

History of the European Academy of Nursing Science (EANS) from 2002-2006.

Based on a presentation given to the Fellows and Scholars of EANS at the 2007 Scientific Meeting in Barcelona by Rosemary Crow, professor emeritus, University of Surrey and the founding President of EANS.

Foundations of EANS

The foundation of the European Academy of Nursing Science emerged from the European Network of Nursing Doctoral Programmes in 1998/9. Planning for the activities of The Network was started in 1997/88 by a small group of Nurse Scientists including Professor Crow, University of Surrey, Professor George Evers, Catholic University of Leuven, Professor Margarethe Lorentson, University of Oslo, Professor Ruth Schrock, University of Witten-Herdecke and Professor Renzo Zanotti, University of Padua. Both the University of Surrey and the Catholic University of Leuven provided financial support during the planning period.

The purpose of the European Network was to provide a summer school where support for doctoral students was available from the then small group of doctorally prepared Nurse Scientists in Europe. Universities with dedicated programmes for Doctoral students wishing to pursue nursing science formed the Network and only students registered in these Universities were accepted into the Summer School. The Summer Schools clearly filled a need as there was never any problem filling places, and there were always colleagues who were prepared to teach on the programme at their own expense. It was during these summer gatherings that the idea for a European Academy of Nursing Science then emerged.

Purpose of EANS, with early objectives and long term 'dreams'

The purpose of developing the European Academy of Nursing Science was to provide a forum for debate and constructive discussion that was free from national and/or local political agendas. Those of us engaged in the Network felt that there was a need for Nurse Scientists to be able to meet to discuss or, in some cases, present controversial positions without the fear of being seen as elitist or even disruptive. In particular, we felt a need for a forum for Scientists who had established programmes of research to share their ideas with other experienced scientists, something most likely to happen across national boundaries. In the course of these early discussions, we set out our 'dreams' for the future looking well ahead of more immediate aims and objectives. These included the following major initiatives:

1. Fundraising to establish a designated centre where fellows could come and stay to provide peace and quiet for sabbatical periods. Our dream saw the need to equip the centre with IT facilities so that fellows could access the literature and communicate with other scientists as they developed their work.
2. As part of the work of the academy, fellows/scholars would develop themes both of a theoretical and methodological nature, such that these would/could contribute to the wider scientific community.
3. EANS would be seen as the source of leaders in Nursing Science across Europe from which, for example, Scientific Committees needing expertise in a relevant field of Nursing Science could draw.

4. The Academy as it developed would publish Annals of Nursing Science based on the work of fellows or scholars during Scientific Meetings or specialized meetings of sub groups concerned with a particular aspect of Nursing Science.

Growth of EANS

The Academy started with a scientific meeting that followed the Summer School of the European Network for Doctoral Programmes in Nursing held in Edinburgh (circa 2002). It soon became apparent that the timing of a scientific meeting after a full and busy teaching programme was unwise so the time was moved to the beginning of a new year when fellows and scholars were most likely to be free to travel. The success of this decision is slowly bearing fruit and it is to the credit and hard work of the current Chair of the Scientific Meeting Professor Helena Leino-Kilpi, University of Turku, Finland that we now seem to have a formula that works.

Hopefully as the years go by, the work discussed at the meeting will form the basis of the Annals and provide a record of the work of the Academy as well becoming available to scientists working in similar fields.