

**CONFERENCE REPORT: 40th BIENNIAL CONVENTION:
Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI): Honor
Society of Nursing, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA
31 October – 4 November 2009**

*I am a nurse ... and I am a member of a global nursing
community.*

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INTRODUCTION

The convention took place from 31 October to 4 November 2009 at the Indiana Convention Centre in Indianapolis, Indiana. At the convention the global nursing community was represented to share diverse experiences, perspectives and knowledge of members of STTI about clinical innovations, cutting-edge research projects and leadership initiatives.

All 15 regions were represented and the Tau Lambda-at-Large chapter, including the Unisa sub-chapter was well-presented from all over Africa.

The aims of the convention were to

- apply and share nursing knowledge and leadership skills in sustaining the health of the world's people
- explore diverse opportunities to promote collaboration for the advancement of nursing science, practice, education, administration and policy development in the global community
- utilise new knowledge to create culturally sensitive practice
- examine interdisciplinary partnerships to promote the global nursing community

PRE-CONVENTION WORKSHOP

On 30 October, the day before the commencement of the convention, a workshop titled *Promoting healthy nurses: personal tools to build global nursing communities* was held.

The workshop included activities on burnout, compassion fatigue, stress and anger management. It also included coping techniques for healing through humour and relaxation skills.

Copies of notes on the activities were given to the attendees which could be valuable for individuals when dealing with stress in the workplace.

PLENARY SESSIONS

The daily plenary sessions proved to be interesting. Presentations had a strong research focus with discussions on the successes in nursing education and clinical research as well as funding for research. Leadership initiatives that are currently in process to build the knowledge resources were showcased. During one of these sessions awards were given to a number of delegates.

CONFERENCE THEMES

The following themes were addressed at the convention:

- ◇ *Practice*; nursing and midwifery, simulation as teaching method, quality, settings and contexts
- ◇ *Research*; evidence-based practice, leadership, ethics, new trends
- ◇ *Education*; critical thinking, computer-based education, post-graduate/continuing, clinical teaching, access and quality
- ◇ *Clinical governance*; leadership, quality, regulation, standards, policy, legislative issues
- ◇ *Gerontological nursing*

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Clinical, research, education and leadership concurrent sessions were offered as concurrent tracks each day.

Evidence-based practice was a central theme throughout all sessions. The ability to make decisions about clinical practice, based on current best evidence, requires an integration of clinical expertise and the specific skills of searching and appraising the literature/research results. To what extent is evidence-based nursing present in nursing practice? A strong focus was placed on developing best practice guidelines given the wealth of information available from research results. Team research with a systematic review design was promoted in order to utilise research results.

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Poster presentations continued for three days with more than 600 posters covering all conference themes. Delegates had the opportunity to discuss the research with the poster presenters.

NETWORK OPPORTUNITIES AND COLLABORATION

During the interactive sessions as well as the chapter meetings many opportunities for networking were created. Collaboration opportunities through The International Leadership Institute such as the *Nurse Faculty Mentored Leadership Development* were presented.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

21st International Nursing Research Congress: Global diversity through research, education and evidence-based practice, Orlando, Florida, USA. 12-16 July 2020.

GENERAL

The new president, Karen Morin took office during the conference. She delivered her presidential call to action —*Connecting through knowledge for global health*.

The Tau Lambda-at-Large Chapter was well represented at the Convention by more than 20 members from Africa. The Chapter was the recipient of the “*Spirit of Philanthropy Award*” in recognition of its capacity-building work – developing and implementing masters degree programmes in selected African countries. Another accolade, the award for the best research article in the *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* went to Tau Lambda members, Donatilla Mukamana and Petra Brysiewicz from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

The induction ceremony of new STTI members took place on 31 October 2009. During this ceremony six members from South Africa were inducted. On the evening of 1 November the Brick Paver Celebration took place at the STTI Headquarters.

A full conference report is available on the website (www.taulambda-at-large.com.)