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President's Pen: Going to the SNRS Conference is like sharpening the saw!



A young faculty member questioned me the other day as to why they should consider going to the SNRS annual conference as it is so easy to collaborate, learn, and meet using technology that we now have readily at hand. It made me pause to think for a moment. As a graduate student I remember getting a lot of advice on making the most of conferences and how to prepare a presentation for a conference. I don't recall faculty ever broaching the topic of why we go to conferences in the first place. It is true that nowadays we have easy and fast access to all sorts of information through the Internet. We can have online meetings, conduct training sessions and attend webinars without leaving the comfort of our office and computer screen. But despite all the virtues of the virtual world, there is no substitute for live, in-person conferences. ¹ Stephen Convey listed "sharpen the saw" as his seventh habit of highly effective people. The idea is that sometimes you need to take a break from the "work" of your research to sharpen your skills. A dull ax won't cut a tree nearly as effectively as a sharp one. So as I pondered the response for the young faculty member, I reflected that I always return from a conference with new ideas and approaches for my research that make me more effective and efficient in the work that I do. I thought I would share with you reasons I think attending the SNRS annual conference is important for each of us as scholars and researchers. This list is not exhaustive nor in any particular order.

1. Enhance Your Knowledge. Learning is a lifelong process. No matter how seasoned we are in our profession we learn from others. For our students and early

investigators, it is an opportunity to learn and engage with senior researchers on a variety of levels. And as seasoned researchers, we learn from young emerging investigators who can provide us with fresh perspectives. Robin Williams in "Dead Poets Society" had his students stand on a desk to get a fresh perspective. It is easy to find ourselves in a rut with our work. Sitting in the same chair, in the same office, working with the same research team can sometimes keep us from fresh thinking and new ideas. Attending the annual conference can spark us to new approaches that will help move our research forward or in a new direction.

2. Present Your Work to Others. This is one of the more obvious reasons for attending conferences. Presenting your work makes you more confident about that work you are doing and gives you a new perspective about your work as colleagues ask questions and make you think about your project differently. You have the opportunity to get feedback on your research from senior scientists who have never seen it before and may provide you with new insight as well as other scientists that are experts in your field.

3. Break Out of Your Comfort Zone and Network. Besides acquiring new knowledge, making professional connections and sharing information is worth the trip to the meeting in and of itself. There is tremendous value in seeing other researchers face-to-face where you can share a handshake, a smile, and valuable information. Having access to the many well-known researchers within the Southern region who are willing to talk and share their expertise and experiences with emerging researchers is gratifying. There is an incredible amount of sharing and learning that happens through networking at the SNRS annual conference. Repeat attendees will tell you that they enjoy meeting colleagues from other institutions within the Southern region and love to catch up with them on a yearly basis. I see a colleague of mine with whom I went through my doctoral program each year at the SNRS meeting, and I love to catch up on her research as well as her family. I look forward to seeing colleagues that have become close friends over the years at the annual conference.

4. Have fun. There is always a social element at the annual meeting where participants can mingle in a relaxing environment such as receptions, breaks, between sessions, and the evening. Although this is not the main reason that you might convince your Dean to send you to the conference, mixing socially at the various events and reaching out to meet people can help to reignite your enthusiasm in your career. When I return back home following the annual meeting, I am fully recharged and ready to dive into my work again.

5. Take the Pulse of the Southern Region. The SNRS annual meeting draws top speakers and features the most up-to-date research findings and information on methodological issues that will enhance your current knowledge base and keep you up to speed on what's new and relevant. The funding panels and meeting with journal editors help clarify and improve chances of your work being funded and published.

6. Invest in Yourself. Going off to a conference and "sharpening the saw" is an investment in yourself. It is admitting that you work at it! It is admitting you still have things to learn no matter how long we have been scientists! It is an investment in yourself, your career, and even your institution. I return back to my institution excited with new ideas to bounce off my colleagues that will strengthen my abilities as a researcher.

So I get it. Conferences can be expensive. Not only the costs financially but also the time away from your office where you could be doing "work." However, I believe that the SNRS annual conference provides a unique convergence of networking, learning, and fun into a single package that can rejuvenate you and allow you to grow personally and professionally. Don't be a woodcutter hacking away at the tree with a dull axe. Come to the SNRS annual meeting and return with new ideas and approaches that make you more effective in your work! Sharpen that saw!

¹ Covey, S. R. (2013). *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. Rosetta Books LLC.

Serving SNRS,
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**SNRS 31st Annual Conference
February 22-25, 2016
Grounded in Research: Academic and Clinical
Partnerships Transforming
Health**

The theme for the 31st Annual SNRS Conference on February 22-25 in Dallas, Texas, is "Grounded in Research: Academic and Clinical Partnerships Transforming Health."

We chose this theme to foster and emphasize the importance of the relationship between clinical nurses doing research in hospital settings and nurse scientists in academic settings - it's a win-win relationship.

For the first time, we have a health care system, Baylor Scott and White Health, serving as our sponsor - thank you!

