

**Title:**

G 05 SPECIAL SESSION: The Journey to a Healthy Work Environment: University of Virginia School of Nursing

**Keywords:**

Healthy work environment, Resilience and Schools of Nursing

**Description/Overview:**

Adapting the standards for a healthy work environment (HWE) from the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN), the UVA School of Nursing created and is sustaining a HWE where students, faculty, and staff flourish. Examples of the steps taken and outcomes achieved will be described.

**Abstract Text:**

We describe the journey of one School of Nursing to create a Healthy Work Environment (HWE) by adapting the standards for a HWE developed by the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN). Over a ten-year period, 2008-2018, we used appreciative inquiry as a method of strategic planning, the staff initiated a HWE committee that faculty joined, performance evaluations included how individuals contribute to a HWE, systematic surveys of "how are we doing" were completed yearly and the Compassionate Care Initiative began. Each activity contributed to a strengthening of the culture of the School and positive outcomes in terms of engagement, student enrollment and success, and recruitment of diverse faculty and staff were noted. Self-care and resilience became a focus across the board with an emphasis on "flourishing." We joined a Joy in Work pilot project sponsored by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement which demonstrated a remarkable increase in satisfaction with one small intervention related to email. We created meditation/resilience rooms and classrooms and activities for the mind and spirit offered free 5 days a week. All students have opportunities for a resiliency retreat and graduated work on contemplative/compassion practices are embedded in the curriculum.

Publications and presentations by numerous faculty have created interest and enthusiasm in our approach across the nation and we have worked with other academic and clinical settings to enhance their own environments. The ingredients that make this happen include a leader and leadership team who understand and embrace the standards and a real sense of what a respectful workplace truly means, one where everyone is valued for their contributions.

The Compassionate Care Initiative <https://cci.nursing.virginia.edu/> emerged because of our HWE and has at its core our goal to "support nurses, physicians, allied health workers, and students by teaching resilience and compassion in health care through educational and experiential programs." With an emphasis on self-care for all, our programs around resiliency receive wide acclaim and create a signature of our students as resilient students who can care for themselves so they can be fully present for others in their care. Our multiple Diversity and Inclusion events where we come together to celebrate each other and also be supportive in tough times are legendary across our University. A HWE in an academic setting is achievable with focus, leadership and dedication.

**References:**

American Association of Critical-Care Nurses. (2005). AACN standards for establishing and sustaining healthy work environments: A journey to excellence. *American Journal of Critical Care*, 14, 187-197. Available at: <http://www.aacn.org/hwe>

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**Content Outline:**

Introduction

Importance of a HWE in academic settings

Background studies

Rationale for using AACN standards for a HWE

UVA School of Nursing Process and Outcomes

HWE Task Force initiated by staff

Appreciative Inquiry Summit for Strategic Planning

"All can flourish": the Compassionate Care Initiative with a focus on Self-Care and Resilience

Making a difference across an academic health center and entire University

**Moderator**

Juli Maxworthy, DNP, MBA  
University of San Francisco  
School of Nursing and Health Professions  
Assistant Professor  
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USA

**Professional Experience:** 2013-present—Assistant Professor, University of San Francisco 2008-present—CEO, WithMax Inc 2010- 2012—Vice President, Service Excellence & Performance Improvement/Quality 2008-2010—Senior Director, Quality and Care Management 2007-2008—Senior Director, Quality and Resource Management 2005-2007—Director, Quality Management/Clinical Effectiveness 2004-2005—Quality Analyst 1986-2004—Charge and Staff Nurse, ICU/NSICU 2017-2019—Vice President, Sigma Board of Directors 2013-2017—Region One Coordinator, Sigma 2011-2013—Chair, Foundation Board, Sigma 2009-2011—Chair, Fellows Committee, Foundation Board, Sigma 2007-2011—President, Nu Xi at Large Chapter Author of five textbooks and multiple book chapters and articles Areas of interest include leadership, healthcare simulation, quality and patient safety Multiple presentations at the local, regional and international levels

**Author Summary:** Dr. Juli Maxworthy is an Assistant Professor at the University of San Francisco in the United States. Her areas of interest include quality and patient safety, leadership and healthcare simulation. She currently serves as the Vice President for the Board of Directors of Sigma.

**Organizer**

Regina M. DeGennaro, DNP, RN, CNS, AOCN, CNL  
University of Virginia  
Acute and Specialty Services  
Associate Professor  
Charlottesville VA  
USA

**Professional Experience:** Dr. DeGennaro is an Associate Professor with more than thirty years of

experience as an oncology and palliative care clinician and educator in NY, CA, IA and Virginia. Dr. DeGennaro serves as a reviewer for professional organizations and holds memberships and certifications from the Oncology Nursing Society and from the American Association for Colleges of Nursing for the CNL certification. Dr. DeGennaro facilitates introductory experiential contemplative practices in class and in clinical settings for students and nurses to learn to care for self. Dr. DeGennaro has re-designed courses and added contemplative pedagogical approaches within existing courses to address quality and safety outcomes and self-care for nurses and nursing students. She is a member of the Healthy Work Environment Committee at the School.

**Author Summary:** Dr. DeGennaro is Academic Director for Clinical Partnerships at the UVA School of Nursing. Her clinical research focuses on translating the evidence for oncology nursing practice to the bedside and specifically on improving symptom management, quality and safety. She has presented regionally, nationally and internationally. Dr. DeGennaro serves as the Assistant Department Chair for the Department of Acute and Specialty Care at the School of Nursing. She is an Oncology CNS and teaches across programs.

### Organizer

Dorrie Fontaine, RN, PhD, FAAN, RN, PhD, FAAN  
University of Virginia  
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**Professional Experience:** 45 years as clinician in critical care, clinical nurse specialist and faculty including associate dean and dean. Over 200 presentations and publications on healthy work environments and compassionate care.

**Author Summary:** Dorrie Fontaine is the dean and Sadie Health Cabaniss professor at the University of Virginia (UVA) School of Nursing. Founder of UVA's Compassionate Care Initiative, Dorrie has 45 years' experience as a critical care and trauma nurse and a distinguished record of leadership at the nation's top nursing schools including University of Maryland, Georgetown University, and the University of California, San Francisco.