

ACNM Annual Student Report 2017

Introduction

The 2017 Students and New Midwives Section (SANMS) would like to thank the ACNM Board of Directors and members for giving consideration to ideas, opinions and concerns raised by students of programs across the United States. Liaisons from each of the 39 midwifery programs collaborated to compile survey responses from which the following primary themes have emerged: student involvement, diversity and inclusion, growing the field of midwifery, and local and national policy efforts. While this list is not comprehensive, we have reviewed all responses and pulled the most common themes out upon which to elucidate concerns raised, opportunities identified and suggestions to put forth. We respectfully ask for your consideration on any suggestions identified.

Student Involvement

As students, we possess optimism, energy, and tenacity. We bring a wide breadth of experience within our student role and have great interest in sharing these skills with our professional organization. We are grateful for the opportunities that ACNM already provides for student involvement and encourage the board to work creatively to enhance student participation.

Across the country, students unanimously named cost as the number one barrier to involvement and membership in ACNM. Tuition rates and subsequent debt are at an all-time high, causing students to forego membership or attendance at the Annual Meeting. We urge the board to acknowledge the cost for students and continue to seek creative solutions to help mitigate this burden. For example, we want to take a moment to recognize and thank the local Illinois Midwives who offered to house students for this year's conference. This effort was greatly appreciated, as evidenced by how quickly the spots were filled! We have developed specific suggestions for your review on how efforts like this can be sustained and expanded (Appendix A).

Students are eager to participate in ACNM governance structures in a more formal way. We acknowledge and celebrate the opportunities that already exist. However, we find that students may not be aware of these opportunities and the roles are insufficiently defined. We recommend that each Division and Committee communicate available openings within their structure to the SANMS co-chair who will disseminate information to student liaisons.

Communication is a priority. The ACNM website, social media platforms, and the liaisons of the Student and New Midwives Section all represent avenues to disseminate information. We encourage the College to make efforts to fully connect these resources, making them current and user-friendly. We believe this will encourage greater student involvement and membership. In addition, communication regarding the role and responsibilities of the SANMS student liaison position can be standardized to assist in the recruitment process (Appendix B),

foster a sense of community, as students transition into new midwives, voting members, and midwifery leaders.

Diversity and Inclusion

We believe that ACNM and midwives can and should be leaders on diversity, inclusion, and cultural humility. We support the College's efforts to improve its language, leadership, and work around this hallmark of midwifery practice. Ignoring these issues creates a fundamental barrier to serving women. We have identified three primary areas within this sub-topic that are of particular concern to student respondents as listed below:

- I. We believe that ACNM should seek opportunities to publicly assert itself as a leader in diversity and inclusion within health care. We encourage the membership to generate a healthy internal dialogue about what practices support cultural humility within midwifery. We commend the college on its appointment of a midwife of color to the Board of Directors. The leadership of ACNM must represent the women we serve, and reflect their many diverse and inclusive backgrounds. We call on the Board of Directors to include diverse leaders with full voting privileges. We applaud the creation of the ACNM Diversity and Inclusion Council. This council must lead on these issues and move the voices of people of color to the forefront. We request that the D&I council and all of ACNM leadership take an active role in breaking down stereotypes, and draw upon the ample evidence on health equity available to support this work. As an example, we believe that the ACNM should have responded after the mother of modern midwifery, Ina May Gaskin, recently suggested that poor people and African American woman specifically should pray, work hard, and grow their own crops as a means to reduce stress related to daily exposure to racism which in turn would decrease their risk of experiencing infant and/or maternal mortality.

- II. We support the effort to revise the core competencies document to keep pace with cultural and clinical evolution. As a part of this process, we request ACNM update the competencies to reflect more inclusive language and establish specifics to make these skills demonstrable. Further, we suggest the College replace the outdated concept of "Cultural Competency" with "Cultural Humility" in all ACNM documents, seminal works (i.e. Varney's Midwifery) and correspondence. Within the Hallmarks of Midwifery, the phrase "Integration of Cultural Humility" should be replaced with "Demonstrate Cultural Humility". The core competencies should specifically address the needs of the LGBTQI community so that our future midwives are well-prepared to provide healthcare to all. Upon revision, ACNM should then recommend these changes to MEAC, with the additional suggestion that curriculum built upon these competencies be driven by experts in the field, not by midwives who happen to work with diverse populations. Additionally, we request that ACNM lead a broader discussion about terms to be reconsidered, including the slogan of "one midwife for every

woman.” Finally, we recommend that a student position be included in committees that address the core competencies and education curricula.

