Expanding and Enhancing Leadership Opportunities for Undergraduate and Graduate Nursing Students

East Carolina University College of Nursing

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Truist Center for Leadership
College of Nursing Grant Report

I.   The Need for Leadership Development in Nursing

The healthcare industry is becoming increasingly complex and requires students to have various leadership skills. Leadership development in nursing programs sets the stage for one of the largest components of practice, critical to delivering high-quality patient care (ANA, 2021). Nurses at all levels need leadership skills to function successfully as a team. More specifically, strong leadership skills in nurses have been linked to improved patient outcomes, reduced medical errors, and staff retention (Sfantou et al., 2017). Therefore, the focus of leadership development with the support of Truist funding remains to educate and build effective leadership strategies that the nursing student will translate into practice.

East Carolina University College of Nursing (CON) has a long history of producing nurse leaders. In fact, our mission is to train and prepare leaders. The leadership activities funded by the TRUIST Center for Leadership Development support the College of Nursing's ability to grow, cultivate, and graduate nursing leaders. In developing our programs to improve the leadership skill of nurses, no one strategy has proven to be the answer. Furthermore, our assessment of students at different educational or academic levels within our programs recognizes the need for more specific development in one area over another. The strategies outlined in this grant report reflect our intentional focus on assessing leadership competencies, designing effective and person-centered leadership strategies, and measuring our program's impact to enhance the leadership capacity of all ECU College of Nursing graduates.

II.   Program Aims

Since the College of Nursing first received funds from the TRUIST Center for Leadership Development, our purpose has remained focused on 1) facilitating the continued development of nursing student leadership capacity and 2) enabling graduate nurses to acquire the knowledge and skills they need for leadership positions in healthcare from the bedside to the boardroom. The professional frameworks that guide our strategies are:

- The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2021)
- American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Nurse Executive Certification Content Standards (ANCC, 2021)
- American Organization of Nurse Executives Nurse Executive Competencies (AONL, 2021)

These frameworks have informed strategies to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of successful leadership through:

- ○ Quality improvement and patient safety principles
- ○ Team-based care
- ○ Knowledge of the professional role of the nurse
- ○ Advocacy for political issues that affect nursing and healthcare
- ○ Dissemination of nursing's contribution to population health

The aims of our leadership development strategies were:

1. To increase ECU College of Nursing students' exposure to diverse leadership experiences to facilitate the development of competitive nurse leaders.

2. Enhance the development of self-knowledge in both personal and professional leadership competencies that foster and examine one's own thoughts, feelings, and biases that influence the nurse leader's ability to lead.

III.   College of Nursing Logic Model

See Figure 1 and Figure 2.

IV.   Leadership Development Activities

Activities Associated with Logic Model for Goal 1

Active participation in local professional associations and professional dissemination

Enhancing students' ability to participate in professional associations and disseminate professional work has been a cornerstone of the College of Nursing's strategy for enhancing the leadership development of all students. Students are encouraged to join student organizations, and stipends are provided with support from Truist funding to offset membership fees for membership fees. Professional membership provides students with a foundation for continued professional growth and service to the profession. The East Carolina Association of Nursing Students (ECANS) has been named a Stellar School Chapter by the National Student Nurses Association (NSNA). NSNA Stellar School Chapter Recognition Program recognizes NSNA school chapters that demonstrate ongoing involvement in NSNA, including a strong commitment to shared governance and the professional development of their students and faculty. This recognition has been awarded for 5 years. ECANS has over 70 members and is one of the largest chapters in the country. Funding from the Truist Grant has supported nursing student attendance at local, state, and national professional association events. Specifically, students have participated in activities with associations noted in Table 1.

Figure 1

College of Nursing Logic Model for
Goal 1

Goal: To increase ECU College of Nursing students' exposure to diverse leadership experiences to facilitate the development of competitive nurse leaders.

Leadership Competencies Targeted: See list in the aims section of this report along with the leadership qualities of collaboration, shared purpose, disagreeing with respect, authenticity, commitment, and empathy.

