapter Key Award criteria
 - a) leadership development
 - b) volunteer opportunity
 - c) member engagement
 - d) individual membership recognition
 - e) used technology to connect with members
 - f) opportunity to recruit nurse leaders and potential student candidates
6. Provide CEUs
7. Opportunity to present

B. Data to show effectiveness

1. Approximately 80 sessions provided over the last ten years (80 CEs)
2. Well attended with an average of 12 members per session
3. Positive evaluations overall
4. Evolved to include student and RN presentations

C. Why it is so effective

1. Branded
2. Regular - same time/same day of the month
3. Varied topics
4. CEs offered
5. Offered at the home academic institution as well as at community partner hospital

II. Chapter leadership best practices

A. Gamma-O-Ramma is a way to celebrate nursing excellence in scholarship, leadership, and service, which are all part of the mission of Sigma.

B. Share new logo

C. Involve leaders in academia and practice to promote best practice and improve health

D. Easily replicated - create new committee with leadership roles

III. Future Recommendations for Gamma-O-Ramma

A. Invite nurses/faculty/students to speak about global initiatives

B. Consider teleconferencing to expand to other hospitals in our health care system

C. Consider opportunities include collaborative work with other disciplines/professions

D. Consider opportunities to collaborate with community groups

First Primary Presenting Author

Primary Presenting Author

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Author Summary: Dr. Jennifer Rousseau is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Women, Children, and Family Nursing. She is a Women's Health Nurse Practitioner and experienced educator at both pre-licensure and doctoral level. Specialty area is depression screening in the postpartum period
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Author Summary: Dr. Forsberg is a Family Nurse Practitioner who has worked in a variety of settings, many in a school-based health center. Her area of focus is motivational interviewing and working with low income population to meet their health care needs.

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Professional Experience: Dr. Carlson has been active in STTI since 1976. She has served in numerous positions at the chapter and regional level, including being a Chairperson STTI Globalization Committee 2011-2013, Fellow-STTI Board Leadership Development Program 2008-2010, President-Gamma Phi chapter 2009-2012, Member-STTI International Service Institute Task Force 2009-2011, Member- STTI

Research Grant Review Committee, STTI International Evidence-Based Practice Award Committee, STTI International Chapter Spirit of Philanthropy Award Committee. Carlson, E.A., Klakovich, M., Broschius, S.K., Roche-Dean, M., Delack, S., Hittle, K., Jumaa, M.O., Stewart, M. W., Alston, P. "Board Leadership Development: The Key to Effective Nursing Leadership in the 21st Century" The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing (Accepted for publication 10/ 2010)

Author Summary: Dr. Carlson has been active in STTI since 1976. She has served in numerous positions at the chapter and regional level, and currently serves on the Sigma International Governance Committee. She is the Chair of Adult and Gerontological Nursing at Rush University College of Nursing. The focus of her most recent work is DNP and PhD collaboration.