



*Advancing Health through Nursing  
Initiative on the Future of Nursing*

# Advancing Nursing Education Team

## **Susan Sportsman, RN, PhD, FAAN Co-Chair, West Region**



Susan Sportsman is the Director of Academic Consulting Group, an innovative service of Elsevier, designed to provide targeted consultations & faculty development workshops to nursing & health professions programs. Prior to joining Elsevier, Dr. Sportsman was the Dean of the College of Health Sciences & Human Services at Midwestern State University. Her career as a nurse educator includes faculty & leadership positions in associate degree, baccalaureate & graduate programs in nursing and health care administration, resulting in her being honored as a fellow in the National League of Nursing Academic of Nursing Educators in 2011. She has also been active in policy advocacy related to nursing & health care through her work with the Texas Nurses Association (past President & Secretary), Texas Society of Allied Health Professionals (past President, Vice President, & Board Member), & Texas Mental Health Association (past Board member). Honors include: the Dallas-Ft. Worth Great 100 Nurses (1991), Leadership Texas (1990), Texas Woman's University (2005) and Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing (2012). As part of her leadership with the Texas Team, she is an author and Co-PI of the RWJ APIN grant focused on increasing the number of RNs graduating from TX BSN programs.

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## **Helen Reid, EdD, MSN, RN, CNE Co-Chair, North Region**



Helen Reid, EdD, MSN, RN, CNE currently serves as the Health Science Center Provost providing administration of the health occupations programs for Trinity Valley Community College (TVCC) in Kaufman, Texas. During her thirty years in nursing education, she has served as previous T-OADN secretary and president and N-OADN treasurer and public relations director, and is now a member of the Texas Nurses Association (TNA) Education Committee, and treasurer of the Texas Association of Deans & Directors of Professional Nursing Programs (TADDPNP). Major projects include Perkins Leadership grant in 2011-2012, and currently co-project director for the Texas Academic Progression in Nursing (APIN) grant funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), and project director for the Texas Concept-Based Curriculum grant project funded by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Dr. Reid received her BSN from the University of Texas at Arlington, MSN from Texas Woman's University and EdD from the University of North Texas.

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**Patricia Allen, RN, EdD, CNE, ANEF, FAAN**  
**Gulf Coast Region**

Director of the Center for Innovation in Nursing Education at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and a Professor in the School of Nursing, Lubbock Texas. She is the founding Director of the Center established in 2004. The Center has received over \$5 million in funding to achieve the mission of working with colleges, communities and businesses to find solutions for the nursing shortage in Texas and beyond. In her seven years at Texas Tech, she has also served in roles of associate dean of undergraduate studies, acting dean and interim regional dean of the Marble Falls campus. As Center Director, Dr. Allen was the Co-PI of a National Science Foundation Partnerships in Innovation grant to explore the use of technology in the first fully funded technology driven accelerated 2nd degree web-based BSN program. In 2005, Dr. Allen obtained her certified nurse educator credential from the NLN and re-certified in 2010. Additionally, Dr. Allen was inducted into The National League of Nursing as a Fellow in the Academy of Nursing Education. She has served on many regional and state committees, has provided many consultations on second degree and RN/BSN curricula. Dr. Allen received her Bachelor's Degree in Nursing from Old Dominion University, a Master's Degree in Nursing from The Catholic University of America and her Doctoral Degree in Education from Florida International University.

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**Betty Adams, RN, PhD**  
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**Sally Duran, RN, MSN**  
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Ms. Duran is Director of Nursing Programs at Alvin Community College. She earned her Bachelor's in Nursing from Northern Michigan University and her Master's in Nursing from Wayne State University. She began her nursing career as a staff nurse in medical-surgical nursing and has extensive years of teaching nursing before becoming Director in 2001. She has been active in professional nursing organizations throughout her career. She currently is President-Elect for the Texas Association of Dean and Directors of Professional Nursing Programs. She serves on the Texas Nurses Association Education Committee and is Past-President for Texas Nurses Association District 29. She has served on the Board Texas Organization for Associate Degree Nursing for over 10 years in several capacities: President, President-Elect, Nominating Committee, and Director of Marketing. In 2011-12 she was a co-investigator on the grant "Reducing Duplication in AD and AD to BSN Curricula" that was funded by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board developing a concept-based nursing curricula and a pathway for Associate Degree graduates in Texas to earn a bachelor's degree in 120 credit hours.

