

NALA Report for the Nursing Organizations Alliance
Mary Jo Satusky, BSN, RN, ONC, CCRC
Scholarship Recipient, NALA 2010

There was something for everyone at the Nursing Alliance Leadership Academy in Louisville, KY on August 14-15, 2010.

The chief elected officers and the chief staff officer need to form a strong leadership partnership. I learned this partnership really sets the tone for the culture of the executive committee, and it can determine the success of the organization. Qualities of this partnership include communication, commitment, transparency, mutual respect, and trust. While the volunteer leaders and the chief staff officer work together with a shared vision of common goals for the association, these team members bring different skills to the partnership and fulfill different roles at the leadership table. The most important part of this presentation was the role delineation between the chief staff officer and the executive committee. The Executive Board determines where the organization is going, while the Executive Director and the staff implements the plans to get the organization there. Having this understanding during my year as President-Elect will help me to build my partnership with our association's Executive Director and facilitate a smooth transition as I take over the role of President. The "prep work" we did by reading the Board Source materials prior to attending the conference was very helpful, especially with this session.

Another presentation was given on Leadership Succession. It was gratifying to hear suggestions of using a leadership competency model, as that is what we currently use in our association. Part of our Board orientation includes pairing new board members with seasoned board members. Since attending NALA, my plan is to examine how these assignments are made and to start the course of action as soon as the election results are announced. I would like to formalize the process by providing appropriate material to the seasoned board members to get them started in mentoring the new board members. Likewise, incoming board members will be given leadership education with the expectation that eventually they, too, will be mentors to newly elected leaders. I also plan to implement the concept of a "mid-year pause," a conversation with each board member and the President and President-Elect to see how the mission and vision are being fulfilled.

The session on "Magnifying your Voice" was great. I plan to look for partnerships my association can form, keeping in mind that good partners may be outside the nursing arena. I like the idea of collecting stories from our members and want to see if we can post those stories on our website. I would also like to implement some media training for Executive Board members. The idea I really found exciting is to have an "elevator speech" for our members. Since attending NALA, my goal is to encourage every association member to develop an elevator speech to communicate our mission and vision.

The presentations on personal strategic planning and personal presentation were good for "me." Most everyone has heard about setting a personal strategic plan, but not everyone

has taken paused to invest the time and energy to do one. This presentation included some good references I can use to continue my personal growth as I navigate my path in life, professionally and personally. Secondly, people judge us by our appearance, whether we like to admit that or not. The session on personal appearance was helpful to me as the presenter clarified what constitutes “business” and “business casual” dress. It would have been great to have an even longer session on personal appearance.

Finally, the networking opportunities at the Academy were incredible! It was great to have time to talk one-on-one with leaders of other organizations and to hear stories of their trials and tribulations. I look forward to connecting with some of these same leaders at the Fall Summit. I had heard good things about NALA, and my experience validated those comments.

Thank you to the Alliance for providing the Leadership Academy and for granting me the financial support to attend.