



NELNE NEWS

New England League for Nurse Educators • Fall 2025 • Issue 2

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Members of the New England League for Nurse Educators (NELNE), As I

approach the halfway point of my term as President of NELNE, I am filled with gratitude and pride for all that we have accomplished together. This year has been one of tremendous progress thanks to the dedication and hard work of our members, board, and administrative director.

One of our most significant milestones was receiving our official IRS Letter of Determination in August, granting NELNE its own federal tax-exempt status! This achievement reflects months of collaboration, persistence, and teamwork from our board and administrative director, Sheila.

Another key goal for this year was to expand our reach across New England, and we are thrilled to see that vision

becoming reality. Our membership continues to grow beyond Massachusetts and Rhode Island, with new members joining us from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Connecticut.

We also held our first-ever conference outside Massachusetts this October, hosted by Rivier University. A heartfelt thank you to Judi O'Hara, EdD, MSN, RN, our newest board member, for her integral role in making this event possible, and to our Education Committee and co-chairs, Susan Lavalley, MS, RN, CNE and Mary Benn, DNP, MSN-Ed, RN, CDOE for their outstanding work in bringing the program to life.

I would like to close by sharing the word cloud, "What draws you to NELNE," created by our members at the recent conference. Words that stood out included networking, learning, support, collaboration, and connection. I am continually inspired by this community's energy,

innovation, and shared commitment to advancing nursing education.

Thank you for being part of NELNE's journey and for helping us grow, connect, and lead across New England.

Sincerely,

Rachael

Rachael Salguero

PhD, RN-BC, CNEcl

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Congratulations to Cheryl Williams PhD, RN, CNE!



We are delighted to share that Dr. Cheryl Williams, NELNE Past President and Professor Emerita at Salem State University, was inducted as a Fellow of the National League for Nursing's (NLN) Academy

of Nursing Education (ANEF) at the 2025 NLN Summit in Orlando, Florida. She was sponsored by Dr. Janet Monagle and Dr. Marilyn Oermann.

Dr. Williams is nationally recognized for her contributions to enhancing nursing student learning, and for her pioneering work in integrating the growth mindset into nursing education, a model that promotes academic success and lifelong learning.

She has presented her research at national, regional, and local conferences;

appeared on the Nurse Educator podcast; and led a webinar for Dr. Tim's series. Her 2018 article, "Mindsets Matter in Nursing Education," received the NLN Innovation in Nursing Education Award, and in 2021, she was honored with the NLN Chapter Excellence in Leadership Award for her collaborative work with nursing organizations across New England. Dr. Williams continues to mentor emerging nurse leaders and make meaningful contributions to the nursing profession.

From Screen to Shift: Using *The Pitt* to Connect Class to Practice

Rachel Salguero, PhD, RN-BC, CNEcl

Looking for a creative way to connect classroom concepts to real-world practice? *The Pitt* (Max, 2025) is one of the most popular and realistic medical dramas currently streaming. Unlike traditional dramatized shows, *The Pitt* authentically captures the teamwork, complexity, and emotional realities nurses face during real shifts. It serves as an ideal springboard to spark critical thinking about real-world clinical practice. Nurse educators can assign short clips or incorporate

student-led summaries from *The Pitt* to energize class discussions. Even if some students or educators do not have a Max subscription, those who have viewed episodes can retell key clinical moments, ethical dilemmas, or team interactions.

This peer-led strategy encourages active participation, encourages classroom discussion, and helps students connect clinical concepts to real-world practice. Following the discussion, educators can

help students unpack clinical priorities, teamwork strategies, advocacy challenges, and the emotional realities of patient care. Discussion questions might include: What would you do next? How would you advocate for your patient? How did communication impact the outcome?

Using *The Pitt* as a learning outlet demonstrates that powerful lessons happen beyond textbooks. Realistic and culturally relevant media bridges theory and practice, engages students into active learning, and supports the development of critical thinking and professional identity in a meaningful, creative way.

Reference: Gemmill, R. (2025). *The Pitt*. Max.

Catching Up With...

...Raeann LeBlanc PhD, DNP, AGPCNP-BC, CHPN



I had the pleasure of speaking with Raeann LeBlanc. Raeann is a clinical associate professor at University Massachusetts Amherst. I asked Raeann what brought them to nursing. Like many nurses, it was a calling after other experiences. During the 1990s, being exposed to the unique needs at end of life through a circle of friends affected by HIV

and AIDS led Raeann into community health nursing.

