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The Emerging Scholars' Network Within MNRS: From Acorns to Oaks

Breanna Hetland¹, Heidi Lindroth², Kendra Kamp³, Elizabeth Edmiston⁴, Kelly L. Wierenga⁵, Heather K. Hardin⁶, Andrea Gilmore-Bykovskyi⁷, Robert Topp⁸, Patricia E. Hershberger⁹, Elizabeth Madigan¹⁰

¹University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, USA

²Indiana University, Indianapolis, USA

³University of Washington, Seattle, USA

⁴Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH, USA

⁵Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis, USA

⁶Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH, USA

⁷University of Wisconsin–Madison, USA

⁸The University of Toledo, OH, USA

⁹The University of Illinois at Chicago, USA

¹⁰Sigma Theta Tau International, Indianapolis, IN, USA

Abstract

As the nursing faculty shortage persists, there is an urgent need to develop emerging nurse scholars into research leaders capable of advocating for the profession and expanding on the mission to improve health. To address this need, the Midwest Nursing Research Society (MNRS) commissioned a student task force that led to the development of the Emerging Scholars Network (ESN). The purpose of this article is to describe how the ESN was developed, integrated, and promoted within the MNRS to advance the overall mission and sustainability of the society. The establishment and success of the ESN is described using the Five Developmental Stages of Organization Evolution. These stages include the following: (a) Developing a Concept; (b) Launching a Start-Up; (c) Establishing Credibility; (d) Creating Sustainability; and (e) Road to Maturing and Legacy. Recommendations for continued development of the ESN are provided.

Corresponding Author: Breanna Hetland, College of Nursing, University of Nebraska Medical Center, 985330 Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, NE 68198-5330, USA. Breanna.hetland@unmc.edu.

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Keywords

leadership; mentorship; nursing scholarship; nursing science; organization development

Nationwide, there is a sense of urgency to train the next generation of emerging scholars to address the growing faculty shortage and advance nursing science. Recent estimates calculate that one third of the total nursing faculty who were working at U.S. universities in 2015 will retire in the next 10 years (Fang & Kesten, 2017). As pioneers of nursing research retire, it is imperative to rapidly develop emerging scholars into innovative researchers in nursing science who are prepared to carry on the cohesive effort to advocate for the profession and expand on the mission to improve health and educate future nurse scientists (Wyman & Henly, 2015). Continual cultivation of new nurse scientists and leaders is critical to the advancement of nursing scholarship and the overall science of health (Broome & Fairman, 2018; Hinshaw, 2001; Wyman & Henly, 2015).

We define an emerging nurse scholar as a nurse in the formative and early stages of their career development and include undergraduate and graduate nursing students (Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Master of Science in Nursing, Doctor of Nursing Practice, and Doctor of Philosophy) postdoctoral fellows, and early career nurse scholars. Strong skills in research, mentoring, and leadership are critical to the future success and influence of emerging nurse scholars; however, there are limited training opportunities for scholars to develop these competencies (Abbott-Anderson, Gilmore-Bykovskyi, & Lyles, 2016; Conn, 2013; Conn et al., 2014). To address the need for structured, accessible, and meaningful opportunities that promote the advancement of new nurse scientists, novice and expert scholars at the Midwest Nursing Research Society (MNRS) joined together to lead the development, assimilation, and sustainability of the Emerging Scholars Network (ESN). The purpose of this article is to describe how the ESN was created, its subsequent growth, and how it was integrated within MNRS to promote the society's overall mission and sustainability.

Outlining the ESN's Organizational Evaluation

The Five Developmental Stages of Organization Evolution (DiGiammarino, 2012) are used to describe the establishment of the ESN. These stages, which are detailed below, include the following: (a) Developing a Concept (2010–2012); (b) Launching a Start-Up (2012–2015); (c) Establishing Credibility (2015–2017), (d) Creating Sustainability (2017-present); and (e) Road to Maturity and Legacy (present-future). Figure 1 details the key outcomes of each stage.

Developing a Concept (2010–2012)

Concept development is a necessary first step to launch an initiative. Individuals must investigate the challenges that the initiative will address and identify strategies to achieve specified goals. A leadership team is established to develop the concept into a mature and stable operation, while building credibility and sustainability through the engagement of key individuals (DiGiammarino, 2012).

ESN activities.—The ESN began in the fall of 2010 as an MNRS board-appointed Student Task Force, under the leadership of the MNRS President Dr. Jean Wyman. At that time, MNRS leaders recognized that student members were key to the long-term survival of the organization and an important voice that was absent from the organizational leadership. In addition, they desired to increase their retention of student members and successfully transition them to regular members to grow MNRS into a premier research organization.

The Student Task Force was co-led by Dr. Scott Harpin, a postdoctoral fellow, and Dr. Wendy Looman, an associate professor, both at the University of Minnesota. It included six student members and an appointed member of the MNRS Board of Directors who served as the liaison between the Student Task Force and the Board of Directors during the formative discussions and collaborations of the Student Task Force. The primary goals of the Student Task Force were to increase early career member engagement within MNRS and review the use of technology to enhance their involvement in MNRS.

To better understand the needs of early career members, the Student Task Force interviewed leaders, as well as past and current student members at MNRS and other nursing regional research societies (Eastern Nursing Research Society, Southern Nursing Research Society, and Western Institute of Nursing). The discussions confirmed that students and postdoctoral fellows felt disconnected from their regional organizations and often only joined them to present their work at the annual conferences, letting their memberships lapse once they had finished presenting. After months of informal conversations and active collaboration with the MNRS Board of Directors, the Student Task Force developed and presented an official list of priority recommendations to be considered. The report was endorsed by the MNRS Board of Directors at the June 2011 board meeting.

The transition from the Student Task Force to the ESN resulted from two key recommendations. The first was to organize an early career member network that would advise the MNRS Board of Directors, and the second called for the appointment of an early career member to each MNRS committee including the Board of Directors. Two members of the Student Task Force were appointed as co-chairs of the ESN by the Board of Directors. This provided stability and momentum during the transition from concept to startup. The ESN was officially established as a subcommittee of the MNRS Board of Directors and introduced to MNRS in 2012 (Harpin & Gilmore-Bykovskyi, 2012). Recommendations from the Student Task Force and follow-up actions (2011 to present) are listed in Table 1.

Launching a Start-Up (2012–2015)

The initial steps to launch a start-up organization provide the administrative foundation developing key ideas and committees. The mission, vision, value, and purpose statements are created. Plans are developed to address the organizational needs and to form a team with appropriate skills to engage future members. At this stage, an outside board provides consistent oversight that not only helps maintain focus but also develops leadership and mentorship skills that will facilitate more independence and success (DiGiammarino, 2012).

ESN activities.—To launch the ESN, mission and vision statements, including the core values, were developed under the mentorship of an appointed senior member of the MNRS

Board of Directors. The guidance helped the ESN establish a strong foundation before they addressed the list of Student Task Force recommendations. The ESN co-chairs initially defined ESN members as students and postdoctoral fellows within MNRS. At the 2012 conference, an inaugural MNRS ESN breakfast and an informal recruitment dinner were held for members to learn about the ESN and available leadership positions.

The following year, ESN co-chairs refined membership criteria to ensure the ESN met the needs of the organization. After many discussions, the ESN expanded its membership in 2013 to include students, postdoctoral fellows, and early career nurse scholars within 3 years of completed training. MNRS Matters, the monthly eNewsletter of MNRS, was used to recruit eligible members to serve in leadership roles. An application process was developed, and phone interviews were conducted to vet applicants' qualifications. ESN leaders also created a formalized infrastructure with various leadership roles, including established positions on the following MNRS standing committees: Membership, Program Planning, Communication, Research Section Advisory, Student Poster, Scholarship, and ex-officio positions on the MNRS Board of Directors and the MNRS Foundation. These eight ESN committee representatives along with the two co-chairs made up the ESN Executive Committee. An Operations Manual was iteratively developed and served as a guide for future growth. The ESN Executive Committee drafted this highly influential document by including detailed position descriptions, committee guidelines, and an explanation of the annual election system. The Operations Manual was essential for establishing legitimacy, providing consistency, and improving the clarity of the ESN Executive Committee. In addition, fundraising and volunteer commitments were included. All ESN Executive Committee Members were expected to volunteer for MNRS fundraising initiatives, as well as develop new fundraising ideas for the MNRS Foundation.

Between 2012 and 2013, the ESN Executive Committee created a pilot model for the ESN Liaison Program, an initiative aimed at disseminating society information to early career and potential members at Midwestern institutions. The ESN Liaison Program pilot officially launched at the 2014 annual conference with the goal to have an ESN Liaison Representative at each MNRS affiliated institution. The ESN Liaison Program aimed to facilitate ESN–MNRS collaboration and reciprocal communication to improve future early career programming, enhance research dissemination, and grow membership.

To increase ESN visibility and recognition among MNRS membership, the ESN Executive Committee partnered with the MNRS Board of Directors and the Program Planning Committee to establish an ESN informational table at the 2014 annual MNRS conference. This table, hosted and self-funded by ESN Executive Committee Members, served as a central hub for early career members to ask questions, gain information on MNRS and the ESN, and sign up for leadership and peer mentorship opportunities within ESN, as well as network and connect with colleagues and mentors. Marketing materials were developed in collaboration with the MNRS management firm to ensure consistent organizational branding and included a brochure, conference badge ribbons, and giveaway items to increase visibility and signify involvement with the ESN. In addition, individuals who expressed interest in ESN involvement were encouraged to attend the first annual onsite Liaison Informational Meeting.

In between annual conferences, the ESN disseminated information and progress updates to the MNRS membership. Members of the ESN Executive Committee authored a section in the MNRS Matters eNewsletter and regularly contributed to a column in the *Western Journal of Nursing Research* (Chlan & Lusk, 2013). An MNRS website shared how to become involved as an early career scholar and provided ESN Executive Committee member biographies. A LinkedIn account associated with, but independent of MNRS's LinkedIn account, was set up and managed by the ESN Communications Representative. Finally, the ESN Executive Committee identified the need for a shared document site and used DropBox to keep ESN Executive Committee members, the MNRS Board of Directors, and the MNRS management company updated and informed.

Leading up to the annual conference in 2015, the ESN updated its guiding documents and established independent identity to continue to grow and flourish. To reflect recent MNRS organizational changes, the ESN Executive Committee adjusted its organizational structure to include two co-chairs and representatives to the Board of Directors, Program Planning, Communications, and Membership committees. The updated Operations Manual was submitted to the Board of Directors for approval. An ESN-specific logo was designed to increase visibility within the MNRS membership. A formal proposal was provided to the MNRS Board of Directors for an annual budget, which would provide up to \$500 each year to the ESN Executive Committee. The funds would support all promotional and educational materials, as well as other needs identified by the ESN Executive Committee. In addition, the ESN Executive Committee submitted a request to modify the MNRS by-laws to allow for the provision of voting rights to the ESN ex-officio positions on the MNRS Board of Directors and MNRS Foundation.

By the end of the start-up phase, the mission, vision, and core values of the ESN were solidified in collaboration with the MNRS Board of Directors. The mission of the ESN states,

The overarching goal of the ESN shall be the same as the purpose of the MNRS: to advance science, transform practice and enhance careers. ESN is specifically tasked with creating and maintaining an infrastructure for expanding student, postdoctoral, and early career member engagement (having less than 3 years of experience in a practice/research position). (Emerging Scholars Network, 2018)

The vision of the ESN states,

In accordance with the mission of MNRS and task of this committee, the vision of the ESN is to build a lasting infrastructure that has the capacity to expand, engage, and integrate student, postdoctoral, and early career MNRS members into the Society. (Emerging Scholars Network, 2018)

The ESN's two core values are committed engagement and shared leadership.

Committed engagement refers to members who are motivated to achieve the committee's success as evidenced by their active participation. In practice, this has led to actively encouraging participation and reappointment of committed and engaged members while having policies in place to address nonparticipation.

Shared leadership required joint accountability and encouragement among ESN members. Due to the intense time commitment required of ESN leaders during this stage of organizational development, the shared leadership design was critical to the ESN's success as many ESN Executive Committee members were navigating the complexities of graduate school in addition to their ESN responsibilities. This model enabled ESN Executive Committee members to share work based on who had the greatest time and flexibility.

Establishing Credibility (2015–2017)

An operations plan that includes a structural model, policies, and procedures is a key step in establishing credibility. These components of an operations plan build on the start-up organization's structural foundation to construct a roadmap of how the committee will achieve its mission and vision while honoring its values and fulfilling its purpose.

ESN activities.—As the ESN expanded, the organizational structure and integration of ESN into MNRS continued to evolve. In 2015, the ESN representative to the MNRS Board of Directors was granted voting rights following a by-law vote by the MNRS membership. This landmark vote established the ESN as a credible, growing, and dynamic committee integrated within the MNRS organization. The Board of Directors approved the ESN's annual budget proposal of \$500, and a Treasurer position was added to the ESN administrative structure. In addition, MNRS promoted the ESN to other organizations as an exemplar prototype program that could be used by other regional societies, including the Council for the Advancement of Nursing Science. Five ESN members were nominated to serve on Council for the Advancement of Nursing Science committees. This promotion elevated ESN's impact to a national level and highlighted the valuable contributions of emerging nursing scholars nationwide.

To continue to build credibility, the ESN expanded its presence at the annual conference, and its level of interaction with the MNRS Board of Directors. In 2015, the ESN organized the first "Meet and Greet" breakfast between the ESN Executive Committee and the MNRS Board of Directors to facilitate communication and an open exchange of ideas targeted at aligning future ESN goals with the MNRS strategic plan. To further early career involvement within MNRS Research Interest Groups, the ESN organized the second annual ESN Luncheon, which featured a moderated panel discussion by Research Interest Group leaders. The Research Interest Group leadership highlighted their activities, including how ESN members could become involved. ESN participation in MNRS Research Interest Groups increased the following year.

The 2-year ESN Liaison Program pilot was completed and shown to be an effective mechanism for promoting events, answering questions, and facilitating involvement. The annual ESN Liaison Program meeting at the MNRS conference enabled communication among current liaisons and bolstered recruitment of liaisons from institutions that were previously unrepresented. Due to the continued growth of the program, an ESN Liaison Program Coordinator position was added to the ESN Executive Committee in 2016.

Both the ESN and MNRS leaders recognized the importance of maintaining a pipeline of developing scholars for the ESN Executive Committee, as well as for the society. As a result, the ESN Executive Committee developed a peermentoring succession plan, which included one-page transition documents for each ESN Executive Committee position. Each position is based on a 3-year service model that includes incoming and outgoing peer mentorship responsibilities. In the first year of service, the incoming ESN Executive Committee member is mentored by the outgoing member. Both share responsibility for the committee position. In the second year of service, the ESN Executive Committee member holds full responsibility for the ESN Executive Committee position while also looking ahead and recruiting the replacement. During the third year of service, the now outgoing ESN Executive Committee member “mentors-in” their replacement. The ESN co-chairs facilitate this process by meeting with both the incoming and outgoing members. This 3-year service model provides the opportunity for early career nurse scholars to develop leadership, peer mentorship, and committee skills within the MNRS society. To facilitate a successful transition into the sustainability stage, the ESN developed an evolving rolling calendar to ensure the completion of responsibilities during personnel changes.

The ESN continued to expand its fundraising obligations by holding its first significant, independent fundraiser in 2016. The ESN created a GoFundMe account and reached the goal of \$1,000. The money was donated to the MNRS Foundation. ESN also donated gift baskets to the MNRS Foundation’s Annual Raffle at the 2017 and 2018 conferences. MNRS highlighted the ESN’s achievements in an article in the *Western Journal of Nursing Research* in 2016 (Arruda, Hetland, Lindroth, & Aaronson, 2016).

The 2016 and 2017 annual conferences brought opportunities for the ESN to expand their credibility by providing relevant conference programming for early career members. The ESN Luncheon in 2016, which was at capacity, included a brief presentation by Dr. Jeri Miller from the National Institute of Nursing Research that detailed funding mechanisms and opportunities for early career scientists through National Institute of Nursing Research. A moderated panel that followed her presentation featured Doctor of Philosophy level nurse scientists, tenured faculty, and postdoctoral research fellows who discussed career and scholarship opportunities for emerging scholars. In 2017, the ESN Luncheon was sold-out and focused on Doctor of Nursing Practice and Doctor of Philosophy research collaborations and networking to build a clinical research team. The panel featured two successful Doctor of Nursing Practice and Doctor of Philosophy dyads that provided a dynamic discussion on strategies to collaboration. The ESN highlighted these events and the committee’s progress in an article published in the *Western Journal of Nursing Research* (Lindroth, Edmiston, Hetland, Hershberger, & Lach, 2017).

