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# News



**National League  
for Nursing**

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## **THE NLN NAMES 2005-2008 CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE IN NURSING EDUCATION™ Four Nursing Programs Cited for Extraordinary Accomplishments**

October 1, 2005 — New York, NY— Schools of nursing whose faculty members are doing outstanding work that sets them apart from others have received the prestigious Centers of Excellence designation, it was announced today at the NLN's 2005 Education Summit. The **NLN Centers of Excellence in Nursing Education™** program (COE) calls for schools to apply for a three-year designation based on their sustained demonstration of excellence in faculty development, nursing education research, or student learning and professional development.

"The COE program was initiated in 2004 to publicly acknowledge nursing schools that distinguish themselves by outstanding achievement in the promotion of excellence in nursing education" said **Dr. Ruth Corcoran**, CEO of the National League for Nursing.

Four outstanding nursing schools met the COE program's rigorous criteria attained COE status for 2005 through 2008: **Excelsior College** in Albany, NY and **Samford University** in Birmingham, AL for *Creating Environments that Promote Student Learning and Professional Development*; and the **University of Louisiana at Lafayette** and the **University of North Carolina at Greensboro** for *Creating Environments that Promote Ongoing Faculty Development*.

Known for its innovative programs, Excelsior College was America's first "virtual university," providing educational opportunities for adult learners and groups historically underrepresented in higher education. Since its inception in 1970, the School of Nursing has been a pioneer in non-traditional higher education, providing a competency-based outcomes assessment program through a distance education format that draws on the expertise of faculty from across the nation. Dr. Bridget Nettleton, dean of the School of Nursing, notes, "This is an incredible affirmation of the outstanding quality of every aspect of Excelsior College and the School of Nursing. It acknowledges our premier external degree nursing programs and our extraordinary students, alumni, faculty, staff, advisers and administrators. We are extremely pleased to have received this honor of distinction."

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At Samford University, the Ida Moffett School of Nursing's inventive program is distinguished by a stellar level of student-faculty collaboration, a faculty that encourages and guides students to deliver professional presentations at national and regional forums; deliberate efforts to promote the health of the poor in surrounding communities; and interactive teaching/learning activities in both nursing and non-nursing courses. Explained dean of the nursing school Dr. Nena Sanders, "The dynamic learning environment at Samford University is complemented by a mission-focused, nurturing community. Faculty feel valued and supported to create many opportunities whereby both they and students, often working together, continue to grow professionally."

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette has designed and implemented a holistic approach to faculty development and documented the impact such a focus has had on faculty, students, and program. Pedagogical research, co-authored publications, peer review, attendance at education-focused workshops and conferences, and extensive collaboration and support among faculty and between the faculty and administration have been sustained over time, resulting in positive outcomes for faculty, students, and the school itself. There is a strong collaborative and unified effort to continually improve as a faculty through formal and informal mechanisms, and systematic peer evaluation and deliberate mentoring are in evidence. The school boasts a dedicated faculty working together to facilitate student learning and faculty professional development.

A deliberate program of professional development, sustained over several years, helps faculty balance scholarship, teaching, and service responsibilities at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro School of Nursing. "We place a high priority on faculty development and understand its importance in shaping the educational program for students, explained dean and professor Dr. Lynne Pearcey. "There is a sense of connectedness among faculty, leavened by support from students, alumni, benefactors, and administration." The school encourages creative approaches to teaching and learning, the utilization of evidence-based teaching practices, purposeful mentoring and use of a master teacher model, and implementation of a well-developed peer review system. Student and peer evaluations indicate a sustained level of outstanding performance, and the school boasts an excellent faculty retention rate.

In keeping with the NLN mission to continually advance quality nursing education, throughout the three years that schools carry the COE designation, they are expected to be available to other schools seeking to move their own programs toward distinction. Summed up NLN chief program officer Dr. Terry Valiga, "Through the Centers of Excellence designation, nursing's most exciting programs are made known to the entire academic community and thus able to inspire other schools to strive for excellence."

COE awardees will be announced at the NLN's annual business meeting to be held at the NLN's 2005 Education Summit on Saturday, October 1 in Baltimore, Maryland.

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*The NLN advances quality nursing education that prepares the nursing workforce to meet the needs of diverse populations in an ever-changing health care environment.*