"Being in nursing...the opportunities came, and I took them." Raeann has a love for education, finding it to be an essential part of the process of being a nurse. This has led to a dual role of clinical faculty and practitioner.

As an adult gerontological NP, Raeann has been working on continuing to learn about the populations with serious illness and nurse led models of care. Raeann has found that there is a gap in palliative care, specifically with nurse comfort and confidence with the topic. The challenges with integrating

palliative care into the nursing curriculum exist due to palliative care not being obvious, "It is not visible" and yet it is integral in all aspects of nursing care. This can pose a challenge for nurse educators in understanding its importance in preparing students.

In addition to Raeann's passion and expertise in palliative care, Raeann is the regional support person for End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC), covering CT, MA, ME, NH and VT. <https://www.aacnnursing.org/elnece/elnece-faculty-corner/regional-support>

Thank you, Raeann, for all you do.

"Thank you NELNE for a great first in-person conference! The speakers were outstanding. I am always so happy to network with other educators especially the Framingham State University bunch. A fantastic day!"



Framingham State faculty, alumni, and current students at Rivier University

Collaborative Testing Activities in Nursing Education: One Program's Experience

By Amanda Cornine, PhD, RN, CNE, CNEcl and Mary Fischer, PhD, MSN, WHNP-BC;
UMass Chan Medical School, Tan Chingfen Graduate School of Nursing

Collaborative testing (CT) is an approach where students work together in groups to answer test questions (Billings, 2017). Students have expressed satisfaction with CT and faculty members have also reported benefits, including promoting critical thinking and learning (Green et al., 2018; Lycette, 2018; Riley et al., 2021). Since 2023, faculty in UMass Chan Medical School's Tan Chingfen Graduate School of Nursing's prelicensure pathway have implemented collaborative activities inspired by CT. We noticed that learners were struggling with NCLEX-style questions and clinical judgment and decided to implement collaborative activities to help learners overcome these struggles.

For each CT activity, learners are placed in semi-random groups of 3-5, based on including a mix of test grades and different peers for each activity. Learners must work together to answer NCLEX-style questions and provide a written rationale for each response. Test security proce-

dures are the same as those for individual tests. We count the CT activities as a small portion of the course grade. Based on our experience, we have several "lessons learned" to guide educators interested in using CT:

- Learners expressed the desire to consult their textbooks during collaborative testing activities. However, since most textbooks are electronic, we had concerns about the potential for academic dishonesty. Instead, we allow each individual to bring a one-page information sheet to consult during the activity. These sheets are collected by faculty at the end of the activity to avoid the possibility that test questions could be copied on them.
- Learners expressed a desire to choose their own groups. We believe that random assignment mimics the practice setting and exposes learners to a diversity of thought. We have found that addressing the rationale for assigning groups ahead of time is helpful for learners.
- We encourage learners to use CT as a growth experience; in line with this, we offer time for them to review their graded activities to further their learning.
- Learners found group work challenging, so we instituted a group work contract that every learner must abide by during the collaborative activities. We use anonymous polling to ask each cohort of students what they want to see in their group work contract and then combine the responses to create the final contract.
- Because the collaborative activities often include only ten questions, we found that grades quickly fell when there were incorrect answers; this was not our intention. We now give learners 50% credit for arriving on time and agreeing to the group work contract; the additional 50% is earned through providing correct answers and rationales.

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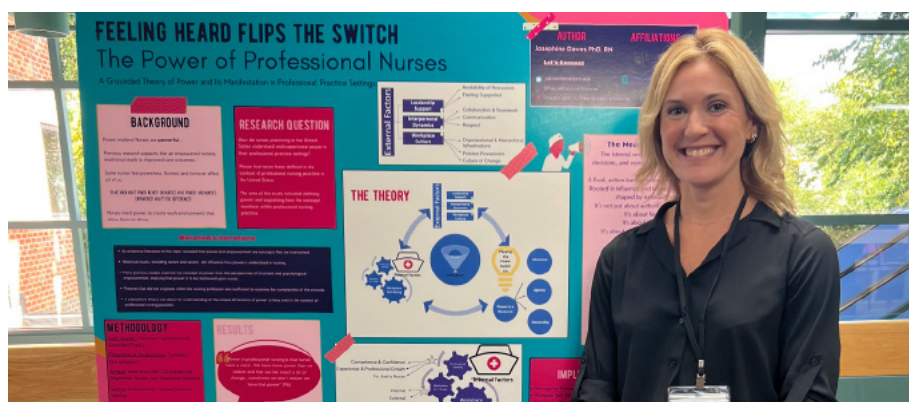
Colleagues' Success

