

## **Nursing CAS**

### ***The National Centralized Application Service for Nursing Schools***

#### **Talking Points**

- The Nursing Centralized Application Service – NursingCAS - provides prospective nursing students with a convenient way to apply to multiple programs and serves as a mechanism to fill vacant seats in schools of nursing.
- NursingCAS simplifies the enrollment process for prospective nursing students and gives applicants a unique online portal in which to apply to schools nationwide.
- Applicants to nursing programs offered at the diploma, associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degree levels pay a small fee for this service (\$45). Fees become progressively lower per application (\$30) for all subsequent school designations.
- Students only need to prepare one application, including one set of transcripts and letters of reference, and this information is then distributed to all designated schools of nursing participating in NursingCAS either locally or nationally.
- Maximizing capacity in schools of nursing is essential to meeting the nation’s current and future demand for registered nurses. NursingCAS will enable U.S. nursing schools to fill all available seats in entry-level (and eventually graduate) nursing programs.
- The need for NursingCAS emerged from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing’s (AACN) desire to ensure that more students seeking a nursing education are accommodated in existing programs. AACN has documented that thousands of qualified applicants are turned away from nursing programs each year, even though many schools have vacant seats to fill.
- According to AACN’s 2008 annual survey, more than 12,000 vacant seats were reported in nursing schools, including 6,000 in undergraduate programs and 6,000 in graduate programs. This number is startling considering the fact that 49,948 qualified applications were turned away from nursing schools during this same time period. AACN’s goal with NursingCAS is to guide students toward these vacancies and fill every available seat.
- Creating a national centralized application service will benefit nursing schools and the profession as a whole. Nursing schools, many of which are currently inundated with applications, will benefit from the efficiencies gained by standardizing the nursing entry process and having real-time access to pre-screened and verified applicant data. Schools also will be able to select from a wider, more diverse pool of students, which will be helpful in meeting recruitment goals. Participation in the centralized application service will be free and voluntary to schools of nursing.

- In terms of benefits to the profession, NursingCAS 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 registered nursing programs will assist with developing workforce projections, identifying employment patterns, and tailoring recruitment strategies to reach under-represented populations in nursing.
- NursingCAS will provide health profession advisors with feedback on admissions trends and standards for the profession, which will help advisors steer bright, qualified students into nursing programs.
- AACN has formed an advisory group to complete the work necessary to establishing the centralized application service. Led by Dr. Timothy Gaspar, dean of the University of Toledo College of Nursing, the group includes representatives from both the West Texas Nursing Education Consortium (WTNEC) and the New Jersey Nursing Initiative as well as nursing deans and members of AACN's Graduate Nursing Admissions Professional Network and the Nursing Advancement Professionals Network.
- AACN is working with Liaison International to launch NursingCAS by March 2010 for Fall 2010 admissions. Liaison is the global leader in providing centralized application services to health professions associations. The firm currently works with many other disciplines, including dentistry, pharmacy, physician assistants, and public health.
- More than 300 nursing programs are located in academic institutions where other health professions participate in a centralized application service. Consequently, many schools of nursing are already well-positioned to readily adopt this service.

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