Who Participates:	Activities:	Participant Outputs:	Which Will Change Participants in These Ways (short-term):	Which Will Lead To (long-term):
Graduate and undergraduate nursing students with an interest in political advocacy, association membership, and dissemination of professional activities	Active participation in local professional associations and professional dissemination	# of students attending each local professional association conference/event	Enhanced leadership competency (see bulleted list in aims section)	Increased commitment to advancing the nursing profession
Participants are primarily selected based on their individual interest in various progam offerings		# of students participating in legislative policy events	Greater participation in professional decision-making	
		# of students participating in associations focused on advocacy	Greater job opportunities and increased involvement with local professional associations	Increased confidence in leading in diverse healthcare settings and contexts
Attendance to NSNA national conference was selected based on submission of essay discussing the importance of the conference on professional growth	Active participation in political advocacy opportunities	# of posters presented	Increased confidence in discussing legislative issues	
		# of students listening to podcasts	Greater likelihood of attending future political advocacy events	Increased active participation in activities that promote change in health care
			Expanded network of colleagues within nursing field	

Figure 2

College of Nursing Logic Model for
Goal 2

Goal: Enhance the development of self-knowledge and both personal and professional leadership competencies that foster and examine one's own thoughts, feelings, and biases that influence the nurse leader's ability to lead from the bedside to the boardroom.

Leadership Competencies Targeted: Self-knowledge and empathy/understanding

Who Participates:	Activities:	Participant Outputs:	Which Will Change Participants in These Ways (short-term):	Which Will Lead To (long-term):
All undergraduate nursing students in their third semester/senior year	Participation in wellness retreat offered by NCNA	# of students participating in self-management activities	Enhance knowledge of leadership capacity through improved personal wellness and awareness	Advanced leadership capacity in complex high stress contexts
Graduate students in the MSN Leadership program	Completion of Strengthsfinders assessment and debriefing of survey findings	Reflective statements by participants	Increased knowledge of personal strengths to increase leadership capacity	Enhanced ability to develop high performing teams composed of diverse and complimentary perspectives
Summer RN-BSN Students		# of students completing Strengthsfinders assessment and attending debriefing		

Table 1. CON Student Participation in Professional Associations

Participants	Association	Activities
8 Graduate Leadership Students	Association for Leadership Science in Nursing (ALSN)	Attended 2021 Virtual Annual Conference. Included keynote by Kevin Sowers, MSN, RN, President of John Hopkins Health System. Mr. Sowers was also a guest speaker for the College of Nursing students.
22 Undergraduate Nursing Students	East Carolina Association of Nursing Students (ECANS)	Membership drive conducted to increase membership and engagement in association activities. Membership subsidies provided.
9 Undergraduate Nursing Students the 2023 National Students Nurses Association conference.	National Student Nurses Association (NSNA)	Supported registration fees, lodging, and travel associated with student attendance. Chapter leaders and students that were members of ECANS were invited to attend at no cost to the students. Students participated in conference activities and association governance. Students submitted and presented three poster presentations on the activities of the ECU Student Nurses Association.
Over 100 students from undergraduate and graduate programs were supported to attend the annual Beta Nu Banquet.	Beta Nu Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society	Students participating in these events received education on understanding self-personality traits and how they related to workplace wellness, satisfaction, team building, and leadership. Students also

		learned from presentations on the development, leadership, and operation of non-profit foundations to accomplish healthy outcomes for populations. Specifically, students heard from CON's new Dean, Dr. Bimbola Akintade, regarding his nonprofit providing care on a global landscape.
32- graduate and undergraduate students have attended Nurses Day at the Legislature 27- Graduate students attended a statewide conference 41- Undergraduate and graduate nursing students attended Nurses Night at the Legislature	North Carolina Nurses Association (NCNA)	NCNA events gave students broad exposure to varied leadership perspectives and education on the importance of professional advocacy that shapes healthcare delivery. Education on advocating for the profession in the political context while exploring opportunities to engage with local and state politicians. The NCNA Nurses Day at the Legislature allowed students to interact in conversation with political leaders related to policy that affects nursing and healthcare delivery in North Carolina. The event allows students to discuss legislation that impacts nursing policy and practice. Nurses Night at the Legislature allowed students to personally interact with NC Legislators and their staff. Active discussions were held between nurses and legislators on policies affecting nursing and health care.

