



Executive Committee Annual Business Meeting Minutes
Video Conference - on October 8, 2024

Agenda Topics

CALL TO ORDER	Babs McAlister called the meeting to order on at 10:00 AM Pacific.
ATTENDEES	<u>Present:</u> Alice Tse (UH), Babs McAlister (UTT), Becky Christian (KU), Darcy Copeland (UNC), Fonda Neal (VCU), Jan Nick (LLU), Jennifer Heck (OUHSC), Katherine Kenny (ASU), Kristin Cloyes (OHSU), Mary Koithan (WSU), Natalie Heywood (ASU), Sandra E. Daack-Hirsch (IOWA), and Sharon Ruyak (UNM). Staff: Bo Perry (WIN) and Anne Boerner.
ABSENT	Candace Burton (UNLV), Jackie Jones (CU), and Paula Meek (UTAH).
END TIME	12:00 PM Pacific
NEXT MEETING(S)	Presentation on October 10, 2024, by Cheryl Dowd, SARA/WICHE Next meeting March 2025, date TBD ACTION ► Anne Boerner to send doodle poll for March meeting.

Call to Order and Introductions/Updates – Babs McAlister

- UTT Reported half of a new building opened (half of it) providing new simulation lab and advising spaces. They recently received a large federal grant to work on first-time in college retention and are looking forward to strengthening their pipeline into graduate programs.
- UH Reported awaiting on final approval for revisions to the PhD program. It’s been proposed as more inter- professional and interdisciplinary and includes a blend of online and face to face. The program has been on pause, so they are looking forward to approval.
- OHSU Kristin Cloyes will be stepping down as PhD program director December 15th because OHSU is reconfiguring how the program is managed. PhD program revisions are underway, including a hybrid model for 2025 to increase accessibility, particularly in the Pacific Northwest and Oregon. The University is currently managing a 45-million-dollar 30-30-30 state legislature grant to increase the number of health professionals graduating. It includes the School of Nursing, targeted for an increase of 30 % by the year 2030. Faculty diversity will also increase by 30%. The university hopes to be more active in NEXus in the future.
- KU As of April there is a new Dean. Many changes are in process include revising the PhD and undergraduate curriculums. The PhD program is currently mostly online so lots of changes in the works.
- OUHSC has a new Dean as of May. Dr. Melissa Craft is serving as interim momentarily. There is also a new Dean of Academic Affairs as of January. Remodeling and new spaces are being developed for advising and classrooms. Curriculums are undergoing revisions. The undergraduate curriculum is still under review. Last year the SON started accepting all qualified applicants and increased undergraduate numbers by as much as 400%.

Subsequent growing pains include increasing faculty, mentoring, orientation, and onboarding support.

- LLU Reports its program is getting larger because of very strong international connections with other schools of nursing and supporting them in increasing their capacities. The SON has an international master's degree and has started a global (international) track for PhD with nine enrolled. The programs expect another nine to start in July. LLU will also increase its faculty.
- IOWA The SON has a new associate dean for graduate practice program and is in the process of hiring an associate dean for undergraduate and pre-licensure programs. Sandra has a new role as dean of faculty. The associate dean from the academic side will probably replacing Sandy to this group. Iowa has a new MSN entry to practice program that is gaining in popularity. It's an interesting group of students who will be able to sit for the licensure exam but graduate with an academic master's degree. As intended, it's pulling people from all kinds of disciplines. Students enrolled include a pharmacist, a chiropractor, and a teacher, along with people who had various baccalaureate degrees that were not nursing. Many of the students have finished their military duty and have come back to school. When it's fully populated, there would be 48 students in a cohort, right now it's about 40. Students have programming that bridges them to either a DNP or PhD program from this master's program.
- UNC The University just broke ground on a medical school with plans to begin enrollment in 2025. The new building, both for nursing and medical schools, will be done in 2026. The APRN master's program has been eliminated and the DNP program is booming. The DNP added an emergency nurse practitioner track, which is drawing people who want to work in urgent care and emergency rooms, particularly in rural settings.
- ASU Dr. Natalie Haywood, a former NEXus student, joins as the Executive Committee member for NEXus, replacing Pauline Komnenich who retired. ASU is starting a medical school in the state called ASU Health. The school of nursing will likely be pulled into it in some way. The medical school is unique in that its graduates will earn both medical and engineering degrees. The College of Nursing was told to expect some big changes.
- UNM Dr. Sharon Rudek is the new PhD program director and new to NEXus, replacing Stephen Hernandez. UNM has a new Dean who started in July.