Dr. Josephine Dawes Successfully Defends Dissertation on Nurse Power

Dr. Josephine Dawes recently defended her dissertation titled "Feeling Heard Flips the Switch: The Power of Professional Nurses." This grounded theory study explored how nurses understand and experience power in their professional practice, ultimately developing a theory of how power can be utilized to create and sustain work environments where nurses thrive. This research was presented at the New England Organization of Nurse Educators Symposium this past September and will also be featured at the upcoming AACN Transform Confer-

ence in December. The study was supported by scholarship funds generously provided by the New England League for Nursing Education (NELNE), and Dr. Dawes extends sincere appreciation for their support of nursing scholarship. To help

bring this important work to practicing nurses, the research is also being shared across social media—follow and share @theprettypowerfulnurse to join the conversation about empowerment and professional identity in nursing.



Collaborating Testing Activities in Nursing Education

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- We have found that allotting 5 minutes per question for traditional NCLEX-style multiple choice and multiple response questions is sufficient; alternate format questions may require additional time.
- Learners with extra time testing accommodations are invited to a separate room before the activity and given their additional time to start the activity

individually. Then, they hand in their materials, walk with faculty to the main room, and start the collaborative portion with their group.

We hope that NELNE members find these lessons learned helpful! We are always happy to talk about collaborative testing and to learn from others who use this teaching strategy.

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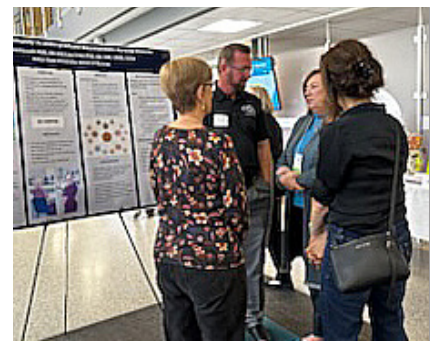
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Highlights from Our Fall Conference

Educator as Guide: Brain-Science Teaching Approaches to Help Learners Reach Summits of Practice Readiness

October 24, 2025 • Rivier University



Anna Maria Faculty Share Simulation Innovations at INACSL 2025

Dr. Melissa Duprey, along with colleagues, Dr. Kimberly Dunker and Dr. Tracy Parson spoke at the 2025 INACSL Conference this summer in Denver, Colorado. They presented a 90 minute interactive session, "Beyond the Bedside Using Simulation To Orient Novice Nurse Faculty."



Assumption University Celebrates First Graduating Cohort of Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) Students

Danielle E. Shaver, PhD, RN, CNE
ABSN Program Coordinator, Assumption University

Assumption University's Froelich School of Nursing proudly celebrated a historic milestone with the graduation of its first Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) cohort. Four pioneering students completed the 16-month hybrid online program, which begins each May and runs across four semesters.

The celebration featured a Graduation Ceremony with a Blessing of the Hands, a cherished nursing tradition symbolizing that a nurse's hands are instruments of healing and compassion. Graduates also received their nursing pins and recited the Nightingale Pledge, affirming their dedication to provide safe, ethical, and compassionate care.

Adding a personal touch, elected student speaker Keri Lowe reflected on the journey, saying:

"To the faculty, staff, school nurses, and preceptors: thank you for believing in us, even when we weren't sure we

believed in ourselves. You have shown us that nursing is more than a profession—it is a way of showing up in the world with resilience, heart, and, hopefully, a really comfortable pair of shoes."

What began with just four students has already grown: this year's ABSN class includes 23 students and continues to expand. The ABSN program joins an already robust traditional four-year BSN nursing track, which is set to graduate its 4th cohort this upcoming May. Together, these programs reflect Assumption's commitment to preparing practice-ready nurses who

integrate the principles of Catholic healthcare ethics with a strong liberal arts and sciences foundation.

We are so incredibly proud of our inaugural ABSN cohort, they took a chance on a new program and, through resilience and hard work, are now ready to enter the workforce as four strong nurses prepared to deliver safe, competent care.