Active participation in political advocacy opportunities

Nurses make up the largest employed group in healthcare and have the potential to have a profound influence on healthcare policy at local, state, and national levels. While such a large group, nurses often have difficulty understanding how to become involved in legislative advocacy. Two events occur each legislative session to allow nurses to advocate for healthcare and nursing policy. The TRUIST Grant supported nursing student attendance at the Nurses Day and Night events with NC General Assembly hosted by the North Carolina Nurses Association.

Nine nursing organizations across North Carolina sponsor Nurses Night at the Legislature. All legislators and staff are invited to a social with nurses at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences during the event. Before attending this event, students are prepared to discuss healthcare issues with legislators through a focused session with instructors at the College of Nursing. Students review priority topics introduced in the legislature, how to talk with legislators, and advocate for important topics that affect the profession, patients, and Eastern North Carolina. Students hear from nurse leaders and legislators during the event regarding current health policy activity. Nurses Day at the Legislature provides professional and student nurses with an opportunity to present a positive image of nursing depth, breadth, and value. Sessions are provided to educate attendees on the legislative process, current policies, and how those policies impact patient care and the nursing profession. Furthermore, attendees can meet with local legislators to discuss important policy topics.

Activities Associated with Logic Model for Goal 2

Since the Fall of 2019, the faculty in the Undergraduate Leadership course asked all students to complete the Strengthsfinders assessment. The Strengthsfinders assessment attempts to have participants identify where individuals have the greatest potential for building strength. It measures patterns of thought, feelings, and behaviors. After completing the assessment, students attend a debriefing session with the course faculty. During the debriefing, students discuss their strengths with other students, learn how to interpret their findings and discover the link between using their strengths and their satisfaction and productivity in the workplace. This activity occurs with all third-semester undergraduate nursing students each Fall and Spring semesters.

V.   Implementation Fidelity, Quality, and Outputs

Fidelity

Since pandemic restrictions have eased, we have seen increased enthusiasm among students desiring to participate in leadership activities. We continue to measure fidelity through student

attendee lists. For most events, participation is greater than pre-pandemic. We continue to measure broad leadership activity outcomes through pre- and post-leadership surveys of third-semester nursing students.

Quality

We solicit involuntary feedback regarding leadership development activities. Students often report positive feedback regarding the positive interactions students have with speakers. The outcomes section of this report will highlight feedback we have received that may shed light on the quality of our programming.

Outputs

The strategies the CON has implemented over the past two years have reached approximately 665 different students. The strategies we offer programming to a broad population of undergraduate and graduate students.
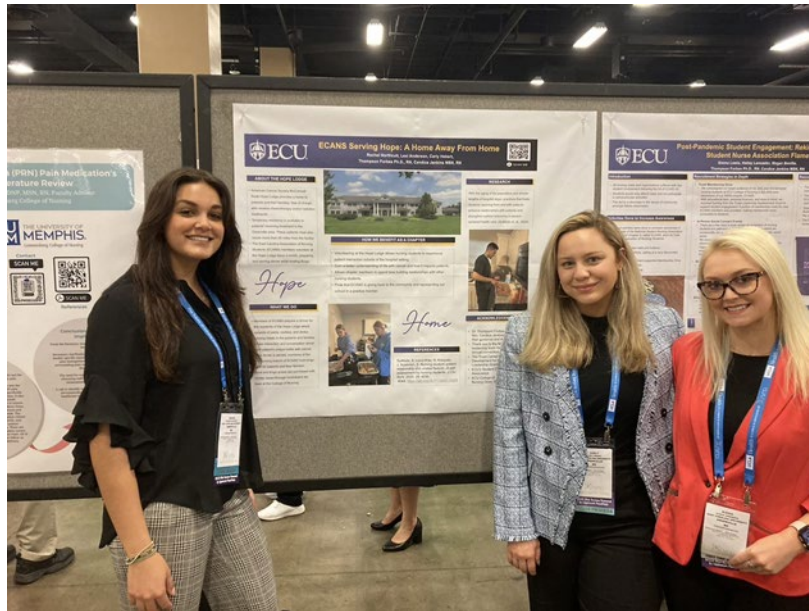