Elective Survey – All Members

Active poll 7 8

What electives do your students need that are not offered at your institution?

Advanced Phenomenology

Mixed methods

Big data analysis

Big data Gerontology AI Team science

specific statistics or advanced research methods

We are developing Data Science courses to fill the need

Join at
slido.com
#1636 815

Members were asked to complete the online elective needs survey at <https://app.sli.do/event/sMhYLe23tiysZ7gephPCYg>

Verbal comments received already were around big data electives. UTT stated they offer big data and have plans to expand offerings. Three data science electives have recently been approved as a sequence for students. LLU is starting big data analytics. As of 10/17/24 seven responses had been recorded for the survey.

Approval of Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included Minutes from March 5, 2024, and June 6, 2024, the 2023-2024 Summary Student Survey Report, Report of the Sustainability Committee, and Results of Membership Annual Survey 2024.

► MOTION #1

Sandy Daack-Hirsch moved to accept the consent agenda materials as presented. The motion was seconded and passed.

Report of the Chair and Project Director – Babs and Anne Boerner

The written report is attached and emphasizes managing financial stability this past year and potentially declining enrollments for the current year. Members are reminded that the flat fee membership fee of \$6,000 goes into effect July 1, 2025. The investment fund is doing well.

Western Institute of Nursing (WIN) Report – Bo Perry, Executive Director

WIN has served as the lead organization since NEXus was established. Every five years the NEXus committee votes on the lead organization. The next vote is in 2026. WIN is grateful to the School of Nursing at OHSU for their support, particularly infrastructure.

Dr. Lauren Clark, Professor and the Shapiro Family Endowed Chair in Developmental Disabilities Studies at the UCLA School of Nursing, is serving as WIN president. Dr. Paula Meek, Professor and the Assistant Dean of the PhD program at the University of Utah College of Nursing, is WIN's Governor of Nursing Research. WIN is grateful to Paula for her contributions to WIN and NEXus over the years. WIN remains committed to supporting NEXus. The WIN board met in September and reviewed NEXus finances and discussed enrollments. Anne will update the board in January.

NEXus had a strong presence at 2024 WIN conference in Salt Lake City. WIN was back to pre-pandemic conference attendance at about 800. The 2025 conference will be at the Davenport Grand in Spokane, Idaho April 8-11. The abstract submission deadline is Tuesday, October 15th.

WIN finished the 2024 fiscal year in a relatively strong financial position after, several difficult years. Conference participation and a vacant staff contributed to the bottom line. Like NEXus, WIN had a strong year of returns in its investment account. As of this morning, the NEXus investment account is valued at \$249,000.

The pro bono financial advisor Charlie Dobson is retiring this fall. He has been with WIN and NEXus for over a decade and was instrumental in establishing the investment accounts. WIN is in the process of identifying a new advisor which we hope to report on at the NEXus March 2025 meeting.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report – Jennifer Heck

Jennifer reviewed last year's budget and actuals, this year's FY25 budget and actuals to date, the Balance Sheet and Profit/Loss comparison reports for July 1, 2024, through August 31, 2024. FY24 income was higher than budgeted, and expenses were about \$10,000 less than budget. This year income is down a little, but the investment fund is doing great. Our expenses are on track for the current year to date. Including the investment account, total bank accounts assets are \$325,000 combined as of August 31st.

Enrollment Report – Anne

Anne shared the historic enrollment report (all terms). The last academic year enrollment was 68, up from 60 in the prior year. Last year saw an increase in DNP enrollments. NEXus is closing in on 1,300 total course enrollments for all years combined. This year summer enrollment for 2024 was low at 9. Anne also shared the fall term report to date at 13 (one more confirmed) vs. 29 last year. Enrollment is small this term.

Jan Nick from LLU asked if international students could enroll. The answer is yes, if a student at a member institution. We have had students from different countries enroll in NEXus in the past.

Jan asked if membership was open to international universities, and it is. All member applications go up for vote. Jan suggested we present at places where we can gain international interest such as the Academy, the Canadian Nurses Association, for Canadian schools.

Financial Stability and Budget – Anne

Anne summarized that this past year was focused on financial stability. We reviewed membership dues, the tuition split, and today will look at tuition pricing. In addition, NEXus will research grants, a longer-term project.

Tuition - Anne

Anne shared a chart of current tuition charges and fees per credit of member institutions for both state resident students and non-residents (out of state). Transcript and application fees are not included but other mandatory fees are (excluding health insurance). This information came from university websites, often the cost estimator calculator. Anne recorded the source of data in case a university has questions about their rate. For resident tuition, members ranged from \$734 to close to \$4,000. The median member rate is \$1,079. The current NEXus rate is \$865, in the bottom quarter of pricing.

The historic NEXus tuition chart was shared. Tuition has not been raised/changed in six years. The recommendation was presented to raise tuition from \$865 to \$995 per credit. This represents a 15% increase overall, equivalent to a 2.5% increase in each of the past six years.

Discussion followed. Members found the rate to be competitive and very reasonable given the streamlining enrollment process that happens with NEXus (versus a student trying to take a course outside of NEXus). Anne clarified that students could use their institutional financial aid if their home institution allows it. This includes loans like NFLP. Some students are required to pay out of pocket. The suggestion was made that NEXus could provide an example about how financial aid could be used by universities.

Vote on Tuition Charge for Academic Year 2025-26 (begins fall 2025)

► MOTION #2

Alice Tse moved to accept the tuition recommendation as presented at \$995 per semester credit (\$663 per quarter credit) beginning fall 2026.

The motion was seconded and passed with 10 votes in agreement and no objections.

Marketing Update – Anne

AACN Doctoral Conference January 2025 San Diego

We will do another email outreach to all doctoral contacts prior to the AACN Doctoral Conference. NEXus will also have a poster presentation, thanks to Darcy Copeland from UNC for coauthoring and submission of the abstract.

Anne brought up the idea to pursue marketing campaigns with possible first year discounts to focused groups such as WIN members, religious private universities, members of MNRS, ENRS or SNRS. In the past when NEXus was expanding, they had a campaign with the Hartford Center for Gerontological Nursing Excellence’s universities. She asked for input about audiences, campaigns and discounts.

A suggestion for a timely discount, i.e. every summer or whatever applicable term is best, might appeal to bargain chasers. Look at programs who are not represented in NEXus who have had recent changes such as deans or PhD program directors. TWU and Baylor come to mind. Review systems, such as UT or UC where one member could impact another member to join or for discounts. Finder’s fee or discount for members was suggested for sister schools.

Streamlining the Member Application Members reviewed the current original membership MOU developed in 2007. It requires/ask for signatures from Dean/Director, College Administrator, Distance Education Officer, Graduate School Administrator and University Academic Officer (Provost). Consider making this an attachment, like the bylaws, without the signatory portion. Leave out the details (like background, purpose, etc.) that are nice to know but not necessary as part of a legal agreement. Have it simplified to state “I agree to pay you X and get XYZ in return”. Everyone agreed universities need to shop anything with payments through legal. Advise to keep Provost/Academic Officer signature and Dean/Director. Perhaps the Graduate Program Director. Get rid of Distance Education Officer. For Dean’s signature you could put statement that as the Dean/Director I am giving my approval and assurance that all university policies and processes have been followed. Can use phrase “if applicable” for Graduate Program Director. Consider a concierge application, depending on the school. If they have those roles or not, then the signatures are asked for. The PhD program chair, in this example was the contact, would tell us who needs to sign a contract. Anne will check what might need legal approval to change.

Nominations and Elections for Officers – Babs

Discussion: Mary Koithan was told yes, she could run even if unable to serve the full two years.

► Election Vote for Chair Elect

Babs McAlister accepted the nomination of Jennifer Heck as Chair Elect and called for a vote. It was unanimous to elect Jennifer.

► Election Vote for Secretary/Treasurer

Babs McAlister accepted the nomination of Mary Koithan as Secretary/Treasurer and called for a vote. It was unanimous to elect Mary.

Database – Anne

Anne reported that Regis University, who operates Taawun, let us know there is a possibility they would no longer offer the product after July 1, 2025. Their largest consortium is likely being sold/moving to a different system. NEXus has begun looking at low cost or free options as potential temporary replacements. If it happens, it could save NEXus some money in the short term. The call for summer classes in January will still go on as planned.