Highlights of the conference include:

- Keynote speaker, Marilyn Hockenberry, RN, PhD, PNP-BC, FAAN
- Eight pre-conference sessions with broad appeal, including one for doctoral students
- Opening reception sponsored by Baylor Scott and White Health
- Awards Luncheon
- SNRS Funding Panel session
- Meet the Editor session
- Special Saturday poster session highlighting the research of SNRS members who work in hospitals
- Exhibit Hall

For the first time, we'll also have a panel of eight deans of research intensive schools, private and public, who will present their views of the various dimensions of the academic role in their schools, as well as strategies and tips for individual faculty to consider.

Outside of the conference, a special SNRS community event will be occurring sponsored by the Minority Health and Community Health RIGS -- a Town Hall meeting with a panel of health experts at Dallas Health and Wellness Institute's community center, 4-6 pm on Wednesday, February 22. See the RIG Corner for more information!

We look forward to seeing you at the conference in February!

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SNRS RIG Community Event

Event Announcement and Purpose Statement

The Minority Health and Community Health Research Interest Groups (RIGS) of the Southern Nurses Research Society will host a pre-conference Community Town Hall on Wednesday, February 22, 2017 4-6 pm at the Diabetes Health and Wellness Institute at Juanita J. Craft Recreation Center, 4500 Spring Avenue, Dallas, TX 75210.

Community Town Hall: A Bridge to Engage Community Members and Researchers

Community engagement is a core approach to improving population health. This Town Hall meeting has been planned by researchers, clinicians and community members to understand the concepts around engagement *with* and *for* promoting health and well-being in the community.

The purpose of this Community Town Hall is two-fold: 1) It will provide information about promoting health and mitigating health disparities, particularly related to major chronic health issues affecting residents of the South Dallas area. Cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and stroke are among the top chronic conditions. 2) The Community Town Hall will provide an opportunity for researchers and others stakeholders to hear concerns and learn from local community members.

Organizers have planned panel presentations by researchers, faith-based organizations and citizen members. A community-based approach will be used to engage all participants in the process of bi-directional learning for problem identification, decision-making and strategies for problem solving empower community for active participation in their own well-being.

The Community Town Hall will conclude with a reception and networking event for attendees. The final results of the Town Hall will be disseminated to attendees, SNRS membership, local community members/groups and schools of nursing in the Dallas, Texas area.

**Update on the \$30 for 30 years
Philanthropy Campaign**

We have a new leader! West Virginia has overtaken Arkansas as the leader in the \$30 for 30 years Development Campaign!

Currently, West Virginia has 32% of its SNRS members participating; next is Arkansas with 27%, then Alabama with 22%. It is a close race! The purpose of this campaign is to endow research funds for SNRS grant awards

in perpetuity. We plan to continue to offer research funding for our full and student members as well as hope to increase the number of grants and funding levels we offer. Your state can win the prize by competing for the highest percentage of \$30 for 30 participants from your state membership. The winners will be announced during the opening session at the SNRS conference in Dallas. We hope to be able to seat your state at the *Table of Honor* during next year's annual conference in Dallas! Please consider if you can donate at least \$30 to this campaign and put your state in first place.

I hope everyone is looking forward to the conference in Dallas, where we will feature more ways for everyone to support this important cause.

Leanne L. Lefler, PhD, APRN, ACNS-BC, FAHA, SNRS
Development Officer

Senior Researcher Spotlight Maura C. Schlairet, Ed.D, M.A., M.S.N., RN, CNL

Dr. Schlairet holds a Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.) in curriculum and instruction from

Valdosta State University; a Master of Arts (M.A.) in bioethics and health care policy from Loyola University in Chicago; a Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.) with an emphasis in adult health nursing and a major in nursing education and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.), both from Valdosta State University; and a diploma in nursing from Mount Carmel School of Nursing in Columbus, Ohio. Dr. Schlairet taught at Valdosta State University for 10 years prior to joining the nursing faculty at Mercer

University. Her clinical expertise is in adult health and she teaches across the graduate and undergraduate nursing programs. Dr. Schlairet is an AACN Leadership for Academic Nursing Program Fellow and member of Sigma Theta Tau International. She has received honors for both her community service, teaching, and research, including the Valdosta Area Excellence in Nursing Award, Valdosta State University Excellence Award for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), and the Georgia Educational Research Association award. Dr. Schlairet's pedagogic research line focuses on issues in nursing education, including high-fidelity simulation and the flipped classroom model. The emphasis of her disciplinary line is on issues affecting care of older adults, including cancer survivorship and ethics. She has a robust publication record, having published more than 40 articles in professional publications, and has presented her findings throughout the United States. She has presented regionally, nationally, and internationally, and has received over \$175,000 in grant funding.



1. What influenced you to become a nurse scientist?

How I view and understand the world around me -- this organic, questioning lens through which everything is filtered certainly influenced my professional role. From a young age, the sciences captured and held my interest. Those irksome "what," "how,"

and "why" questions are always at the forefront of my mind. I do know I process information in terms of thinking about what is known and unknown.

