

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

NURSING EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVES

ANN B. BAIN, EDD, MSN, RN
Professor and Chairperson, Department of Nursing
University of Arkansas - Little Rock
Little Rock, Arkansas

SUSAN C. BALTRUS, MSN, RNBC, CNE
President, College of Nursing and Health Professions
Central Maine Medical Center
Lewiston, Maine

NANCY PHOENIX BITTNER, PHD, RN, CNS
Professor
School of Nursing, Science and Health Professions
Regis College
Weston, Massachusetts

LINDA K. COCKRELL, MSN, RN
Program Leader, Health and Medical Sciences
Central School of Practical Nursing
Norfolk Technical Center, Norfolk Public Schools
Norfolk, Virginia

KIMBERLY K. CRIBB, EDD, MSN, RN, CNE
MSN Program Director, Division of Nursing
Thomas University
Thomasville, Georgia

CATHERINE McJANNET, MN, RN, CEN
Director of Nursing and Health Occupations
Programs
Southwestern College
San Diego, California

MARY LOU RUSIN, EDD, RN, ANEF
Professor and Chair, Nursing Department
Daemen College
Amherst, New York

MARY W. STEC, MSN, RN, CNE
Course Coordinator/Instructor
Dixon School of Nursing, Abington Memorial Hospital
Willow Grove, Pennsylvania

PEGGY TUDOR, EDD, MSN, RN, CNE
Department Chair, Associate Degree Nursing
Eastern Kentucky University
Richmond, Kentucky

NURSING SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

CHRISTINA DIMICHELE, MSN, RN, NEA-BC
Nurse Manager
The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

JANET Y. HARRIS, DNP, RN, NEA-BC
Chief Nursing Officer
The University of Mississippi Medical Center
Jackson, Mississippi

RAQUEL PASARON, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC
ARNP/Pediatric Surgery Liaison
Miami Children's Hospital
Miami, Florida

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

GARY CARMAN, PHD, LMSW
President
Carman Consulting
South Windsor, Connecticut

DAVID E. ORMSTEDT, JD
Attorney/Consultant
Bloomington, Indiana

HOWARD S. SMITH, EDD
Education Leadership Consultant
Harris Beach, PLLC
Buffalo, New York



Formerly NLNAC, National League
for Nursing Accrediting Commission, Inc.

May 20, 2013

Lea Hall, PhD, MSN, FNP-BC, RN
Executive Director
School of Nursing
Indiana State University
749 Chestnut Street
Terre Haute, IN 47809

Dear Dr. Hall:

We are writing to share exciting news. Effective May 6, 2013, the NLNAC changed its name and is now the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)! As you know, the Commission has consistently supported the interests of nursing education, nursing practice, and the public through the functions of accreditation since 1997, and our work will continue uninterrupted as we transition to our new name.

Please be assured that our mission has not changed and remains at the center of everything we do on behalf of our partners in nursing education and the nursing profession as a whole. There will be no change in the day-to-day operations of the agency or the excellent work by the Commission and the more than six hundred committed volunteers who assist us in ensuring quality nursing education throughout the U.S. and the U.S. Territories for all six (6) program types (clinical doctorate, master's, baccalaureate, associate, diploma, and practical). We are the only U.S. Department of Education (USDOE)– and Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)–recognized accrediting agency to offer accreditation for all six (6) types of nursing programs.

As you will recall, we proudly announced the release of the 2013 Standards and Criteria in January of this year, and those Standards will guide accreditation for the next five (5) years. The Accreditation Manual, policies, and procedures with which you are familiar are also unchanged, and our adoption of a new name will in no way affect the current accreditation status of the Commission's accredited nursing programs. In addition, the name change has been reported to the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE), and the change has been reviewed and accepted by the USDOE; the USDOE website has already been updated to reflect the change to ACEN.

You may be asking, "why change?" As you know, the NLNAC separated from the trade association, the National League for Nursing (NLN), in

1997 as required by the USDOE. At that time, the NLNAC purchased the accreditation assets from the NLN for more than two million dollars. In addition to that purchase, in order to use the NLNAC name, we have continued to pay monthly royalty fees totaling several million dollars. However, the relationship with the NLN has made it impossible for the Commission to continue its compliance with the USDOE Regulations.

Specifically, as an HEA Title-IV Gatekeeper, an accrediting agency is required to be not only separate but independent in order to demonstrate compliance with the U.S. Department of Education 34 Code of Federal Regulations Part §602.14(a)(b). Not every accrediting agency chooses to meet Part §602.14(a)(b) in order to be recognized by the USDOE; however, as a Title IV Gatekeeper, we are required to be in compliance with this regulation. We strongly value our continued USDOE recognition and our role as a Title IV Gatekeeper. As thousands of nursing students would lose their access to Federal Student Aid without this recognition, we have embraced this responsibility and have taken every action necessary to retain our USDOE recognition. In addition, this recognition is of increasing importance as completion of a nursing program that is accredited by a USDOE-recognized agency like ACEN is a requirement for employment with a growing number of employers, most notably the healthcare facilities associated with the Department of Veteran Affairs, and USDOE-recognition is also required for accredited nursing programs to access Federal grant programs.

In 2012, at the time of the NLNAC's last review by the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI), the Commission was directed to remove the oversight of the NLN and gain control of the Commission's Bylaws, revising the Bylaws to ensure that they reflect our independence from the trade association. As you are aware from our previous communications, the NLNAC and the NLN have been engaged in ongoing litigation in order to ensure that we are a separate and independent accrediting agency in accordance with the Federal regulations. We have never wavered from our responsibilities and commitment to the nursing programs, including those for which we are a Title IV Gatekeeper.

Additional announcements and information will be sent in the coming weeks. Please also visit our website regularly as we unveil our new look, logo, website, and colors! In the meantime, should you have any questions, please feel free to contact any of the ACEN professional staff members:

- Dr. Sharon Tanner – (404) 975-5000
- Dr. Nell Ard – (404) 975-5004
- Dr. Cordia Starling – (404) 975-5005
- Dr. Abigail Gerding – (404) 975-5008

You may also find additional information related to the ACEN's USDOE recognition by contacting the ACEN's Staff Analyst at the USDOE, Chuck Mula, at (202) 219-7036. Information related to the HEA Title IV Regulations is also available at: <http://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred>.

We have long awaited this opportunity for complete and independent governance of the Commission, and we look forward to the many new ways in which we will partner with and support our accredited nursing programs!

Sincerely,



Mary Lou Rusin, EdD, RN, ANEF
Chair, ACEN Board of Commissioners



Sharon J. Tanner, EdD, MSN, RN
Chief Executive Officer