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**Carson Easley, MS, RN**  
**Gulf Coast Region**

Director of Nursing for the Mental and Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County-Houston, Texas which is the largest Community Mental Health and Mental Retardation Center in Texas and of the largest in the United States. She received her Bachelors of Science Degree in Nursing from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston and earned her Masters of Science Degree in Nursing from Texas Woman's University with areas of focus in medical-surgical nursing and education. Her career experiences include nursing education, psychiatric-mental health nursing, quality management and staff development/training and nursing administration. Ms. Easley continues to provide nursing education as an Adjunct Faculty member for Texas Woman's University in the area of psychiatric/mental health nursing. During Houston's response to Hurricane Katrina victims, she acted as an administrator on duty for the MHMR of Harris County psychiatric services at the Reliant Arena and was responsible for assuring nursing coverage for the mental health unit. In 2009 she was recognized by the Texas Nurses Association-District 9 Chapter as one of the 20 Outstanding Nurses in the Houston Area. In 2010 she was the regional winner of the Nursing Excellence Award for the South Central Region in the area of Advancing and Leading the Profession sponsored by NurseWeek magazine.

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**Carmen Edwards, MSN, RN**  
**West Region**



Carmen Edwards is the Chair of the Associate Degree Nursing Program at Midland College. She earned her AAS from Odessa College and BSN from West Texas A&M University. Her Master's in Nursing is from The University of Texas at El Paso where she earned a major in medical-surgical nursing and a double minor in administration and education. She has enjoyed a variety of clinical nursing roles including that of staff nurse in acute care and home health, occupational health nurse in a hospital and in a municipality, and parish nurse for her local congregation. Her most recent clinical position, after retiring from education for a year, was serving as the director of nursing at a psychiatric hospital. Ms. Edwards has worked in nursing education for 24 years at Midland College and at Odessa College. She has served as faculty member, program director, and divisional dean. She has been an active participant in numerous local, regional and statewide organizations and committees, focusing on nursing education, allied health professional training and partnerships, and improving access to health services.

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**Chris Fowler, MPA**  
**Central Region**



Senior program director for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the state agency that oversees and coordinates higher education for the State of Texas. As a specialist in health education policy development and implementation, she reviews new health degree programs, and administers \$13 million in special item funding, including the \$4.05 million Nursing, Allied Health, and Other Health-related Education Grant Program. She is also the agency's principal author or editor of a number of legislative reports on health education including Projecting the Need for Pharmacy Education in Texas (2004), A New Curriculum Model for Initial RN Licensure Programs (2008), and Strategies to Increase the Number of Initial Licensure Registered Nurses and Nursing Faculty (2009). Prior to working as a program director, she was the budget and performance analyst for health-related institutions at the Texas Legislative Budget Board.

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**State Representative Donna Howard, RN**  
**Central Region**



Howard serves on the House Higher Education Committee, House Administration Committee, and is vice chair of the House Culture, Recreation, and Tourism Committee. She also co-founded the Air Quality Caucus, a bipartisan group of more than three dozen lawmakers working on clean energy issues. For her work at the State Capitol on health care, environmental protection, and historic preservation, Howard has been honored by community organizations, from the Austin Business Journal and the Texas Hospital Association to the Sierra Club and the Heritage Society of Austin. Howard is a native of Austin who graduated from Reagan High School, then went on to earn a bachelor's degree in nursing and a master's in health education, both from the University of Texas. She worked as a critical care nurse at Brackenridge and Seton hospitals, was the first hospital-based Patient Education Coordinator in Austin history, and helped start the Seton Good Health School. She has also served as president of the Texas Nurses' Association (District 5) and as a Health Education instructor at UT.

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**Pamela Lauer, MPH**  
**Central Region**



Pam currently leads the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) in the Center for Health Statistics. Aside from a short stint at the Health and Human Services Commission, she has been with the Center for Nursing Workforce Studies in various roles since February 2007. During her time with the TCNWS she has lead different projects on nursing education and nurse staffing among various employers of nurses. She has also represented the TCNWS as member of the research committee of the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers where she assisted with the development of minimum datasets for nursing supply, demand, and education data. Pam has a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin and a master's degree from the University of Texas Health Science Center.