2. What advice would you give to aspiring nurse scientists?

First, mentors are essential to success: I would encourage aspiring nurse scientists to think broadly about potential mentors. Models to increase research at the bedside are being tested, and these models may allow aspiring nurse scientists to collaborate with those actively engaged in research. We must not allow lack of a "perfect mentor" to hinder our initial steps or to derail our evolving skill set! Whether in an academic or clinical setting, we might all wish for a senior nurse scientist as our mentor. I did not have this opportunity and in this regard my experience was certainly not unique. We know the training ground for nurse scientists has been shrinking. Nonetheless, as a junior faculty I found a wonderful peer who possessed unique skills (role modeling behaviors) and a few other colleagues with complimentary research skills (i.e., alternate research paradigm). The other advice, of course, is the necessity for nurse scientists to be continuously and significantly engaged within our lines of inquiry to authentically address the IOM's goal to bridge the research and evidence-based practice chasm by 2020.

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Note: If you would like to nominate a senior researcher/SNRS member for the Researcher Spotlight, please email your suggestion to rgreen8@ggc.edu

Student Network Update

Wow, It is hard to believe that we are in the final stretch of 2016! That means that the SNRS Annual Conference is just around the corner. As you know, the conference is in the "Big D," Dallas, this year. I guess it's true that they do things bigger in Texas as this conference is shaping up to be one for the record books.

The Student Network is very excited to have East Carolina State University and the University of Tennessee Health Science Center host the inaugural Student Lounge. Stay tuned for more information about the events that will be scheduled for student members in the Lounge during the session breaks on Thursday and Friday.



The Student Network is proud to work with Rasheeta Chandler and Maryellen Potts, and their fellow ubercreatives on the Communications Committee in planning the first Roving Reporter. Applications for the roving reporter are currently being reviewed. If you missed this time around, be sure to keep your eyes open for the next conference's opportunity to be a Roving Reporter and to be an important contributor to the conference and have auto- networking opportunities!

I would also like to use this opportunity to urge all students to make their plans to attend the Student Network Pre-conference on Wednesday. Mariya Kovaleva, your Student Network Chair Elect, has arranged for Dr. Carolyn Clevenger of Emory University and Dr. Brittany Butts, a former SNRS Student Network representative to speak with us about some of important PhD survival skills, some nuts and bolts for dissemination of your work, and in keeping with our conference theme integrating academic and clinical research, some "how to's" on managing both academic and clinical work. The Student Network Pre-conference provides fun, education, networking and a place to commiserate! I look forward to seeing you there!

Finally, I'd like to say that it has been my great pleasure to serve as your SNRS Student Network Chair for the past two years. I have especially enjoyed working with the tireless SNRS Board Members and the great support and management team of Kellen Company. I am most pleased to be handing off the Student Network Chair to MariyaKovaleva at the Dallas conference. Mariya will continue to work on making SNRS an important resource for all of our student members. Be sure to meet her in Texas!

Cathy Pantik
Student Network Chair

Student Spotlight Telisa Spikes, MSN, RN, NEA-BC

Telisa Spikes, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, is a third year, full-time PhD student at Emory University's Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing. She aspires to complete her program by 2018.



Ms. Spikes earned her BSN (2003) from Baptist College of Nursing at Mercer University, her MSN (2009) from Kennesaw State University where her focus was advanced care leadership and health policy, and she has been a Board Certified Advanced Nurse Executive since 2012.

She currently is working on a grant proposal to the NIH and American Heart Association. Her research is focused on factors that promote blood pressure medication adherence in young and early middle age Black women with hypertension.

In addition, Ms. Spikes presented a poster in 2016 at the SNRS conference, entitled "The Effect of a Lifestyle Intervention on Psychosocial Factors and Medication Adherence in African Americans with Metabolic Syndrome."

Editor's Note

The NINR (National Institute of Nursing Research) published a new strategic plan in September. The NINR, as part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), has been at the forefront of establishing priorities for nursing research for 30 years. The strategic plan focuses on prioritizing the areas of greatest need in which nursing science can have the greatest impact. The four current themes are symptom science, wellness, self-management of chronic conditions, and the science of end-of-life and palliative care. In addition, the new plan acknowledges the important place of technology and innovation across these areas and reaffirms a commitment to promoting nursing science and research as a career path.



The underlying mission of the NINR is to promote and improve the health and quality of life of individuals, families, and communities. This continued focus on health promotion and quality of life is one of the unique hallmarks of nursing's contribution to practice and research.

As I write this, I am preparing to participate in a state-level workshop to strategize development of better public health and academic partnerships in Georgia. Reading the newest NINR strategic plan has energized me to do all I can as a researcher, educator, and nurse to work toward more robust partnerships that can promote the priorities of the NINR. I invite each of you to read the new NINR Strategic Plan if you have not already done so, and become inspired to use some new ideas to invigorate your own current program of research. Click [here](#) to view the NINR Strategic Plan.

In addition, with political change ahead in Washington, I urge you to contact your elected officials to urge them to support ongoing and increased funding for the NIH: www.usa.gov/elected-officials

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