Students enjoying time after the Sigma Beta Nu Fall Banquet

Students with Dr. Forbes and the CON Dean, Dr. Akintade enjoying time at the NCNA Conference

Group photo of students and faculty attending the NSNA Conference

Senior nursing students presenting Poster Presentations at the NSNA Conference

All students that developed Poster Presentations for the NSNA Conference on various research topics

Group photo of faculty, graduate and undergraduate nurses that enjoyed Nurses Day at the Legislature

Undergraduate nursing students with Representative Tim Reeder at Nurses Day at the Legislature

Graduate and undergraduate students and faculty with Representative Reeder during Nurses Day at the Legislature

Undergraduate students and faculty at Nurses Night at the legislature

Graduate students with Representative Gale Adcock at Nurses Night at the Legislature

Graduate students and faculty with Representative Tim Reeder at Nurses Night at the Legislature

VI.   Evidence of Impact

<u>Impacts During Participation</u>

Most of our leadership development strategies are provided to undergraduate nursing students. We created a pre- and post-course survey to efficiently collect data on our program outcomes and generate a reliable measure of student development. The survey is completed at the beginning and end of their required NURS 4150 Leadership in Nursing course (3 semester hours). The survey primarily queried students about the desired skills outlined in section II. These include knowledge of quality improvement, patient safety, team-based care, and effective leadership strategies. Furthermore, the survey asks about students' comfort in participating in improvement projects, team-based care, and political advocacy. We have been using this survey since the Fall of 2019. As of Spring 2023, 912 students have completed the pre- and post-surveys. Table 2 shows the outcomes of this survey.

A Wilcox Signed-Rank test was conducted to assess change over time for each outcome. There was a positive and statistically significant difference in students' self-appraisals of every outcomes measure from pre- to post-course levels. Participants in the course reported greater understanding of quality improvement principles, better understanding of patient safety principles, better understanding of team-based care principles, greater understanding of effective leadership strategies, greater comfort participating in quality improvement projects, and greater comfort discussing political issues that affect nursing and healthcare with policy leaders. To a smaller, but still sizeable extent, participants also reported greater comfort in efforts to improve team-based care, greater comfort discussing the professional role of nurses with others, and better understanding of the importance of participating in professional associations.

Table 2. Descriptive and Inferential Survey Results

Leadership Outcomes from NURS 4150 Fall 2019-Spring 2023 n=1113			
(Percentages are those students reporting Very or Extremely Knowledgeable)			
Variable Measured	**Pre-Course** n=874	**Post-Course** n=872	**Wilcox Signed-Rank Test (Unpaired)**
Understanding Quality Improvement Principles	5.60%	84.90%	Z = -∞ p < 0.001
Understanding of Patient Safety Principles	41.07%	93.12%	Z = -37.2 p < 0.001
Understanding of Team-Based Care Principles	26.77%	89.45%	Z = -37.49 p < 0.001
Understanding of Effective Leadership Strategies	21.51%	90.37%	Z = -37.45 p < 0.001
Comfort Participating in Quality Improvement Projects	48.28%	95.06%	Z = -23.93 p < 0.001
Comfort Participating in Efforts to Improve Team-Based Care	74.48%	95.76%	Z = -32.80 p < 0.001
Comfort Discussing the Professional Role of the Nurse with Others	77.57%	95.87%	Z = -15.39 p < 0.001
Understand the Importance of Participating in Professional Associations	92.33%	98.96%	Z = -6.69 p < 0.001
Comfort Discussing Political Issues that Effect Nursing and Healthcare with Policy Leaders	41.76%	72.23%	Z = -6.69 p < 0.001

In addition to quantitative data collected from undergraduate students, we developed a separate survey to capture student feedback after each event where TRUIST funds were used to support the activity. The primary data collected is in narrative form. We found that for many of these activities, the reflective nature of open-ended questions provided additional development for the student while providing faculty with feedback on activity outcomes. Table 3 shows some of the feedback received for various leadership development activities.