- III. ACNM has long struggled to bring an intersectional and equitable framework to midwifery. As we move forward, we recommend eliminating “dog whistling” in our profession. Thus, we propose moving away from coded language and outdated terms such as “inner-city, vulnerable, and low-income.” Instead, ACNM should utilize specific language and recommend specific practices to address risk factors. We call on ACNM to recognize the intrinsic structures that shape our patients, and our interactions with them, and to provide continuing support and education to better understand these structures.

Growing the Field of Midwifery

We would like to reaffirm and reiterate the previous student report in regards to growing the field of midwifery. Public awareness of midwifery care continues to be an issue affecting our profession in the United States. We thank ACNM for responding to a past student report by making information about education programs for prospective students readily available on its website. This will in turn allow students to pick the school that meets their needs. We propose utilizing social media as a tool to disseminate and promote midwives as evidence based care providers for women throughout their lifespan.

The preceptor shortage continues to be a significant issue affecting the ability of midwifery students to graduate on time and join the workforce. This inhibits growth of the profession. Students are continuing to sit out semesters due to lack of available clinical sites. We urge ACNM members in all settings to precept students. We propose creating a database of ACNM members who are willing to precept, including their practice and location, which will facilitate placement for faculty and students.

We appreciate that ACNM offers workshops to expand our scope of practice. We propose increasing the variety and frequency of offering these services, such as expanding ultrasound training and adding reproductive choice counseling and services.

Local and National Policy Efforts

Midwifery care has consistently proven to lead to optimal health care outcomes, and provides a cost-effective solution to an increasingly complex healthcare system. As students and future midwives, we are eager to promote increased access to healthcare, and work towards reducing disparities in maternal and neonatal outcomes.

Two themes emerged from the survey of our classmates to include ACNM support for student involvement in policy, advocacy, and addressing limited scope of practice in certain states.

Many students have expressed enthusiasm regarding ACNM's policy efforts. We appreciate the speed with which ACNM addressed potential repeal and replacement of the ACA and the support for women's health care access and coverage. As student midwives, we are interested in becoming more involved in health policy. While we acknowledge that the Student Legislative Contacts (SLC) program allows students to become involved in GAC and PAC, we have observed that the program is not reaching all schools or students. We propose that ACNM considers directly inviting midwifery students members to become SLCs and promote new programs that would involve activism and advocacy in health policy.

Students in states with practice barriers, such as required supervision and collaborative agreements, would like to see even more focus on having these barriers removed. To facilitate student involvement in addressing limited scope of practice, we would like ACNM to create a research packet with the most current and/or pertinent research addressing the safety and efficacy of midwifery care. Included with this packet, a list of talking points to facilitate discussion with state representatives would be beneficial, both to students and practicing midwives who are interested in a more active role in advocacy. In addition, this packet could be used for negotiating privileges when accepting new job offers.

Conclusion

We thank the ACNM for the opportunity to represent the students and new midwives, we know that careful consideration will be given to our recommendations. We are students one day and midwives the next, so we appreciate the fact that our voice is heard and respected at this point in our career. As participants in the Students and New Midwives Section, we are motivated to share these priorities and engage our cohorts in the work of the College. Through this document and our combined efforts to advance the work contained within it, we will help ACNM meet its' mission of advancing the practice of midwifery in order to achieve optimal reproductive health for individuals and their families throughout the lifespan.

Respectfully submitted by,

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Appendix A: Housing for Students at Annual Meeting

Many students were able to attend this year's Annual Meeting due to free housing that was coordinated by dedicated volunteers in the Illinois Affiliate. This increased access to ACNM's premier professional event was achieved at no additional cost to the organization. We believe that this effort should be continued and made a standard component of Annual Meeting planning in future years. Although this effort necessarily depends on local volunteers, support from the national level would help institutionalize this critical offering. We believe that formal recognition of hosts at the annual meeting, either via an announcement by ACNM leadership or in the form of a SANMS-sponsored reception for hosts and students, would help recognize the magnitude of the contribution made by volunteer hosts. We also propose that the national office ensures that each Local Committee establish a subcommittee or point person to coordinate the housing placement process annually. A student liaison from a local program would be well-suited to fill this role.

The coordinator appointed by the Local Committee would be responsible for collecting information from both local hosts and visiting students and using this information to match students with hosts as appropriate. Below is an overview of the process that was used in Chicago. This information can be shared with, and expanded by, local affiliates each year to help streamline and enhance this offering.