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**Mary Elizabeth Mancini, RN, PhD, NE-BC, FAHA, FAAN**  
**North Region**

Professor, Associate Dean & Chair for Undergraduate Nursing Programs at The University of Texas at Arlington College of Nursing. She holds the Baylor Health Care System Professorship for Healthcare Research. Prior to moving to an academic role in 2004, Dr. Mancini was Sr. VP for Nursing Administration & CNO at Parkland Health & Hospital System in Dallas, Texas, a position she held for 18 years. Dr. Mancini is active in the area of simulation in healthcare including serving as President of the Society for the Society for Simulation in Healthcare, member of the Institute of Medicine's Global Forum on Innovations in Health Professions Education, past member of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada's Simulation Task Force, Sigma Theta Tau International's Simulation & Emerging Technologies Content Advisory Group, & the World Health Organization's Initiative on Training & Simulation & Patient Safety. In

addition to serving as a member of the Texas Team Advancing Health through Nursing, she is the Chair of the Texas Nursing Association's Education Committee.

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**Nitha Matthews, RN, BSN-PhD Nursing Student**  
**Gulf Coast Region**

Nitha Mathew is currently working as a registered nurse at the UT-Harris County Psychiatric Center, Houston, TX. She is currently pursuing a PhD in nursing at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, TX. Ms. Mathew has a rich nursing background in adult critical care and mental health nursing. She is selected as a Jonas Nurse Leaders Scholar for 2012–2014 from the from the Jonas Center for Nursing Excellence. She is skilled in psychotherapy and works effectively and efficiently with interdisciplinary teams. In addition to being an outstanding student, Ms. Mathew finds times to work with patients suffering from depression, schizophrenia and other behavioral or mental health disorders. In formal leadership positions, she has served as a Charge Nurse at the Surgery Specialty Hospitals of America and is currently a Charge Nurse on an adult psychiatric unit. She is actively working with the Gulf-Coast Region of Texas Team to meet the IOM recommendations in Texas. She is an active member in many professional nursing organizations including the Trained Nurses Association of India (TNAI), Southern Nursing Research Society (SNRS), Texas Team Advancing Health through Nursing Action Coalition, Texas Nurses Association (TNA) District 9, Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing (STTI), National Association of Indian Nurses of America (NAINA) and Indian American Nurses Association (IANA) of Houston Gulf Coast Chapter. Ms. Mathew's research interest for her dissertation focuses on the relationship between physical activity and acculturation in Asian Indian women living in the U.S.

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**Pearl Merritt, EdD, MSN, MS, RN, FAAN**  
**West Region**

Abilene Regional Dean for Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing, she has worked with nursing education for unlicensed and licensed staff for 30 years. She was selected as the winner of the Texas Association of Homes and services for the Aging Distinguished Service Award in 2008. "She is a powerful supporter of the development of nurses and education. She created the first Career Ladder for Certified Nursing Assistants in Texas and continues to champion culture change with innovative care models." Most recently, Dr. Merritt lead Buckner Retirement Services to bring the first Green House Model® for Long-Term Care to Texas. Dr. Merritt serves in numerous professional and academic positions including the Center for Nursing Workforce Studies and Chaired the Long-Term Care Task Force which made recommendations to the Texas Legislature and Governor's Office. She is currently co-principle investigator on a HRSA Grant that was awarded to Sears-Methodist Retirement System in partnership with Texas Tech University Health Science Center School of Nursing. This grant is a \$750,000 award in which individuals are selected to attend school to become a certified nursing assistant. Dr Merritt is a strong advocate for the elderly and involved on a state and national level in the culture change movement.

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**Ellarene Duis Sanders, PhD, RN, NEA-BC**  
**Central Region**

Interim Executive Director, Dr. Sanders leads the strategic operations of Texas Nurses Association, a statewide professional organization of registered nurses that seeks to promote excellence in nursing through high standards of practice, legislative involvement, and public policy advocacy. In her position, Dr. Sanders also directs the daily operations of Texas Nurses Foundation and its programs and projects including the Nurse Oncology Education Program and the Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses. Dr. Sanders has a wealth of nursing experience: direct patient care nurse in medical/surgical, pediatrics, intensive care and emergency services; nurse manager in general medicine and burn intensive care; director of nursing at a 200-bed general hospital; assistant hospital administrator; director/developer of a junior college associate degree nursing program; and project director for Magnet® Recognition/Shared Governance. She currently serves as 2011-2013 chairman, member, expert reviewer and reviewer trainer of the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Pathway to Excellence® Commission. Dr. Sanders is also a member of the Alumni Hall of Fame of the University of Texas Medical Branch School of Nursing.