Table 3. Sample Program Feedback from Student Participants

Spring 2023 Nurses Night at the Legislature
"I have lived in North Carolina for 20 years but never been to the legislature. This was a fantastic opportunity to network and meet policymakers. Experience gained talking with the lawmakers is invaluable. After attending this event, I feel more confident to go to future events."
Fall 2022 Beta Nu Banquet
"The event helped me to see the far-reaching impacts that the nursing profession can have, from focusing on individual patients to research and using those experiences to make a global impact."
Fall 2022 NCNA Annual Convention
"Due to the healthcare climate lately, I have felt apprehensive about going into leadership and pursuing an administrative or executive role. This conference was the push I needed to feel excited about that decision again. Nurse leaders are needed at the business table to advocate for nursing staff and bring a clinical perspective that other executives may be unable to provide. "

Impacts of Products Created (ECANS Poster Presentations)

Post-Pandemic Student Engagement: Rekindling the Student Nurse Association Flame

Emma Lewis, Hailey Lancaster, Megan Bonilla,
Thompson Forbes Ph.D., RN, Candice Jenkins MSN, RN

SCAN ME

Introduction

- All nursing clubs and organizations suffered with low student involvement following the hit of COVID-19.
- Students would only attend class and not participate in extracurricular activities.
- This led to a decrease in the sense of community amongst fellow classmates.

Activities Done to Increase Awareness

- Several activities were done to increase awareness of our chapter of the National Student Nursing Association (NSNA). Our Chapter is called ECANS, short for East Carolina Association of Nursing Students.
- Key Activities
  - Gifting free badge reels and buttons
  - Creating club T-Shirts, selling at a very discounted price
  - Truist Leadership Grant supported Membership Drive
  - Social Connect events
  - Social Media Marketing

Acknowledgements

- Dr. Thompson Forbes and Mrs. Candice Jenkins. We appreciate their guidance and support.
- Thank you to the NCANS leadership team for organizing the annual convention.
- The Truist Center for Leadership Development for the generous Leadership Grant.
- ECU's Student Government Association
- ECU College of Nursing Dean, Bimbola F. Akintade.

Recruitment Strategies in Depth

- **Truist Membership Drive**
  - We campaigned our target audience of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd semester nursing students at ECU College of Nursing to join and raise awareness of our NSNA chapter, ECANS.
  - With educational fees, personal finances, and more in mind, we received funding from the Truist Leadership Development Grant to support student engagement. A portion of membership costs for new ECANS members was provided, making membership more accessible to students.

- **In-Person Social Connect Events**
  - There are a few days a week where all semesters of nursing students are gathered at ECU CON for classes, in which we occasionally set up an ECANS outreach table in the main social areas.
  - We encourage all students to join our chapter and provide information such as who we are, what we do, and the impact this organization can make. Many of our members have the ability to engage with students and foster interest in our club through interpersonal connections.

- **ECANS Custom Apparel and Accessories**
  - Designed and created ECANS buttons and badge reels at our campus library and handed them out to students for free, to market ECANS and create awareness among our peers.
  - Designed club T-Shirts and were able to sell them at a discounted price due to our collaboration with the SGA and their assistance with costs, raising our accessibility efforts.
  - We are also currently in the process of designing custom ECANS cups and more.

- **ECU ECANS Social Media**
  - Recently, we have established an Instagram presence to expand our reach and generate interest on social media. We also post meeting information for current members and raise awareness about upcoming events.

Recruitment Results

- The Truist Membership drive increased membership by 15 students
- The Connect events encouraged students to join ECANS, with 20 students expressing interest in the club by filling out an interest form.
- Apparel is worn across campus (pictured below). Buttons are displayed on backpacks, which allows the club to be advertised around school.
- The ECANS Instagram page has successfully increased student attendance at meetings.

Summary

- ECANS innovated several recruitment strategies as an attempt to increase membership in the club post-COVID-19.
- These strategies positively assisted in increasing the number of students involved in ECANS and allowed more students to be involved around campus.
- Student nurse associations must create new strategies to foster engagement and membership.

