



SPRING 2026 NEWSLETTER

President's Message



Dear all,

Our Louisiana Chapter was one of only four chapters across the nation honored for chapter performance excellence at the 2026 ACHE Congress in Houston earlier this month.

Also at Congress, eight of our eighteen colleagues who earned Board Certification as Fellows of ACHE in 2025 walked across the stage to be recognized at the convocation. This accomplishment represents a cornerstone in advancing healthcare leadership development and aligning with national standards of excellence across our industry. Congratulations to all who achieved this important career milestone in 2025. Your dedication highlights the value of ACHE membership and inspires those who are working toward this goal in 2026.

As a chapter, our focus in 2026 will continue to be creating value for our members through mentorship, networking, and education.

Warmly,

Dionne Viator, CPA, FACHE
ACHE of Louisiana President

2026 Fellow Advancement Program

The next **Fellow Advancement Course Cohort** will kick off on Thursday, June 4 and run each Thursday through Aug. 13. [Registration](#) is now live on Eventbrite. Participation in the course requires that you meet all the [advancement requirements](#), take the Board of Governors exam, and apply to become a Fellow by Dec. 31, 2026. Please contact Rich Priore, FACHE, at rpriore@tulane.edu or 612-965-3134 if you have any questions. Under Dr. Priore's leadership, fifteen members have advanced to Fellow status from the 2024 and 2025 cohorts. Read the Fellow Spotlight in this newsletter to get a first-hand perspective of the value of the program!

Recognition of New Fellows

Speaking of Fellows, congratulations to **Michael Bertrand, II, Vincent Dellocono, Kristen Gradney, Tamara Mitchell, Mark Randolph, Jamie Shaw, Erin Walker, and Jomel Whittington** who have earned the FACHE credential.

Pay Dues by March 31

Pay 2026 dues before April 1 to avoid a lapse in membership. There are three payment options:

- Pay in one lump sum;
- Enroll in Membership Auto Renewal; or
- Request a dues installment plan (billed in three payments).

Questions about the installment plan can be directed to ACHE's Customer Service Center at contact@ache.org or call (312) 424-9400, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CT.

Starting 2026 with Purpose: The Responsibility and Impact of Mentorship

Kristina Gray, PhD(c), MBA/HCM, PPMC, CRA, CPCS and Mentorship Chair

As we enter 2026, mentorship remains one of the most meaningful responsibilities we hold as healthcare leaders. Beyond titles, metrics, and strategic plans, mentorship is where leadership becomes personal, and where our influence has the greatest potential to shape the future of our profession.



Mentorship is not about providing answers; it is about creating space for critical thinking, confidence building, and intentional career navigation. As mentors, we have the privilege of helping emerging leaders translate theory into practice, understand organizational culture, and develop the discernment required to lead with integrity in complex healthcare environments. The role demands presence, honesty, and accountability – qualities that define leadership long after formal programs conclude.

One mentee that I have worked with the past year, reflected on the experience this way: “As a student pursuing an MBA in Healthcare Administration, having a mentor was essential in helping me navigate both my academic journey and the transition into healthcare leadership. Guidance from a seasoned executive has given me the confidence to make intentional career decisions, ask the right questions, and better understand how leadership principles translate into real-world healthcare operations. Through mentorship, I gained clarity on my professional goals, strengthened my ability to reflect on feedback, and learned how purposeful leadership can shape both individual growth and organizational culture. This experience reinforced the value of mentorship not only as professional support, but as a foundation for accountability, self-awareness, and long-term success as an early careerist.” ~ Lidia Trappey

This reflection reinforces what many of us know instinctively: mentorship accelerates growth not through directive instruction, but through purposeful dialogue. Effective mentorship strengthens self-awareness, encourages reflection on feedback, and builds clarity around professional goals. It also reinforces that leadership is not transactional – it is relational.

As we begin 2026, I encourage fellow ACHE members to view mentorship not as an optional activity, but as a strategic and ethical obligation. Whether through formal programs or informal relationships, mentorship is how we sustain excellence, advance equity, and ensure the next generation of healthcare leaders is prepared – not just to manage systems, but to lead people.

If you would like to become a mentor or mentee, please reach out via the chapter [website](#).

Mentorship is how leadership endures.

Commentary on Community Impact



The Future of Healthcare Leadership: Insights from the Richard J. Stull Essay Competition

Emerging Healthcare Leaders Offer Insight, Courage, and Hope for the Profession by Dr. Coletta C. Barrett, DNP, MHA, RN, FAHA, FACHE

Every generation of healthcare leaders eventually confronts the same question: Who will lead after us?

For those privileged to read the essays submitted to the Stull Essay Contest each year, the answer becomes reassuringly clear.

Serving as a reader and evaluator for the Stull Essay Contest has long been one of the most rewarding professional experiences of my career. The contest invites emerging healthcare professionals and students to examine complex issues facing healthcare today and to propose thoughtful, evidence-informed perspectives on how those challenges might be addressed. Through their writing, participants demonstrate not only their understanding of healthcare systems but also their capacity for reflection, analysis, and leadership.

This year, I had the additional honor of moderating the recognition lecture in which the six winning authors presented their work. What might have been a traditional awards presentation quickly became something more meaningful, a dialogue about the future of healthcare leadership.

As each student presented, their insights sparked discussion about workforce challenges, health equity, innovation, and accountability in healthcare systems. Their perspectives reflected both intellectual rigor and moral clarity—qualities essential to leaders navigating today's increasingly complex healthcare environment.