This graduating class has paved the way for future cohorts and embodies Assumption University's mission to prepare nurses who will make a lasting impact in hospitals, communities, and beyond.



Building the Future of Nursing Faculty in Massachusetts

Jay Prosser DNP, RN, CCRN-K, NE-BC

Executive Director • Massachusetts Nursing Council on Workforce Sustainability

Across Massachusetts, multiple strategies are underway to strengthen the nursing career pathway—ensuring we have enough nurses at the bedside, in clinics, and in the homes of every resident. While solutions to the nursing workforce crisis are complex and multifaceted, one truth is universal: new nurses must be educated, and that requires nurse faculty.

Without nursing faculty, there can be no pipeline of future nurses. Yet today, many schools are being forced to limit student enrollment because of faculty shortages. A shrinking faculty workforce, looming retirements, more lucrative opportunities in clinical practice, and limited educational capacity to prepare new faculty are converging to create a crisis.

The challenge has only intensified with the elimination of the Nurse Faculty Loan Program (NFLP)—a federal initiative launched in 2008

to support aspiring nurse educators through low-interest loans and loan forgiveness. This program was funded through the Health Resources and Services Administration to the tune of \$29 million per year. With recent budget cuts, this critical pathway has vanished.

A shrinking faculty workforce, looming retirements, more lucrative opportunities in clinical practice, and limited educational capacity to prepare new faculty are converging to create a crisis.

Despite these barriers, students are still seeking ways to enter academia. The Nursing Council on Workforce Sustainability (NCWS) believes the path to becoming nurse faculty should be more accessible and better supported. That is why the NCWS Faculty and Education Committee is developing the Massachusetts Nurse Educator Scholar (MANES) Program—a state-level replacement for the NFLP. MANES will offer scalable solutions to support Massachusetts residents pursuing careers as

nurse educators. The committee is finalizing a financial framework and will soon seek funding partners, aiming to build sustainability without relying solely on the state budget.

Another major barrier lies in accessibility. Just like their nursing student counterparts,

future nurse educators must complete clinical teaching hours. These hours are unpaid, often forcing students to choose between earning income or advancing toward faculty roles. To address this, NCWS is exploring a nurse educator apprenticeship model. This approach would compensate students for their teaching hours, ease financial burdens, and provide valuable instructional capacity to nursing programs—all while

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2025 NLN Education Summit Recap: Unraveling the Mysteries of Artificial Intelligence

Rachael Salguero, PhD, RN-BC, CNEcl and Jean DeCoffe, MSN, MS, CNS, RN

The 2025 National League for Nursing (NLN) Education Summit brought together nurse educators, scholars, and leaders from across the nation to explore the theme, “The Challenge: Unraveling the Mysteries of Artificial Intelligence.” Held in Orlando, FL, this year’s summit highlighted how artificial intelligence is shaping the future of nursing education, from competency-based learning and simulation to curriculum innovation and faculty development.

Participants engaged in keynote sessions, poster and podium presentations, and networking events designed to

advance teaching excellence and foster collaboration across academic and clinical settings. Attendees also earned continuing education credits while connecting with colleagues committed to transforming the landscape of nursing education.

A special highlight of the event was the induction of Dr. Cheryl Williams, MARILN Past President and Professor Emerita at Salem State University, as a Fellow of the NLN Academy of Nursing Education (ANEF). Dr. Williams is nationally recognized for her contributions to improving nursing student learning and for her innovative integration of the growth

mindset framework into nursing education, a model that inspires resilience, curiosity, and lifelong learning among students and faculty alike.

Building the Future of Nursing Faculty in Massachusetts

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expanding the pipeline of faculty.

Looking ahead, the committee plans to present Phase I of this work to NCWS this fall, with more program details expected in early 2026. Alongside this initiative, NCWS continues to advocate for competitive faculty salaries—an essential step to ensure educators remain in academic roles.

The nursing faculty crisis is daunting, but solutions are within reach. By reimagining pathways, addressing barriers, and investing in innovative programs like MANES and faculty apprenticeships, Massachusetts can secure the future of nursing education.

