Title:
Nurses as Leaders: Connecting Through Board Service

Cynthia B. Dunlap, DNP
Quality, Texas Hospital Association, Mount Calm, TX, USA

Session Title:
Servant Leadership Skills

Slot:
O 03: Monday, 19 September 2016: 4:45 PM-5:30 PM

Scheduled Time:
5:05 PM

Purpose:
The purpose of this presentation is to describe the needed interprofessional skills and the acquisition of those skills from an initial research study, along with methods to seek board service within our communities.

Keywords:
Board service, Nursing and skills, knowledge, and competencies

References:

Abstract Summary:
We, as nurses, have the responsibility to influence change through leadership roles including board service to all organizations. What skills, knowledge, and competencies should you possess for board service? How should you acquire these necessary interprofessional attributes? How should you seek local, community board service? This session provides these answers.

Learning Activity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The learner will be able to describe the skills, knowledge, and competencies for effective board service through the literature and recently conducted research.</td>
<td>The content to be described for this objective is what attributes are identified in the nursing, healthcare, and business literature with the results of quantitative descriptive research study of nurses who have served or are currently serving on boards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The learner will be able to identify learning methods to acquire these interprofessional skills.</td>
<td>The content to be described for this objective is the results from the research study on the preferred methods to gain these attributes. In addition, the settings and ways to gain these attributes will be described including formal academic curriculum, continuing education, and coaching and mentoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The learner will be able to develop and implement methods to seek and serve in governance positions.</td>
<td>The content to be described for this objective is creating a personal strategic plan for board membership, serving as a volunteer, networking with other interprofessionals, and identifying and collaborating with coaches and mentors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abstract Text:

Scope of Abstract

Nurses are responsible for acquiring key attributes for board service (Institute of Medicine [IOM], 2011). The skills, knowledge, and competencies for effective board service have been presented within the nursing literature; however, no study has been reported to understand from nurses what those are. In addition, methods to acquire the necessary attributes for board service and to create the opportunities to serve on boards will be explored.

Significance of Abstract

Nurses have the opportunity to shape and change the health of their community, participate in health care reform, establish health policy, and advance their profession by assuming board positions for healthcare and key community and governmental organizations (IOM, 2011). The call for more nurses to serve on boards led to a strategic collaboration among nursing organizations leading to the establishment
of the Nurses on Boards Coalition (NOBC) (Future of Nursing: Campaign to Action [FNCA], 2014). With a goal to place 10,000 nurses on boards by 2020, the NOBC has developed strategies to increase the number of nurses serving on boards and identify opportunities for nurses to become more effective board members (FNCA, 2014).

### Description and Evaluation of Needed Skills

The competencies for leadership roles, including board service, have been identified and are grounded in knowledge and experience acquired beginning in nursing schools, assuming leadership roles, and continuing throughout one’s career (Carlson et al., 2011; Pate, 2013; Westphal & McNeil, 2014). Content experts, based upon literature review or personal experiences, have described the needed skills, knowledge, and competencies for board service with common themes of collaboration, finance, strategy and planning, visionary skills, and communication (American Nurses Foundation, 2015 [ANF]; Center for Healthcare Governance, 2011; Westphal & McNeil, 2014). Additionally, competencies identified for board service include being a consensus builder, good communicator, strategist, team member, and visionary (“AACN Framework for Governance Leadership Positions,” 2006; BoardSource, 2007; Cascio, 2004).

A IRB-approved quantitative descriptive study was conducted in 2015 using an online survey tool with participants recruited from professional nursing organizations and colleagues within Texas. Content of the survey included key attributes identified from within the literature and the 2015 ANF survey (ANF, 2015). The de-identifiable data were analyzed by demographics and descriptive statistics. With 125 study participants, skills and knowledge that the respondents most often wished they possessed prior to board service were those commonly associated with the business aspects of board governance and were finance (53.6%, n=67), investment (42.4%, n=53), audit (41.6%, n=52) and marketing (39.2%, n=49). However, when ranked in comparison of all skills and knowledge through the use of Mann Whitney U statistical testing, quality improvement, human resources, and management were identified as a necessary foundational set of attributes for board service. The majority of the respondents reported that their competencies of self-leadership (72.6%, n=91), delivering an effective message (62.4%, n=78), consensus building (61.6%, n=77), visioning (56.0%, n=70), and global thinking (55.2%, n=69) were not as developed they had wished prior to board service.

### Acquiring the skills, knowledge, and competencies

**Evaluation of results**

The study group demonstrated that the majority (57.6%, n = 72) acquired the attributes that they possessed from a nursing graduate educational program. Other methods most commonly used to gain possession of the skills, knowledge, and competencies for board service were mentoring and coaching (59.2%, n = 74), conferences (52.8%, n = 66) and continuing education (48.8%, n = 61). When asked what the preferred methods of learning to support ongoing and future board service were, mentoring (48%, n = 60) and networking (46.4%, n = 58) were articulated by the nurses.

### Settings to gain attributes

Nurses have many ways to gain the opportunities to improve their skill sets and knowledge for board service. An early adopter promoting education of nurses for board service was Sigma Theta Tau Institute resulting in their annual conferences entitled “Board Leadership Institute” (Sigma Theta Tau Institute [STTI], 2016). The NOBC is targeting in 2016 and 2017 the spread of information and education at most national educational conferences. In addition to the National Coalition, states such as Texas and Virginia have action coalitions to provide nurses with targeted education for board service (FNCA, 2014 & Hassmiller & Quinn, 2015). The Northwest and Texas Organizations of Nurse Executives, and colleges and universities such as the East Carolina University School of Nursing and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center have established or supported workshops to provide opportunities for graduate and
continuing education for nurse leaders within states (Brown, 2015; Hassmiller & Quinn, 2015; Walton et al., 2015).

Coaching and mentoring, according to this research study, are preferred methods of learning and acquiring information to further support board service. One of the NOBC’s workgroups is developing specific tactics to encourage opportunities for mentoring and coaching. (Harper, 2015). Individual nurses currently can explore several options to gain access to coaches and mentors for board service through their nurse leaders, other healthcare leaders such as the chief financial officers and strategic planners, and professional development organizations such as BoardSource.

Mechanisms to gain a board position

Creating a personal strategic plan for board service can be empowering for the nurse to execute towards the goal of a governance position. Within that plan, nurses can identify what skills, knowledge, and competencies need to be developed and identify the ways provided this presentation to gain them. Concurrently to addressing the needed attributes for board service, volunteering and serving on community councils, committees, advisory boards and within other community organizations allows the nurse to identify which types of organizations best match to one’s passions and interests. Volunteering not only supports nurses’ professional development but also can be a benefit to their employer (Hill, 2008). Active participation and engagement allows nurses to develop a network of interprofessionals who can assist as a mentor and in potential board placements. Once nurses have identified which organizations are of interest for board service, discussions can occur with the executive director and other board members about the process to gain a board seat. Lastly, finding a coach and mentor can provide the needed support to further develop competencies of self-awareness, executive presence, and global thinking (Cornwall & Totten, 2011).