Leadership development is not incidental in healthcare; it must be cultivated intentionally. Opportunities that encourage emerging professionals to articulate ideas, challenge assumptions, and engage in thoughtful dialogue play a significant role in shaping the leaders our health systems will depend upon in the future.

National leadership frameworks reinforce this imperative. Reports from the National Academy of Medicine emphasize the importance of developing leadership capacity across the healthcare workforce to advance health equity and strengthen system performance (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine et al., 2021). Similarly, leadership competency models developed by the American College of Healthcare Executives underscore mentorship, professional engagement, and lifelong learning as foundational elements of effective healthcare leadership (American College of Healthcare Executives, 2026).

Programs like the Stull Essay Contest serve as a bridge between emerging professionals and experienced leaders. They create a space where innovative ideas can be shared, where dialogue can flourish, and where seasoned leaders can listen to perspectives that may challenge long-standing assumptions.

In the undergraduate division, essays addressed the evolving competencies of healthcare leadership, the strategic implications of reputation management in the digital era, and the ethical considerations surrounding genetic and pharmacogenetic testing. These topics highlight an important shift in healthcare leadership—from managing systems to navigating a complex environment encompassing workforce culture, digital transparency, and the ethical stewardship of emerging technologies.

In the graduate division, the focus shifted to integrating advanced technologies into healthcare systems. Essays explored artificial intelligence as a driver of performance improvement and return on investment, the strategic design of technology-integrated healthcare systems, and the development of frameworks for applying AI to chronic disease management.

What struck me most during the presentations was the depth of thought demonstrated by the winners. The essence of us who have spent decades in healthcare leadership is that experiences like Stull Essay presentations provide a profound sense of optimism. While the challenges facing healthcare remain significant—workforce shortages, financial pressures, technological disruption, and persistent health inequities—the future remains promising, given

the caliber of individuals entering the profession (American College of Healthcare Executives, n.d.).

Healthcare leadership is ultimately a relay, not a solo race. Each generation carries the responsibility to strengthen the profession and prepare those who will lead after us.

The Stull Essay Contest reminds us that leadership development is not simply about teaching skills; it is about cultivating voices, encouraging curiosity, and inspiring a commitment to serve.

Listening to these emerging professionals, one cannot help but feel hopeful. The future of healthcare will be shaped by leaders who are thoughtful, principled, and prepared to navigate complexity with both compassion and courage.

For those of us privileged to serve as mentors, readers, and stewards of the profession, the experience is both humbling and inspiring.

The future of healthcare leadership is already emerging—and it is in very capable hands.

Author Reflection

Having served as a reader for the Stull Essay Contest for many years, I value these essays as more than an academic exercise. They are a window into the thinking of the next generation of healthcare leaders. Each year, I am reminded that while the challenges facing healthcare continue to evolve, so too does the talent, insight, and commitment of those preparing to lead. Moderating the recognition session this year made that realization even more powerful. Listening to the winners present their ideas and engage in thoughtful dialogue reaffirmed what I have long believed: the future of healthcare leadership will be shaped by individuals deeply committed to improving the health of the communities we serve.

References

American College of Healthcare Executives. (n.d.). 10 strategic priorities for healthcare leaders in 2026. <https://www.ache.org/blog/2026/10-strategic-priorities-for-healthcare-leaders-in-2026>

American College of Healthcare Executives. (2026). *ACHE healthcare executive 2026 competencies assessment tool*. <https://www.ache.org/-/media/ache/career-resource-center/cat-competencies-assessment-tool.pdf>

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, National Academy of Medicine, & Committee on the Future of Nursing 2020-2030. (2021). *The future of nursing 2020-2030: charting a path to achieve health equity*. National Academies Press.

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Fellow Spotlight – Dylan Thriffiley, FACHE

Dylan is the Interim Chief Compliance Officer for Ochsner Health. She is pictured at right with coworker Michelle Lucas Huck, FACHE and Chief Audit Executive at Ochsner Health.

What do you feel is the value of the FACHE designation?

I work in healthcare compliance, so my day-to-day tends to live in a pretty specific lane. The FACHE process forced me outside of it in the best possible way. Preparing for the BOG exam means engaging with all 10 knowledge domains – finance, operations, strategy, governance – areas that, frankly, compliance professionals don't always get deep exposure to. And that broader understanding of how healthcare organizations actually function makes me better at my job. If you want to understand why certain decisions get made (and why some of them eventually become compliance problems) you need to understand the business of healthcare, not just your corner of it. FACHE gave me a framework for that.



What is one thing that has or continues to surprise you in your career?

How much of healthcare leadership is really about relationships. The technical knowledge matters, but the ability to navigate people, build trust across silos, and communicate up, down, and sideways – that's what actually moves the needle. I keep learning that lesson in new ways.

What are your recommendations for early careerists?

My advice is simple: don't wait until you feel 'ready,' and don't try to do it alone.

The Fellow Advancement Course through the Louisiana chapter was a game changer for me. Dr. Priore has a gift for taking dense material and making it genuinely approachable and digestible, and what really sets it apart is that he doesn't just teach you the content. He teaches you how to take the exam. The test-taking strategies alone are worth it. There is a lot of material to cover, and having that structured support made the process feel manageable rather than overwhelming. I was also lucky enough to go through the course and Convocation with my friend and colleague Michelle Huck, which made the whole experience even more meaningful.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

I have five kids, so I'll let you use your imagination on what "outside of work" looks like for me. :)

Chapter Website:
<https://louisiana.ache.org/>

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