Creating a Governance Structure Consistent with Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation (CNEA) Accreditation Standards

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Investigate potential governance strategies
Use Nursing expertise in a supportive rather than controlling role
Provide advice as to how to adapt proposed governance structures to ensure compliance with nursing standards.

Purpose:
This poster provides an overview of a leadership journey that sought to help a liberal arts college launch a new nursing program while creating a structure that would support a successful accreditation application. While faculty and administration understood the impetus to create a nursing program, unfamiliarity with nursing culture and concerns as to the consequences of adding a professional program to a liberal arts institution presented significant barriers to success.

Introduction/Background
Change is always accompanied by various levels of stress among those involved, particularly when the involved parties have no sense of control over processes or outcomes. Holding information forums for administration, faculty, and staff helped to convey nursing’s need for and commitment to the liberal studies culture. This also helped to educate the institution on accreditation standards and nursing culture.

It very quickly became apparent that major changes to the governance structure would need to happen. The existing organization was functional for a very small, liberal arts college, but would not meet the needs of a college with a growing student population seeking to add a nursing major. It was also recognized that incorporation of accreditation standards during the planning stages would lead to a more successful program and development of sound policies.

Challenges
- Administration and Faculty unfamiliar with Nursing
- Perceived threats to liberal studies culture
- Need for new governance structure for growing institution

Strategies
- Informational forums
- Respect for Liberal Studies
- Incorporation of CNEA standards into planning process
- Play supportive role in selecting new governance structure

Outcomes
- Forge relationships institutionally and within community
- Communicate frequently
- ‘Market’ your changes internally
- Understand personal strengths and weaknesses
- Understand organizational strengths and weaknesses
- Respect existing culture, even if it must change
- Build a support base

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