The Benefits of Student Membership in a Professional Organization

There are many benefits to being a member of a professional nursing or laboratory science organization, and there are many reasons why people join them. Some join to stay current in their field or specialty area while others do so to network or be an active member of the organization. Regardless of the reason, you should consider joining one, as the benefits of doing so can be many.

Membership generally includes a newsletter or other publication(s) published by the organization to help keep members up-to-date with new and changing developments in the profession. It can also provide job search assistance and discounts on professional books, continuing education courses, conference attendance costs, and insurance. Membership connects you with your peers, allows you to participate in member-only training events and conferences, and provides valuable tips for getting started in your career upon graduation. Members of the organization share best practices and learn about new trends, education and technical advances, and they can take advantage of exceptional networking opportunities to help with career advancement.

The good news is that you don’t have to wait until you finish school to join them; there are nursing and laboratory science organizations that offer student membership. In addition to the individual organizations’ membership benefits, becoming involved in a professional organization on the local level will allow you to get to know local professionals in your field. You never know when a contact will be able to connect you to a job or be in a position to hire you themselves!

Some membership information about a few professional organizations, one laboratory science (AACC) and two nursing (ANA and NSNA), is presented below. Please visit their websites for additional information and benefits and to become a member.

American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC)

The American Association for Clinical Chemistry brings together those working in laboratory medicine and allows them to exchange best practices, learn about the latest biomedical science developments, and network with like-minded professionals from across the globe. Full-time undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate students are eligible for Trainee Member status, and membership dues are $38.

Trainee members get access to educational, career, and networking opportunities, including:

- Access to 18 scientific divisions, local section networking and educational events, and AACC Artery—an online community for members only, and the AACC Member Directory.
- Complimentary subscriptions to AACC publications: Clinical Chemistry (online only), Journal of Applied Laboratory Medicine (online only), Clinical Laboratory News, and CLN Stat.
- Special AACC Scientific Annual Meeting & Clinical Lab Expo benefits, including significant savings on registration and priority access to annual meeting housing.
- Exceptional discounts on a year-round educational events and webinars, including 50% discount to AACC’s Online Certificate Programs.
- Free membership in AACC’s Society for Young Clinical Laboratorians (SYCL), with vital networking, mentorship, education, travel grant and recognition opportunities.

For membership information, go to their website at https://www.aacc.org/membership/become-a-member/trainee-member.
American Nurses Association (ANA)

Although you are not eligible for ANA membership until you become a licensed RN, you can become an ANA Student Subscriber now and access members-only information for free or at a discounted rate. Nursing students can become Subscribers for $10, and if you are a member of the National Student Nurses Association (NSNA), you can become a subscriber for free. Nursing students who register as ANA Subscribers receive digital access to the following:

- Full ANA position and policy papers on important nursing issues
- Members-only content on Nursingworld.org
- ANA publications such as American Nurse Today, OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing, and ANA SmartBrief

For additional membership information, go their website at http://www.nursingworld.org/EspeciallyForYou/Student-Nurses. Sign up for a Subscriber account today and take advantage of your membership benefits right away! Additionally, students and new grads can register for a FREE digital “Welcome to the Profession Kit” which is full of information on taking care of your career, yourself, your patients, and your profession.

National Student Nurses' Association (NSNA)

The National Student Nurses Association (NSNA) provides educational resources, leadership opportunities, and career guidance to help prepare students for involvement in professional associations upon graduation. It's mission is “to mentor students preparing for initial licensure as registered nurses, and to convey the standards, ethics, and skills that students will need as responsible and accountable leaders and members of the profession” (NSNA, n.d., para. 1).

Some of the NSNA membership benefits include:

- Leadership development, community outreach and career planning opportunities
- Subscription to Imprint, the professional magazine for student nurses
- Discounts on study tools/NCLEX reviews, health and liability insurance, NSNA Annual Convention & MidYear Career Planning Conference registration fees, and student membership in select professional nursing organizations
- Scholarship opportunities

The cost to join NSNA is $40 per year in Ohio; it varies based on the state you live in. This is a small price to pay for the opportunities and benefits that membership affords you. For additional information, go to the NSNA website (http://www.nsna.org/).

Additional Professional Nursing Organizations with Student Membership

There are many other nursing organizations with a variety of student nurse networking opportunities; here are a few you may be interested in joining:

- Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (http://www.medsurgnurse.org)
- American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (http://www.aacn.org)
- American Association of Occupational Health Nurses (http://www.aaohn.org)
- American Psychiatric Nurses Association (http://www.apna.org)
- Emergency Nurses Association (http://www.ena.org)
- National Association of Orthopaedic Nurses (http://www.orthonurse.org)
- Oncology Nursing Society (http://www.ons.org)

Professional organizations, both at the national and local chapter levels, provide opportunities to share best practices, connect with peers in your specialty, and learn about new trends and technical advances. Joining these associations or volunteering with organizations in your specialty area can help you advance your career through networking opportunities, whether you are a student, new graduate, or seasoned professional. Join one today!

References:

