

Unique Committee Lets Nurses Help in Creation of Policies

"We believe that if nurses can help make the policies for Nursing Service they will support them, and this has proven true over the years," said Miss Lelia Clark, director of the service, in speaking of the Personnel Policies Committee that comes under her direction.

In the late forties, nursing personnel problems arising from the lack of job descriptions and discrepancies in vacation allowances led Dean Florence Wilson of the School of Nursing to push for the formation of a personnel policies committee for Nursing Service. It was formed and functioned under the dean's direction until the following year, 1949, when it became the responsibility of the new director of Nursing Service, Miss Clark.

"The purpose of the committee is to get the overall picture—the prevailing attitude or opinion—for the other nurses," said Mrs. Arlene Park, who completed this fall a two year term as committee chairman. "It is a committee to recommend solutions to certain problems," she added.

Policies In Perspective

It is also felt that the committee serves not only the nursing staff in general, but also its members in particular. Miss Clark feels that serving on the committee is an important part of in-service education, since it helps the nurses view the overall policies with more perspective.

Ten nurses serve on the committee, each for two years, with five new members being appointed each year. When a committee member's term ends, she may suggest a replacement. When possible, the applicant is interviewed by the committee chairman. Final appointment is subject to the approval of the applicant's immediate supervisor.

"We try to have all levels and all services represented on the committee," said Miss Clark.

The committee has several functions.

Deals With Knotty Problems

One of its major functions, as its name implies, is the frequent review of personnel policies involving the graduate nurse

(R.N.). "The committee deals with some of the more knotty problems that come up concerning the policies," said Miss Clark. Often changes are recommended.

To keep abreast of trends in benefits and personnel policies found in other medical centers, a survey is conducted every few years. Many recommendations have been made, based upon the results of the surveys. Recommended salary increases is an example of such a recommendation.

The committee also serves staff nurses in other ways. It studies, reviews, and defines qualifications, functions and standards of the graduate nurse, the assistant head nurse, and head nurse. Applications and credentials are reviewed and recommendations made for the

Sometimes subcommittees are created to deal with special problems. It was a subcommittee that developed the scholarship program for graduate nurses, which entitles them during the first year of employment to six hours of course instruction in any subject at any area institution (pending admission to the school) and twelve hours thereafter. (Last year twenty-seven nurses participated in the program.) Another subcommittee was created to study the 40-hour week, and in recent years several subcommittees have been appointed to work on time problems arising from the number of nurses who can work only on a part-time basis.

More Coffee and Money

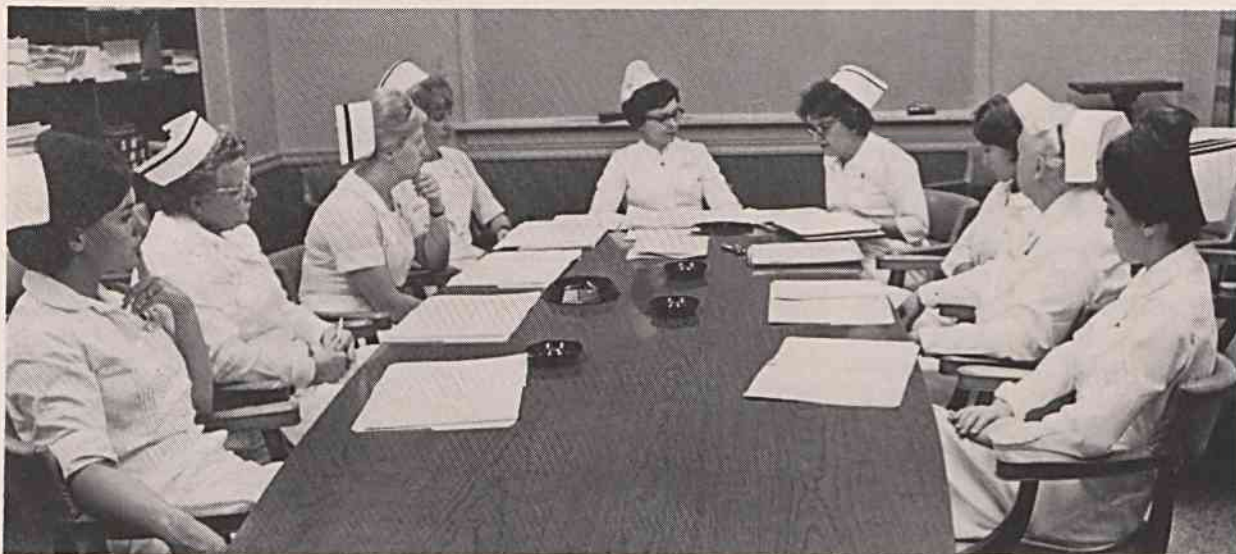
It is because of the committee's recommendations that night

plaints are discussed. Sometimes Miss Clark feels the need for committee discussion of a problem with which she is faced. Doctors, too, sometimes present problems for discussion.

It is emphasized that staff nurses are encouraged to bring nursing problems—personal or otherwise—to the attention of their committee representative. Only the problem is revealed to the committee, not the source of information. All committee discussions are considered confidential.

Considering a Swimming Pool

At the present time, the committee is working on recommendations for a personnel policies handbook; fact-sheets describing the different nursing areas to be used in the recruitment and orientation of new nurses; and



Take a sticky problem, add a dash of diplomacy and a lot of discussion, sift with perspective and you have a meeting of the Nursing Service Personnel Policies Committee. It is to this committee that problems faced by registered nurses on the wards, in the clinics, and in other areas of the hospital are brought forward for discussion and a recommended solution. Shown above discussing a problem at one of the committee meetings are (from left): Mrs. Elizabeth Kendall, Mrs. Mary McColm, Mrs. Shirlianne Kostyo, Miss Norma Griffith, Mrs. Joanne McLees (chairman), Miss Gloria Stevens, Mrs. Barbara Bovender, Miss Lelia Clark, and Miss Nancy Burris.

promotion of nurses.

"It is unique, I think, for the nurses to be given a voice in recommending appointments for head nurse and assistant head nurse positions and policy changes," said Mrs. Joanne McLees, present committee chairman. "And there have been very few times when our recommendations have not been accepted," she added.

In addition, special requests are considered by the committee, such as requests for vacation not covered by existing policies and also requests for leaves of absence.

nurses have coffee, salaries have been raised, certain nursing positions have been created, time-scheduling for different shifts has been studied, nursing positions are better defined, and that requests for countless leaves of absence, vacations, promotions, appointments, and job relocations have been granted.

"The committee has done a great deal in ways and means of improving the work situation for the graduate nurse at Duke," said Miss Clark.

Often "sticky" problems are brought to the committee for discussion. Numerous ward com-

a high-rise apartment building for staff nurses which will include one- and two-bedroom units, a swimming pool, and laundry facilities.

Committee members and the nurses they represent are: Mrs. Joanne McLees (chairman) and Mrs. Elizabeth Kendall, Medicine; Miss Gloria Stevens, Pediatrics; Miss Nancy Burris and Miss Shirley Scott, Surgery; Mrs. Pat Brady, OR; Mrs. Barbara Bovender, Psychiatry; Mrs. Mary McColm, supervisors; Mrs. Shirlianne Kostyo, OPD; and Miss Norma Griffith, Ob-Gyn.