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**Elizabeth Sjoberg, RN, JD  
Central Region**

Joined the Texas Hospital Association in February, 1995. She is one of three in-house attorneys, whose responsibilities include advocating for member hospitals and health systems in the legislative and regulatory arenas, and informing members and the public about current topics in health law. As Associate General Counsel, her issue areas include nurse licensure, practice and education; data collection; advance directives and end-of-life care; quality and patient safety; children's and women's issues; and public health promotion and wellness. She also is a member of the Texas Team, working in coordination with the Office of the Governor to address nursing education capacity. Ms. Sjoberg received her law degree from St. Mary's University School of Law in San Antonio, and her bachelors of science in nursing degree from the University of Texas School of Nursing at Austin. Prior to attending law school, she worked in both the hospital and clinic settings. Ms. Sjoberg's professional affiliations include the State Bar of Texas and Health Law Section; the American Health Lawyers Association; the American and Texas Organizations of Nurse Executives; and the American and Texas Nurses Associations.

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**Mari F. Tietze, PhD, RN-BC, FHIMSS  
North Region**

Obtained a BS in Nursing in 1977. Completed a MS in Nursing in 1986 from Kansas University, Kansas City, Kansas. In 2002, was awarded a PhD from the College of Nursing, Texas Woman's University, Denton, Texas. Worked as Senior Manager, Center for Research and Innovation, VHA Inc., Irving, Texas. Between 2007 and 2010, was Director of Nursing Research and Informatics, Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council – Education and Research Foundation. In that role, was responsible for deployment of the Council's 3-year technology implementation project on behalf of the Small Community, Rural Hospitals Research Grant, a National Institute of Health grant funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Was key member on a team that was awarded an \$8.4 million grant for a Regional Extension Center in North Texas. Directed Workforce Center nursing research and Data Initiative informatics projects. In 2010, became Associate Professor at Texas Woman's University, College of Nursing, Dallas Center. She is Board certified by the American Nurses Credentialing Center in Informatics Nursing and FHIMSS Certified by the Health Information Management Systems Society.

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**Mary Wainwright, MS, RN  
East Region**

As Deputy Director of the East Texas Area Health Education Center (AHEC), Mary is responsible for supervision of core program staff that support administrative and programmatic activities of nine regional operations. She coordinates the planning and evaluation of the AHEC's activities, which are designed to improve the quality, supply, diversity, distribution, and effectiveness of health workforce and improve the health awareness, responsibility, and accountability by individuals and communities in the AHEC service area that encompasses 17.5 million residents. Mary is the Principal Investigator (PI) for the East Texas AHEC Student/Resident Experiences and Rotations in Community Health (SEARCH) contract. She also facilitates the partnership between the University of Texas Medical Branch Geriatric Education Center and East Texas AHEC. Mary is a master-prepared nurse with practice experience in rural and urban practice settings, including critical care nursing practice and administration. She has taught at all levels of nursing education. Mary is a national leader in AHEC program evaluation, and in nurse retention practices. She is the PI for a HRSA contract with the National AHEC Organization to develop the AHEC Training and Consultation Center to support AHECs improvement of evaluation and performance measures. Rural health care has been the central theme of Mary's professional work, and leadership in rural health and nursing continues to be a strong interest. She is an alumna of Texas Woman's University.

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**Susan Weeks, DNP, RN, CNS, LMFT, FAAN  
North Region**

Dr. Susan Weeks is Associate Dean of Nursing and Health Sciences at Texas Christian University, and also serves as the Director of the TCU Center for Evidence Based Practice & Research: A Collaborating Center of the Joanna Briggs Institute. She leads the Dallas Fort Worth Evidence Based Practice & Research Collaborative, and is the Director of the DFW Evidence Based Practice Fellowship. She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, and serves as an Appraiser with the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Magnet Recognition Program. Over 35 years of healthcare experience fuel her passion for facilitating nursing practice that delivers quality care based on evidence.

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## **Deborah Yancey, MSN, RN** **Gulf Coast Region**

President of Texas Organization of Associate Degree Nursing (TOADN). Yancy is an active member of NOADN and TNA. She has been the Director of Wharton County Junior College Associate Degree Nursing Program since January, 2009. Prior experience in nursing education has been as course coordinator for Obstetrics and Medical Surgical Nursing at Wharton County Junior College. Before entering the field of nursing education she was a Director of Nurses at a rural facility. Yancey graduated from University of Texas at Houston in 1975 with my Bachelor of Science Degree, and earned her Master's in Nursing from University of Texas at Austin in 1995.

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