Creating Sustainability (2017 to present)

Future planning to sustain the solid foundation and establish credibility is critical to maintain not only productivity but also the engagement and enthusiasm for the organization’s continued growth. Succession planning and a continual evaluation of programming and marketing materials is integral to this stage.

ESN activities.—During 2017 and 2018, the ESN Executive Committee focused on creating sustainability by expanding conference programming, increasing their social media presence, and reviewing current program expenses. The MNRS conference programming was expanded to include an ESN-organized, early career–focused preconference session entitled “Moving from your Doctoral Degree to the ‘Real World’: Nuts and Bolts of Degree Completion, Post-Degree Options, and Career Cartography.” The extra programming was in response to feedback received from the ESN liaisons. The workshop aimed to provide early career scholars with tools to complete their degree, gain insight into their next career steps, and understand how to develop their pipeline to ensure future success. The ESN Executive Committee Members co-planned this workshop, organizing content and recruiting speakers. All MNRS preconference sessions were heavily advertised through the ESN Liaison Program and social media forums resulting in 28 registered attendees. Results from a presurvey and postsurvey revealed that attendees improved their knowledge of career advancement, time management strategies, pipeline development, and timely degree completion. Additional conference programming included an ESN Luncheon entitled “Nurses on Boards: Transformative Nurse Leadership” to encourage nurses to think broadly about their service role and to consider leadership opportunities on boards.

The ESN expanded its use of social media platforms to further engage MNRS early career members and disseminate information. The ESN Liaison Program developed a dedicated channel on Slack and a Facebook group. In addition, several liaisons published an information exchange article in the *Western Journal of Nursing Research* (Trotter et al., 2018). In the current academic year (2018–2019), ESN is working with the MNRS association management company to tailor emails that introduce and describe the benefits of the ESN to the early career membership (Hardin et al., 2019). A “Twitter Chat” designed to engage ESN members in an online discussion before the annual conference was a new addition to the ESN social media platform. The chat focused on ways to prepare for poster and podium presentations, as well as tips and tricks to improve the dissemination of research findings.

The ESN Executive Committee reviewed current program expenses and discussed how to address the rising cost of the ESN Luncheon. MNRS and ESN recognize the importance of providing affordable programming to the early career membership. To maintain low costs, the ESN Luncheon price was included as a sponsorship option. The ESN leaders have also acknowledged the importance of providing dissertation scholarships and is using GoFundMe to raise funds for a scholarship. The ESN campaign encourages students, post-doctoral fellows, faculty, friends, family, and anyone interested in promoting nursing scholarship to donate \$5, the cost of approximately one coffee (<https://pages.donately.com/mnrsfoundation/campaign/mnrs-esn-dissertation-grant>).

The ESN Operations Manual is continually updated to reflect changes within MNRS. In 2017 and into 2018, it was revised to detail the merging of the MNRS Communications and Research Interests Group committees into the Communications and Engagement Committees. A Social Media chair position was added to the ESN Executive Committee to grow the ESN’s social media presence. The ESN continually updates to maintain congruency with MNRS to be in the best position to contribute to the Society.

Road to Maturity and Overall Impact (Present-Future)

For the ESN, the foundation, building, establishing, credibility, and future planning stages have led to a fruitful and engaged organization that is delivering desired products while holding the stakeholders' attention. Now, the focus is on sustaining the productive organization by continuing to change to meet the needs of the stakeholders and develop new mechanisms to generate further growth.

Current Status of Major ESN Contributions

Operations Manual

The ESN Operations Manual serves as a comprehensive tool kit for maintaining the tasks, vision, and operations of the ESN. The manual outlines benchmarks for mapping and evaluating the progress and effectiveness of the Network with regards to the mission of MNRS and contains related forms, documents, and records. The manual is intended to provide future ESN leaders with a sustainable model to enact ESN's long-term vision to build a lasting infrastructure. The latest version of this 18-page document includes the ESN's objectives, structure, and the Executive Committee's meeting procedures and the member's duties and appointment, as well as the documents review, revision, and maintenance instructions. All members of the ESN Executive Committee review the manual annually, and the co-chairs are responsible for submitting updates to the MNRS Board of Directors as applicable.