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ECANS Serving Hope: A Home Away From Home

Rachel Northcutt, Lexi Anderson, Carly Hebert,
Thompson Forbes Ph.D., RN, Candice Jenkins MSN, RN

SCAN ME

ABOUT THE HOPE LODGE

- American Cancer Society McConnell-Raab Hope Lodge provides a home to patients and their families, free of charge, who receive chemotherapy and/or radiation treatments.
- Temporary residence is available to patients' receiving treatment in the Greenville area. These patients must also reside more than 40 miles from the facility.
- The East Carolina Association of Nursing Students (ECANS) members volunteer at the Hope Lodge twice a month, preparing and serving dinner while hosting Bingo.

Hope

WHAT WE DO

- Members of ECANS prepare a dinner for the residents of the Hope Lodge which consists of pasta, cookies, and drinks.
- Serving meals to the patients and families allows interaction and conversation about each patient's unique battle with cancer.
- After dinner is served, members of the Pre-Nursing branch of ECANS host bingo night for patients and their families.
- Food and bingo prizes are purchased with money raised through fundraisers we have at the College of Nursing.

HOW WE BENEFIT AS A CHAPTER

- Volunteering at the Hope Lodge allows nursing students to experience patient interaction outside of the hospital setting.
- Gain a better understanding of life with cancer and how it impacts patients.
- Allows chapter members to spend time building relationships with other nursing students.
- Pride that ECANS is giving back to the community and representing our school in a positive manner.

Home

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RESEARCH

With the aging of the population and shorter lengths of hospital stays, practices that foster students' learning from and with patients enhance relationships with patients and strengthen patient autonomy in person-centered health care. (Suikkala et. al., 2020)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A Mission of Service: The Core of ECANS

Anna Beavans, Rob Dawson, Katie Harris, Thompson Forbes Ph.D., RN, Candice Jenkins MSN, RN

OUR MISSION OF SERVICE

- Service is a foundational mission of the East Carolina Association of Nursing Students (ECANS).
- Service Activities Include:
  - Organizing Student Engagement Events
  - Setting up Fundraisers
  - Facilitating Student Support Systems
- ECANS and its members strive to find exciting and meaningful ways to be active community stewards.

PROUD SERVICE MOMENTS

- Valentine's Day card decorating event for ECU Health's Behavioral Health Unit patients.
- Food Drive to raise awareness of food insecurity and support the Nash County, NC population.
- ECANS members shared a food drive flyer created for the event via social media to raise awareness and gain attraction.

FUTURE PLANS

- Expanding card decorating events across the academic year to more clinical sites.
- Increase food drives and incorporate coat drives during Winter months.
- Organize a blood drive to encourage ECANS members and all ECU students to participate in service.
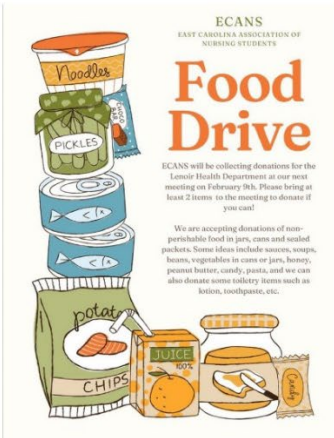
RESULTS

- Increased membership and association interest among nursing students.
- Collaboration with senior nursing students to help facilitate their community health service-learning project by promoting the food drive to a larger population and involving all students in the college of nursing.
- Member exploration of using social media and external resources for marketing to promote community service.
- Donation of 95 cans from the food drive for the A Touch of the Father's Love Food Pantry.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Dr. Thompson Forbes and Mrs. Candice Jenkins. We appreciate their guidance and support.
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ECANS
EAST CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF
NURSING STUDENTS

Food Drive

ECANS will be collecting donations for the Lenoir Health Department at our next meeting on February 9th. Please bring at least 2 items to the meeting to donate if you can!

We are accepting donations of non-perishable food in jars, cans and sealed packets. Some ideas include sauces, soups, beans, vegetables in cans or jars, honey, peanut butter, candy, pasta, and we can also donate some toiletry items such as lotion, toothpaste, etc.