If you would like to be part of the solution, we invite you to join us. Send us an email at NursingCouncil@umassmed.edu. Jay.prosser@umassmed.edu



NELNE members at the 2025 NLN Education Summit, Orlando, FL. Pictured from left to right: Carol Femia, Karen Hunt, Cassandra Mombrun, Rachael Salguero, Lisa Thomas, Eileen Costello, Elaine Tagliareni, Cheryl Williams, Diane Shea, Susan Maciewicz, Jean DeCoffe, Margie Sipe

Anna Maria College Unveils State-of-the-Art Miriam Hall Simulation Center



Anna Maria College proudly hosted an Open House on Thursday, September 18, to showcase the newly renovated nursing, EMT, and paramedic simulation spaces within Miriam Hall. The college recently completed nearly \$2 million in upgrades, transforming the building into a cutting-edge, interdisciplinary

Simulation Center designed to elevate clinical education and workforce readiness.

More than 100 guests attended the event throughout the afternoon, including representatives from regional healthcare systems, local high schools, first responder agencies, and community partners. Visitors had the opportunity to tour the immersive learning environments, observe high-fidelity equipment in action, and learn about the college's expanded simulation capabilities.

A highlight of the renovation is the purchase of a fully equipped ambulance, allowing for realistic pre-hospital care simulations. This innovative

addition enhances interprofessional education by enabling EMT and paramedic students to provide on-scene and transport care, followed by smooth transition of the simulated patient into the Trauma Room for continued treatment by nursing students. This "door-to-trauma bay" experience mirrors real-world care coordination and strengthens collaboration, communication, and clinical decision-making skills across disciplines.

The launch of Miriam Hall's enhanced Simulation Center marks an exciting step forward in preparing practice-ready graduates and fostering strong partnerships with the health-care community.



NELNE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER CHAIR

Lisa Cross
lcross@salemstate.edu

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Melissa Duprey
mduprey1@umassd.edu

Lori Kasher
lkasher@ccri.edu

Sarah O'Brien
Obriensar@Merrimack.edu

Elizabeth Raposa
eraposa@neit.edu

LAYOUT/DESIGN

Tom Gunning
thomas.gunning@regiscollege.edu

Thank you to all who have contributed to this newsletter! Please let us know if you have editorial ideas for future editions or would like to join our committee.

NELNE BOARD MEMBERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Rachel Salguero
rhylersalguero@mghihp.edu

President-Elect

Lisa Cross
lcross@salemstate.edu

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amacdonald@massbay.edu

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Christine Devine
cdevine@fitchburgstate.edu

MEMBER DIRECTORS

Mary Benn
mbenn@neit.edu

Amanda Cornine
amanda.cornine@umassmed.edu

Jean DeCoffe
jmdecoffe@ccri.edu

Susan Lavallee
lavalles@middlesex.mass.edu

Joann Monks
jmonks@valleytech.k12.ma.us

Judi O'Hara
johara@rivier.edu

Judie Pelletier
jpelletier@uppercapetech.org

Christine Salvucci
christine.salvucci@umb.edu

Caitlin Stover
cms00687@vermontstate.edu

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

Sheila Blomquist
nelne.nursing@gmail.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Associate Degree

Lisa Fugiel, Co-Chair
lfugiel@stcc.edu

Angela MacDonald, Co-Chair
amacdonald@massbay.edu

Continuing Education

Terri Legare
terri.legare@salve.edu

Education

Mary Benn Co-Chair
mbenn@neit.edu

Susan Lavallee Co-Chair
lavalles@middlesex.mass.edu

Executive

Rachel Salguero
rhylersalguero@mghihp.edu

Faculty Award

Amanda Cornine
amanda.cornine@umassmed.edu

Finance

Angela MacDonald
amacdonald@massbay.edu

Membership

Open Position

Mentoring

Amy Wachsmuth
awachsmuth@salemstate.edu

Newsletter

Lisa Cross
lcross@salemstate.edu

Nominating

Lisa Cross
lcross@salemstate.edu

Practical Nursing

Joann Monks
jmonks@valleytech.k12.ma.us

Poster

Clarisse Fairbanks
clarisse.fairbanks@salve.edu

Scholarship

Christine Salvucci
christine.salvucci@umb.edu

Strategic Planning

Lisa Cross
lcross@salemstate.edu



New Mini-Series On Zoom!

***Gaps from Practice
to Higher Ed/Bedside
to Blackboard***

November 12-19 • 2-3:30pm

Nelne.nursingnetwork.com/nursing-events