

# Nurse Leadership Reimagined: Moving Beyond Diversity to Fostering Inclusion, Equity, and Belonging in Academic and Professional Organizations

Emerging Diversity Leaders (EDL) Program | AcademyHealth

## Background and Problem Statement:

Systemic racism is a public health crisis. Over the past three years, the horrendous consequences of racial inequality and injustice have been exposed in real time on television and social media feeds. Despite the dangers posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, people globally have gathered to protest police brutality following the deaths of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and many others from racial violence. These events should serve as an inflection point for challenging the status quo and enabling the formation of initiatives with meaningful outcomes at the organizational and individual level.

Nurses play key roles in the health and wellness of all human beings. If health disparities are to be eliminated and health equity achieved, the nursing profession must accelerate initiatives to recruit and retain faculty and students from underrepresented groups (NIH defined racial and ethnic minority groups, males, LGBTQ+, and immigrants).

The current RN population is primarily non-Hispanic White (80.8%) in addition to other racial/ethnic minority groups (Black and African American [6.2%], Hispanic [5%], Asian [7.5%], and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander [0.5%], American Indian/Alaska Native [0.4%], and multiracial [1.7%]) (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2019). The low percentages of nurses from racial/ethnic minority groups in the nursing workforce reflect the suboptimal number of individuals from racial/ethnic minority groups enrolled in nursing schools.

Some progress has been made toward meeting the goals of the Future of Nursing report – among nursing students from racial and ethnic minority groups, 34% were enrolled in entry-level BSN programs, 35% in MSN programs, and 33% in research-focused doctoral nursing programs; however, only 16% of full-time nursing faculty belong to racial and ethnic minority groups (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2017).

This lack of representation in clinical and academic settings by nurses who self-identify with racial and ethnic minority backgrounds as well as other individuals from underrepresented and disadvantaged groups reinforce systemic barriers to equity because students may infer the nursing profession does not value all forms of diversity or offer equitable career ladder opportunities for professional advancement.

Furthermore, nursing health services research must expand its focus to address health disparity issues within the health system. Although nursing health services research has historically focused on issues regarding the nursing workforce or nurse practitioner scope of practice, examining inequalities created and sustained by systemic and institutional racism and discriminatory practices should become a more central direction of research efforts.



## What Action has IRGNI Taken?

In 2020, the Interdisciplinary Research Group on Nursing Issues (IRGNI) created the Emerging Diversity Leaders (EDL) program to reinforce its commitment to dismantling systemic racism and cultivating greater diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice.

**PURPOSE:** The overall purpose of the EDL program is to provide culturally sensitive mentorship, support strong bonds, and create a sense of belonging and community for a cadre of equity-centered health services researchers from underrepresented backgrounds and groups who will 1) be part of a pipeline of diverse leaders and board members who are contributing to the mission and operational needs of IRGNI, and 2) establish careers that contribute to reducing health disparities to achieve equity.

**VISION:** As a nationally recognized coaching and mentoring program, we transform health services research, education, and practice to advance health for all people.

**MISSION IN ACTION:** By creating safe and inclusive spaces, providing opportunities for self-reflection, and teaching practical leadership skills, EDL mentors empower undergraduate and graduate nursing and midwifery students, who reflect the full diversity of the professions and the communities we serve, to assume leadership roles and realize their full potential within IRGNI, their home institutions, and the broader community and society. EDL mentees' lived experiences and research interests can facilitate upward mentoring and knowledge sharing to mentors as well as the IRGNI board to expand conceptualizations of nursing health services research.

## What Additional Action Will IRGNI Take?

Nurse leaders are currently working to identify culturally sensitive recruitment strategies, encourage leadership development, and advocate for programs that eliminate systemic barriers to successful careers for diverse faculty. As a critical next step, IRGNI has outlined the creation of a robust, three-branched (undergraduate, graduate, and alumni) coaching and culturally sensitive mentoring program designed to support future health researchers from racial/ethnic minority groups and other culturally diverse backgrounds.

