Executive Master of Science in Nursing Program

Incorporating the 14 Forces of Magnetism

Joan Thomas, PhD, APRN, CS
Donna Herrin, MSN, RN, CNAA, FACHE

This is the second in a 3-part series describing an executive master of science in nursing program. Part 1 described program development built on the American Organization of Nurse Executive's competencies and distinctive features of the students' online and on-site learning experiences. This article presents how the 14 Forces of Magnetism are integrated across the curriculum and the unique criteria for program admission. Finally, part 3 will describe use of the Robert Wood Johnson Executive Nurse Fellows Program as the model for scholarly activity and the use of Benner's Novice to Expert theory for program evaluation.

When U.S. News & World Report publishes its showcase of America’s best hospitals, designation as an American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Magnet organization contributes to ratings of excellence. The America’s Best Hospitals list has an elite division known as the honor roll, and in 2006, 8 of the top 10 hospitals listed on the honor roll were ANCC Magnet designated.1,2

There is increasing evidence that Magnet-designated organizations have improved outcomes in a number of indicators, including nurse recruitment and retention, patient satisfaction, and patient clinical conditions.3 Furthermore, Magnet-designated facilities demonstrate marketplace advantages such as increasing the public confidence in the overall quality of the healthcare organization, attracting the highest-quality nurses and physicians, and increasing market share because of increased use by patients and insurance plans. Other noted benefits of Magnet status include an enhanced culture of empowerment, respect, and integrity for all employees; expanding collaborative relationships among staff; and increased employee morale by recognizing the excellence of the nursing program and the individual nurses.4

Because Magnet-designated organizations base practices on the 14 Forces of Magnetism (the Forces), it can be assumed that senior nurse leaders who fully understand the Forces, incorporate the use of the Forces into personal leadership practices, and lead others to use them will create improved practice settings and programs for patient care delivery. However, use of the Forces as curricular building blocks for graduate nurse executive education has not been reported. The Loewenberg School of Nursing, University of Memphis, was granted specific opportunity to redesign the former nursing administration program through funding and partnership with the Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare system. The collaborative efforts of both nurse executives in practice and nurses in academe resulted in the new executive master of science in nursing (MSN) program, with a key foundational component being the integration of the
Forces across the curriculum. Figure 1 outlines an abbreviated version of the Forces as described by McClure and Hinshaw in 2002.\textsuperscript{3,5}

**Integration of the Forces of Magnetism Into the Executive MSN Curriculum**

Students are immersed into the significance of the Forces in the initial opening of the executive MSN program. The first course content is a synopsis of the Magnet Recognition Program, including the American Nurses Association’s *Scope and Standards for Nurse Administrators* (2nd ed),\textsuperscript{6} a general overview of the 14 Forces, the 8 Essentials of Magnetism, and the evidence base for superior outcomes associated with Magnet organizations.

Each course in the curriculum provides an in-depth examination of each of the Forces. However, Force 1, the Quality of Nursing Leadership, serves as the major curricular domain thread driving the executive MSN program. Table 1 illustrates how each of the Forces is integrated into the executive MSN curriculum along with the American Organization of Nurse Executives’ (AONE) competencies. The exception to this structure is the accounting and finance courses taught by nonnursing University of Memphis accountancy and health administration faculty. For further information about the AONE Nurse Executive Competencies, see the previous article and the resource center section of the AONE Web site.\textsuperscript{7}

The curriculum was developed collaboratively with nurse leaders possessing expert knowledge of the Magnet Recognition Program. Several employees of both the practice partner and the school of nursing serve as ANCC Magnet Program appraisers. In addition to the Magnet appraisers’...
curricular contributions, during the on-site executive development experiences, students are provided opportunities for dialogue exchange and learning experiences with Magnet appraisers and a Magnet commissioner who resides locally.

It is anticipated that, currently, Magnet-designated healthcare organizations or those that are Magnet-aspiring will find such a graduate program advantageous because of the strong curriculum focus on the Forces. Given the strong focus on the major curricular domain thread, Quality of Nursing Leadership, healthcare organizations that are not Magnet-aspiring will find that students still benefit from the defined structure and focus on excellence in nursing leadership.

**Unique Admission Criteria**

Nursing leaders and aspiring leaders will find the approach to admission criteria for the described executive MSN program unique and innovative. Healthcare organizations select or sponsor registered nurse (RN) leaders who demonstrate high potential/high performer capability with probable career tracks in senior leadership. The RNs must have a minimum of 2 years of middle-management experience and a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or institution. Those holding a baccalaureate in nursing are admitted directly, whereas RNs with a baccalaureate in another field complete a bridge program before entering the executive MSN program. Transcripts, resumes, and applicant-written letters of interest are considered and hold significant weight. Employer-sponsors of the RN leaders also submit a letter describing the reasons why the organizations view the applicants as possessing high potential/high performer attributes.

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**Table 1. Integration of Nurse Executive Competencies and 14 Forces of Magnetism Into Curriculum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>AONE Nurse Executive Competencies and 14 Forces of Magnetism</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Developing Organizational Leadership (3 h)</td>
<td>AONE Competency: Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication and Relationship Building (3 h)</td>
<td>AONE Competency: Communication and Relationship Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accountability, Advocacy and Ethics (3 h)</td>
<td>AONE Competency: Professionalism</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health Policy (3 h)</td>
<td>Force 9: Autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Accounting (3 h)</td>
<td>AONE Competency: Knowledge of the Healthcare Environment I</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial and Human Resources for Patient Care (3 h)</td>
<td>Force 4: Personnel Policies and Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improving Patient Care Delivery (3 h)</td>
<td>AONE Competency: Knowledge of the Healthcare Environment I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marketing, Strategic, and Information Management (3 h)</td>
<td>Force 5: Professional Models of Care</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence-Based Management Practices (3 h)</td>
<td>AONE Competency: Business Skills II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Nurse Executive Practicum (4 h)</td>
<td>AONE Competency: Knowledge of the Healthcare Environment II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scholarly Synthesis (3 h)</td>
<td>Force 7: Quality Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total hours 37</td>
<td>The application of the 14 Forces of Magnetism and the AONE Nurse Executive Competencies are demonstrated during the Nurse Executive Practicum and the Scholarly Synthesis course.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abbreviation: AONE, American Organization of Nurse Executives.
Registered nurses not sponsored by a healthcare organization submit a dossier and resume that validate possession of high potential/high performer ability. These RN applicants also provide 3 professional letters of reference from former employers outlining support for the applicant as holding high potential/high performer characteristics with strong potential for executive leadership.

Summary
In 2002, Margretta Styles wrote that “it is my personal conviction and testimony that the ‘Magnet Movement’ in all of its manifestations and nuances offers the greatest hope for the future of nursing and healthcare organizations.”

The executive MSN program embraces the Forces as a cornerstone of the “Magnet Movement.” The complexities of today’s healthcare environment require nurse executives with multifaceted skills in human relations, strategic management, business, technology, finance, marketing, and improving patient outcomes. Such programs that integrate both ANCC Forces of Magnetism and AONE Nurse Executive Competencies into executive leadership curriculum hold great promise for the development of future nurse executive leaders with needed multiple skill capacity.

REFERENCES

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