House Matching Process:

1. Begin the housing match early (e.g. January or February) to ensure there is adequate time to advertise housing to students before they begin making their own arrangements. This also ensures that students who do not match will have adequate time to make alternative plans.
2. Recruit volunteer hosts via existing local affiliate listservs. It is recommended that the request comes from a local ACNM official to demonstrate ACNM's institutional support of this initiative. Information regarding number of days housing is available, housing location, number of available spots, presence of pets, need for transportation and nature of the sleeping accommodations should be collected from hosts via an online survey to help organize and facilitate the matching process.
3. Once hosts have been confirmed, an announcement regarding the housing process should be disseminated through multiple communications platforms, including the ACNM Student facebook page, an email to student liaisons, the ACNM student webpage and any relevant ACNM newsletters or email updates.
4. This announcement should contain a link to a survey that assesses the following information: commitment to attending the annual meeting, presence of any financial barriers, the impact that housing would have on ability to attend, receipt of any other form of ACNM-related aid, allergies, access to transportation, geographic location, anticipated dates of attendance for the meeting and willingness to room with other students. This survey should also include a question that asks for permission to share student email addresses

with other students who were not placed so they can independently make arrangements for shared housing in the host city.

5. The coordinator will then complete the process of matching available hosts with interested students and draft introductory emails with a basic description of the host location, accommodation, transportation situation and presence of pets or any other special circumstances. The coordinator will instruct the students to reach out to the host to confirm arrangements one week in advance or earlier if any questions are needed.

Additionally, the roles and responsibilities of hosts and students should be made very clear to all parties involved. The expectation of hosts is that they accurately present the details of the accommodation they are so generously providing. Students are expected to be respectful and courteous guests who communicate their needs in advance of their stay. Both parties have a responsibility to communicate any changes to the circumstances of the planned stay as soon as possible.

Appendix B: SANMS Student Liaison Description & Responsibilities

The SANMS Student Liaison serves as the point of connection between students in their academic programs and the governing structures of ACNM. As such, their main responsibilities include:

1. Disseminating information from ACNM to students at their institution
2. Answering or facilitating student inquiries related to ACNM resources and events
3. Regularly informing students in their program about local Affiliate opportunities and serving as a point of contact between students and their local Affiliate
4. Collecting information on student priorities and concerns and communicating these issues to ACNM in the form of the annual Student Report that is presented at each Annual Meeting.
5. Effectively onboarding the individual who will take over the liaison role to institution-specific processes and resources

Term of Service: The term for the Students and New Midwives Section (SANMS) student liaison is from annual meeting to annual meeting in a one year term (unless your program director decides that you will stay on for year two). Each educational program has a different way of choosing liaisons. The SANMS co-chairs should be notified of all new liaison names by July 1st to facilitate onboarding of the new cohort.

Time Commitment:

- Attend webinars and conference calls throughout the year (about 4-5)
- Attendance at the Annual Meeting strongly encouraged to assist with finalizing the Student Report

- Frequent email communications from SANMS to pass along information to all students at your institution (both ACNM members and non-members)

Additional Resources:

[SANMS liaison description](#)

[ACNM Student webpage](#)

Appendix C: Diversity and Inclusion Appendix

1. Equity in Midwifery Education <https://www.equitymidwifery.org>
2. Into the Light of Day: Reflections on the History of Midwives of Color Within the American College of Nurse-Midwives. -Linda Janet Holmes, M.P.A
3. American College of Nurse-Midwives. (2012). Core competencies for basic midwifery practice. Retrieved May 23, 2017, from <http://www.midwife.org/ACNM/files/ACNMLibraryData/UPLOADFILENAME/000000000050/Core%20Comptencies%20Dec%202012.pdf>
4. Crenshaw, Kimberle Williams. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *The Feminist Philosophy Reader*. Eds. Alison Bailey and Chris Cuomo. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008. 279-309.
5. Meadows-Fernandez, R. (n.d.). Motherhood and Marginalization: The Oppressive History of the Birth Industry. Retrieved May 23, 2017, from <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/40576-motherhood-and-marginalization-the-oppressive-history-of-the-birth-industry>
6. Tervalon, M., & Murray-Garcia, J. (1998). Cultural humility versus cultural competence: A critical distinction in defining physician training outcomes in multicultural education. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, 9, 117-125.