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For Immediate Release

AACN Launches the First National Centralized Application Service for Students Seeking Entry into Schools of Nursing

NursingCAS Provides a Mechanism to Fill Available Seats in Undergraduate and Graduate Nursing Programs

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 31, 2010 – Today, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) announced the launch of NursingCAS, the first national centralized application service for students applying to all types of registered nursing (RN) programs. Similar to services already in place for medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and other health professions, NursingCAS (<http://www.nursingcas.org>) provides individuals with a convenient way to apply to nursing programs nationwide while serving as an important mechanism to fill vacant seats in schools of nursing.

“Facilitating entry in nursing programs is critical to attracting the best and brightest applicants into the profession and sustaining strong interest in nursing careers,” said AACN President Kathleen Potempa. “NursingCAS streamlines the application process and provides prospective applicants with an online portal designed to maximize customer service while minimizing redundancy and applicant burden.”

Through NursingCAS, prospective nursing students only need to complete one electronic application and prepare one set of corresponding materials, which then will be disseminated online to designated schools of nursing for consideration. NursingCAS verifies the application components for accuracy, calculates the applicant’s grade point averages, and sends the materials to the nursing programs selected by the applicant. Applicants pay a small fee for this service (\$45), which become lower per application (\$30) for all additional schools selected. Those applying through NursingCAS will have access to dedicated customer service staff throughout the application process as well as real-time information about their application status.

During Phase I of NursingCAS, students may use this service to apply to any type of undergraduate RN program, including diploma, associate degree, baccalaureate, and entry-level master’s programs. Students may begin using NursingCAS to apply to master’s and doctoral nursing program in Fall 2010 when Phase II commences. AACN is working with the firm Liaison International, the nation’s leading provider of application services to health professions associations, to administer NursingCAS.

Meeting Nursing Workforce Needs

NursingCAS was developed to maximize capacity in schools of nursing and fill all available seats. Even though enrollment and applications to schools of nursing have increased significantly for the past 9 years, a large number of schools report having available seats each year. In 2009, almost 55,000 qualified applications were turned away for baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs, even though more than 14,000 available seats went unfilled. NursingCAS provides a much-needed mechanism to match students looking to gain entry into nursing school with open seats at participating institutions.

“With the government projecting the need for more than 580,000 new RN positions in the workforce by the year 2018, the mandate to maximize capacity in our nation’s nursing education programs is more important than ever,” said Dr. Potempa. “NursingCAS addresses this critical need by streamlining entry into nursing programs and ensuring that all available seats in nursing schools are filled with well-qualified applicants.”

NursingCAS also will be instrumental in providing accurate data needed to identify workforce trends and inform public policy decisions. The comprehensive data set that results from having a central entry point into nursing will assist with developing workforce projections, identifying employment patterns, and tailoring recruitment strategies to reach under-represented populations in nursing. This service also will provide health profession advisors with feedback on admissions trends and standards for the profession, which will help them steer qualified students into nursing programs.

Rolling Out NursingCAS

More than 300 schools of nursing representing all types of RN programs have taken their first steps toward participating in NursingCAS by attending an overview Webinar, completing a technical assistance call, and initiating the process of submitting an intent-to-participate agreement. Currently, 39 schools of nursing that draw more than 22,000 applications each year have registered with NursingCAS, including top-ranked academic health centers, liberal-arts-focused schools, public and private institutions, religiously-affiliated schools, and a hospital-based diploma program. Participating schools include:

Bellarmino University
Christ Hospital (NJ diploma program)
Creighton University
George Washington University
Georgetown University
Johns Hopkins University
Kentucky Christian University
Lewis-Clark State College
MacMurray College
MidAmerica Nazarene University
Missouri Western State University

Mount Aloysius College
Northern Michigan University
Patty Hanks Shelton School of Nursing
Regis University
Research College of Nursing
Rush University
Samford University
Samuel Merritt University
San Diego State University
Southern Vermont College
Southwestern College

St. Francis College
St. Luke's College
Texas A&M Health Science Center
Texas Tech University Health Science
Center
Thomas Edison State College
Touro University Nevada
Union University
University of Central Missouri
University of Cincinnati

University of Houston Victoria
University of Medicine and Dentistry of
New Jersey
University of Texas Health Science
Center at Houston
University of Texas Medical Branch
University of the Incarnate Word
University of Toledo
University of Vermont
William Jewell College

Participation in NursingCAS is free and voluntary to schools of nursing. New nursing schools will be added to NursingCAS every week as agreements are received. Institutions looking to join the service are encouraged to visit AACN's Web site for more information – www.aacnnursing.org/NursingCAS – and contact NursingCAS coordinator Caroline Allen to schedule a technical assistance call (callen@aacnnursing.org , 202-463-6930, ext. 258).

Participating schools will enjoy access to a larger, more diverse applicant pool while receiving the online tools and customer support services needed to alleviate the administrative burdens faced by admission offices. For schools already at maximum capacity in terms of applications, NursingCAS provides some much-needed relief by offering a convenient way to verify transcript information and sort applicant data at no charge to the institution. All participating schools will receive a free copy of the software (Web AdMIT) needed to collect and sort applicant information.

AACN and Liaison International have worked closely with an expert Advisory Group to establish NursingCAS. Led by Dr. Timothy Gaspar, dean of the University of Toledo College of Nursing and member of the AACN Board of Directors, the group includes nursing school deans and directors, enrollment personnel, and members of AACN's Graduate Nursing Admissions Professional Network and the Nursing Advancement Professionals Network. Also in the group were representatives from two regional collaboratives focused on nursing education capacity: the West Texas Nursing Education Consortium (<https://portal.wtnec.org>), an initiative of Texas Tech University Health Science Center Anita Thigpen Perry School of Nursing, and the New Jersey Nursing Initiative (<http://www.njni.org>) funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) is the national voice for university and four-year college education programs in nursing. Representing more than 640 member schools of nursing at public and private institutions nationwide, AACN's educational, research, governmental advocacy, data collection, publications, and other programs work to establish quality standards for bachelor's- and graduate-degree nursing education, assist deans and directors to implement those standards, influence the nursing profession to improve health care, and promote public support of baccalaureate and graduate nursing education, research, and practice. www.aacnnursing.org

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