## EDL Coaching and Mentoring Program

*(for undergraduate, graduate and alumni)*

### BRANCH 1: BEDL Program – Undergraduate Nursing and Midwifery Students *(including entry-level APRNs)*

Leader/mentor: TBD

Purpose: Develop the research and professional engagement skills of undergraduate nursing and midwifery students interested in HSR.

Meeting frequency: Monthly

Members: Undergraduate EDL mentees selected through holistic application. Must be undergraduate or entry-level APRN students with no prior nursing degree.

### BRANCH 2: GEDL Program – Graduate Nursing and Midwifery Students

Leader/mentor: TBD

Purpose: Provide a safe mentoring space for emerging leaders in nursing and midwifery HSR, expose emerging leaders to IRGNI board processes, and help the IRGNI board advance health equity HSR work.

Meeting frequency: Monthly

Members: EDL mentees selected through holistic application. Must be graduate-level students.

### BRANCH 3: EDL Alumni Program

Leader/mentor: TBD

Purpose: Provide ongoing mentoring support as EDL alumni transition into different careers; facilitate academic leadership and grow network of EDL alumni in HSR, nursing, and midwifery; support professional growth & networking.

Meeting frequency: Monthly

Members: EDL alumni who have completed one year of the program.

## EDL Mentee and Mentor Roles and Responsibilities:

Mentee	Mentor
<p>Mentees' roles can and will change depending on their unique needs, academic experience, and the nature of the mentoring relationship. Mentees in the EDL program are required to</p>	<p>Mentors can assume various roles during the mentoring relationship depending on the nature of each mentee's needs and experiences. Mentors are required to</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Invest time to the mentoring relationship, interact often with other mentees, and complete end-of-program evaluation survey</li> <li>· Keep their mentor(s) informed of their academic progress, successes, challenges, and other concerns</li> <li>· Learn about IRGNI board processes by 1) attending at least two board meetings per year, and 2) supporting annual conference planning and abstract review process</li> <li>· Attend annual IRGNI event during AcademyHealth annual research meeting (providing funding is available)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Participate in the evaluation of the EDL program by completing the end-of-program evaluation survey</li> <li>· Invest in the relationship and be available for standing meetings (during second Fridays, between 10am and 11am)</li> <li>· Share their knowledge and experience to benefit EDL personal and professional development with mentees</li> <li>· Attend annual EDL networking event during AcademyHealth annual research meeting (providing funding is available)</li> </ul>

## Benefits of EDL Program to Mentees, Mentors, IRGNI and the Nursing Profession:

Mentee	Mentor	IRGNI and the Nursing Profession
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Accelerate professional development</li> <li>· Expand personal and professional network</li> <li>· Create and strengthen a sense of belonging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Provide a sense of satisfaction from helping EDL mentees to launch and build their careers</li> <li>· Indicate commitment to developing EDL mentorship, supporting IRGNI's mission, and improving the nursing profession</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Preserve organizational knowledge</li> <li>· Attract and retain diverse talent</li> <li>· Facilitates upward mentoring and knowledge sharing to mentors and the IRGNI board</li> <li>· Support the inclusion of equity work within nursing HSR</li> </ul>

Mentees and mentors alike are responsible for gaining one another's trust and confidence by interacting ethically and collegially as well as valuing each other's time and professional/personal commitments while engaging in activities that support IRGNI's mission and the nursing profession.

## Acknowledgements

**Author:**

Michael Cary

**Graphic Designer:**

Parker Ress

**Current EDL mentors:**

Michael Cary, PhD, RN, FAAN

Associate Professor

Duke University School of Nursing

J. Margo Brooks Carthon, PhD, RN, FAAN

Associate Professor

University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

Robert Lucero, PhD, RN, FAAN

Professor

UCLA School of Nursing

Ellen Kurtzman, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN

Professor

Rutgers University School of Planning and Public Policy

**Past EDL mentors:**

Deonni Stollendorf, PhD, RN

Assistant Professor

Vanderbilt University School of Nursing

Allison Squires, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN

Associate Professor

NYU School of Nursing

Hayley Germack, PhD, MHS, RN

Associate Director, Real World Value & Evidence, Pulmonary Hypertension

Janssen Scientific Affairs, LLC