Executive Committee Structure

As of 2018, the ESN Executive Committee included 10 ESN leaders who are mentored by an MNRS Board Member at large: Co-Chairs (2), Secretary, Treasurer/Finance Committee Representative, ESN Liaison Program Coordinator, MNRS Board of Directors Representative, MNRS Foundation Representative, Communications/Engagement Representative, Program Planning Representative, and Membership Representative (Figure 2). The Communications/Engagement Representative and Program Planning Representative have the ability to establish subcommittees to assist with tasks. For instance, a Social Media Specialist position can assist the Communications/Engagement Representative. This structure was developed strategically to demonstrate the integration and collaboration between the MNRS Board of Directors, MNRS Committee Chairs, and the ESN Executive Committee, which are illustrated in the Image of Cohesiveness (Figure 3).

ESN Liaison Program

As the ESN grew, the ESN Liaison Program served as a pipeline to identify and develop new early career leaders. Liaisons have assisted in the development of various PowerPoint presentations detailing research, networking, and leadership skills. One example is the creation of an elevator speech and tips and tricks of networking. The PowerPoint presentations were disseminated to each Liaison, and they were encouraged to host a Lunch and Learn at their institution to share the content. Recently, Liaisons published an article in the *Western Journal of Nursing Research* (Trotter et al., 2018). These opportunities allow interested individuals to gain leadership experience within ESN before committing to a more

time-intensive Executive Committee position. At the beginning of 2018, the ESN Liaison Program included 22 Liaisons from institutions across the Midwest (out of 250 possible institutions).

The ESN's Impact on MNRS

The ESN provides the MNRS organization at large with an infrastructure to develop the nurse scientists and leaders needed to sustain and advance MNRS into the future. With a priority focus on promoting early career member engagement in research, the ESN has initiated and led a multitude of research-related activities. Research funding, collaboration, and dissemination have been highlighted in ESN luncheon topics and Twitter chats. The ESN Liaison Program promotes the annual research conference involvement via institutional-level peer-to-peer engagement. The ESN helps new student members navigate their first MNRS conference by presenting materials and answering questions at the New Member Orientation. Finally, the ESN supports nursing research through innovative social media campaigns and crowdfunding initiatives.

The ESN serves the needs of the larger organization by providing a bridge for students to fully engage in MNRS as regular members throughout their early career phase. By providing early immersion into the organization, the ESN members are socialized into the role of an organizational leader in a research-rich environment, understand organizational structure and function, and are prepared to seamlessly transition into the roles and functions of the MNRS committees they will serve. ESN alumni serve in leadership roles within the larger organization and will be the MNRS leaders of the future. In addition, the ESN introduces members to the importance of active engagement in nursing organizations and research, assists in membership retention, and teaches the importance of continued fundraising to support the society and nursing research (Lach & Larson, 2018).

The creation of a functional and flourishing web of nurse scholars in leadership positions outside of the ESN is an unexpected benefit. The current members and alumni of the ESN now contribute to nursing scholarship at regional and national levels, interprofessional organizations, governmental agencies, and institutional boards. The valuable leadership and peer mentorship skills they gained through their experience with the ESN provide these individuals with a foundational toolkit to function as leading nurse scholars. This web has fostered research and manuscript collaborations, nationwide research connections, and informal peer mentorship roles.

ESN strives to be a significant source of fresh ideas and perspectives that are useful to MNRS, such as promoting the organization through social media. The ESN was the first MNRS committee to launch a LinkedIn page, which was later used as a model for the MNRS LinkedIn page, and members continue to provide relevant examples of professional engagement by increasing the use of social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. In addition to a broader social media presence, the ESN Representative to the Board of Directors is an active participant in Society meetings; communicating students' perspectives on Board decisions affect the growing group of emerging scholars within MNRS. Finally, the ESN Operations Manual was used as a blueprint to reorganize all MNRS sub

committees. Together, the partnership between the ESN and the MNRS Board of Directors synergistically develops and promotes nurse leaders and scholars.