Other Business

Jan from LLU asked if NEXus course offerings can be graded/offered as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory instead of for a letter grade. LLU has learned that only courses for grade are acceptable for review at their institution. Anne clarified that 99% of courses are offered for grade. Her understanding is that Utah mistakenly did not assign letter grades for students, but it has since been corrected.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Announce 2025-2026 Tuition rate to all members (Executive, Financial and CSCs)	Anne Boerner	Before March 1, 2026
Review LLU students for letter grade assignments from Utah to confirm it's been resolved.	Anne Boerner and LLU staff	November 1, 2025
Research Canadian Universities for potential marketing for membership	Anne Boerner	June 30, 2025
Share prior financial aid report with Loma Linda University.	Anne Boerner	November 1, 2024
Work up sample financial aid applications for NEXus coursework	Anne Boerner with Members	March 31, 2025
Create Meeting Doodle Poll and Meeting Invite for March 2025 Meetings	Anne Boerner	November 30, 2024
Draft a timeline of database transition incase Taawun is no longer available	Anne Boerner	January 1, 2025

Recorded by
Anne Boerner

Attachment Chair and Director Report 2024 follows.



Chair and Project Director Report October 2024

Babs McAlister, PhD, RN, CNM, Graduate Program Director and Associate Professor
The University of Texas at Tyler and Chair of NEXus
Anne Boerner, NEXus Project Director

Financial

This past year the Executive Committee focused on continuing to secure the financial stability of the NEXus project. This has become important during this period of fewer course registrations.

The Committee **approved a streamed flat membership rate of \$6,000**, effective July 2026 for continuing members. This replaces the original base fee of \$5,000 with optional additional doctoral program fee of \$1,000. Membership fees have not changed since 2011.

In addition, the Committee **approved a change to the tuition share split from 15 to 20% for NEXus administration** and a decrease from 10 to 5% for Home/Sending institutions. The new share formula became effective summer 2025: Teaching 75% + NEXus 20% + Home 5%.

We saw **excellent returns in the investment fund** last year, with an increase of \$10,921, bringing our fund total to \$ 225,025 as of August 31, 2023.

This year, we will be looking at a proposal for a tuition increase effective fall 2026, the first increase in six years. A tuition pricing recommendation is being made of **\$995 per credit, an increase from the current rate of \$865**.

Looking towards the future, growing membership continues to be important. NEXus will also research grant support, although its anticipated this will be a long-term project, but worthwhile.

Enrollment

Enrollment continues to be unpredictable year to year. NEXus registrations in **2023-2024 totaled 68, a 13% increase** from the year before, due to the higher enrollment in the fall term. The summer term of 2024 had only 9 registrations, a historic low.

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
55	77	104	57	83	60	68

Fall 2024 shows a continued decrease in registrations at 13 (vs. 30 in 2023).

Marketing for New Members

Membership Drive Email

In January 2024 NEXus sent out an email to over 800 program heads at doctoral nursing program prospects, inviting them to join and to see our booth at the AACN Doctoral conference.

More than 200 were opened. This built upon the brochure we created and mailed in 2023 to CNOs at doctoral universities in the US.

Presentations and Posters

Thanks to the commitment of our members, NEXus abstracts were submitted at conferences (past and upcoming):

NEW for 2024-2025

Submission for Presentation at AACN 2025 Doctoral Education Conference

Stronger Together: Examining the Impact of Online Course Sharing between Doctoral Nursing Programs, By Darcy Copeland, PhD, RN, and Anne Boerner, Project Director

2024

1. Presentation at the **MNRS 2024 Conference**
The Nursing Education Xchange (NEXus): A Cost-Effective Way to Increase Graduate Nursing Enrollment, By Jennifer L. Heck, PhD, RNC-NIC, CNE, PMH-C and Anne Boerner, Project Director
2. Presentation at **WIN 2024 Annual Conference**
The NEXus Consortium: Increase Access and Reduce Impact in Changing Academic Environments, By Mary S. Koithan, PhD, RN, CNS-BS, FAAN, Dean, College of Nursing Washington State University and Anne Boerner, Project Director

Booths

NEXus will be at:

- AACN 2025 Doctoral Conference in San Diego, CA (January 2025)
- WIN Conference 2025 in Spokane, ID (April 2025)

Membership

- Ohio State University withdrew as of July 1, 2024.
- University of Alaska expressed an interest in joining

Operations

NEXus administration officially took on billing for Home Institutions. NEXus will collect the 5% tuition share on behalf of sending institutions and credit their accounts.