<u>Institutional Impacts</u>

As a result of the collaborative effort of the Truist Center for Leadership Development, the College of Nursing has had the opportunity to partner with other health sciences divisions. Through this partnership, a revitalization of interprofessional activities is emerging on campus. The College of Nursing continues to be a large contributor to programming and student participation. The Truist Leadership Center Collaborative is currently working on strategies to track student participants and tell their story of the impacts of the program. The College of Nursing has a student highlighted in one of the initial leadership success stories. (See Appendix A)

VII.   Lessons Learned

While we are proud of our leadership strategies' impact, we recognize opportunities for further improvements to our program. The impact of COVID-19 on our ability to provide leadership development experiences highlighted the need for more structure and predictability in the activities we offer our students. We also recognize that most of our impacts are on undergraduate nursing students. The foundation of our proposal for leadership development funding was based on leadership development in undergraduate nurses. Considering this, we recognize the immense opportunity to offer more leadership development to our graduate students. While continuing to offer leadership development activities for a broad population of undergraduate and graduate students, we also plan to implement a structured program specifically for baccalaureate nursing students interested in leadership growth and development. Selection for participation in the program will focus on, and recruit, students with a high probability of substantial leadership impacts in health care. We anticipate this program to have no more than ten students from each incoming nursing class. This program will allow undergraduate students to participate in activities throughout their two years in the nursing program with more depth and rigor than our current broad-based options. This will enhance their opportunity for networking, collaboration, and leadership experiences to foster their high potential for impact post-graduation.

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Appendix A

TRUIST leadership success story

Kimberly Delgado

A long-term care nurse seeks to make a difference in her field by pursuing her PhD and becoming a confident leader

College of Nursing Leadership Academy Participant

beginning the journey

Kimberly found it frustrating how little change she could make at the local facilities she worked at as a nurse. She realized that, despite her fears, pursuing her PhD at ECU was how she could make a difference on a larger scale.

new avenues to leadership

Partway into her PhD program, Kimberly felt as if she was missing out on networking and involvement in the ECU nursing community. When she attended the Association for Leadership Science in Nursing's 2021 conference, she recognized the impact she could make as a nurse researcher. She then applied to the North Carolina Nurses Association (NCNA) Leadership Academy.

a broadened perspective

The NCNA Leadership Academy brought Kimberly together with like-minded individuals that also wanted to transform their field. *Individuals "who want to enhance nursing, improve nursing, know the challenges that come with being a part of nursing leadership and still keep encouraging each other."* She was inspired by her fellow nurses and encouraged to face the challenges that come with her profession. Other nurses in the program inspired her to pursue research despite her worries and she has now completed her dissertation on nursing staff identification of urinary tract infections in nursing homes.

understanding the change process

Through the program and networking, she was able to surround herself with women who helped her see her own value and then participate in Nurse's Night at the Legislature to discuss topics relevant to their field with local and state representatives. **She is now the NCNA's Regional Engagement Coordinator for the Northeast region.** Kimberly pursued these opportunities because of the confidence and relationships she gained from the Academy.

Kimberly joined the **Carolina GWEP** team to provide community education on changes associated with aging. **She is also the Nursing Assistant Program Coordinator at Pitt Community. College.**

the lasting impacts

Reflecting back, Kimberly indicated that if it weren't for the Leadership Academy, she would not be as persistent and motivated to create lasting change and pursue challenging opportunities. **She would not have started her business or considered politics/impacting legislative change if it weren't for the program.**

continuing the journey

Kimberly has completed her PhD at ECU and has just opened her own business, Ali's Angels Long-Term Care Continuing Ed, where she provides education for long-term care facilities. She attributes her confidence in her ability to make a difference to the NCNA program and the opportunities it provided for her to connect with individuals who encourage and challenge her.

her testimonial

"Participation in the NCNA Leadership Academy, ALSN, and Nurse's Night at the Legislature have ignited a flame in me that I didn't know existed! As a bedside nurse, I never imagined that I would desire a seat at a table involving research or policymaking. I just knew change was necessary. Now, thanks to Dr. Thompson Forbes, Dr. Donna Roberson, Dr. Donna Lake, Gale Adcock and many others, I think I'm ready to make 'Good Trouble,' advocating for nurses, nurse educators, and long-term care. The time for change is NOW!"