Future Plans

The ESN continues to mature, striving to find new ways to enhance MNRS and integrate the student and early career member voices. One key to establishing maturity has been creating a succession plan. The ESN Liaison Program provides a useful pipeline to recruit highly qualified individuals to positions on the ESN Executive Committee. Serving within the ESN Liaison Program enables individuals to become familiar with the mission and vision of the ESN before committing to advanced leadership role. In turn, the ESN Executive Committee becomes a conduit for future MNRS committee and Board of Directors involvement. This pipeline is integral to the continued success of current and future nurse scholars and scientists. Two recently elected MNRS Board of Directors members started their leadership experiences with the ESN (Lach & Aaronson, 2017; Lach & Larson, 2018).

In an age of social media, the ESN continues to lead the way by assisting with the increasing MNRS' social media usage. The ESN Executive Committee proposed an ESN online forum that would facilitate the exchange of information, allow resource sharing, create connections between members at various institutions, and allow continuous open dialogue on several topics. The proposed program is now in its pilot stage as an ESN Facebook group. If successful, a larger forum would be created and hopefully link to MNRS's Research Interest Groups to facilitate collaborations among scholars. The ESN continues to examine new and innovative ways to engage emerging scholars in the MNRS organization.

Full engagement of all MNRS members is integral to the continued success and sustainability of the Society. The development and shared vision of the ESN, to engage and develop nurse scholar leaders, benefits not only MNRS but also nursing scholarship at large. These emerging scholars are the leaders, researchers, and educators of the future, and it is vital that they develop leadership and peer mentorship skills. The ESN provides an active forum and environment for the creation of future MNRS nurse leaders, which will continue to build nurse scholarship. Due to the success of the ESN, the framework is expanding to other regional and national nursing organizations. Expanding and nurturing the ESN will ensure the continued provision of fresh, innovative ideas to meet the demands of the dynamic institutional and healthcare needs of the population.

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Figure 1.

Key outcomes.

Note. MNRS BOD = Midwest Nursing Research Society board of directors; ESN = Emerging Scholars Network.

Figure 2.

From acorns to oaks: The organizational structure of the ESN.

Note. MNRS BOD = Midwest Nursing Research Society Board of Directors; ESN = Emerging Scholars Network.

Figure 3.

Image of Cohesiveness.

Note. MNRS = Midwest Nursing Research Society; ESN = Emerging Scholars Network.

Table 1.

Recommendations From the Student Task Force and Follow-Up Actions Taken (2011 to Present).

Recommendation	Action Taken by ESN
Formally organize as a “early career member network,” using that governing body to elect the board student member and collectively advise the MNRS Board	<p>ESN formed, Executive Committee defined</p> <p>Operations Manual created and approved</p> <p>ESN representation on most MNRS committees including Board of Directors</p> <p>ESN Liaison Program established</p> <p>ESN voting rights within MNRS and on Board of Directors obtained</p> <p>ESN contribution to fundraising efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GoFundMe Page, \$1,000 raised • Donate gift basket-Foundation raffle
Design and implement a plan to bolster early career membership using early career member liaisons as a network	<p>ESN Liaison Program established</p> <p>ESN liaison events held at each institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informational YouTube videos • Informal lunches and meetings • Conference meet-ups <p>ESN recruitment and information events at annual MNRS conference</p> <p>ESN annual column in MNRS Matters</p>
Develop clear communications mechanisms to meet the needs and wishes of early career members	<p>ESN Social Media sites developed (LinkedIn, Facebook page/group, and Slack)</p> <p>ESN webpage</p> <p>ESN events at MNRS conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESN Information table • ESN Conference orientation • ESN Breakfast • ESN Lunch • ESN Preconference • ESN Recruitment events
Function as a body to introduce new early career members to senior MNRS members or MNRS members who have similar research interests	<p>ESN-MNRS Board of Directors “Meet and Great” held annually</p> <p>ESN representative serve on most MNRS committees including Board of Directors</p> <p>ESN promotion/education of how-to network at annual conference</p> <p>ESN involvement in Council for the Advancement of Nursing Science committees</p> <p>ESN member involvement in subcommittees of the MNRS Board of Directors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance subcommittee • Revenue generation committee • Scientific review/manual revision

Note. ESN = Emerging Scholars Network; MNRS = Midwest Nursing Research Society.

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