



GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE ***March 2018***

INTRODUCTION AND TASK FORCE CHARGE

In 2014, the AACN Board of Directors established the Futures Task Force to develop recommendations regarding potential new efforts that can be implemented to support the mission of the organization and ensure support for the development of a nursing workforce for the future. As part of its charge, the task force conducted an organizational assessment to determine if AACN is well positioned to meet the needs of all internal and external stakeholders given the expansion of our mission and reach. In order for AACN to truly serve as the catalyst for innovation in nursing education that will improve health and health care, the task force recommended in its final report that AACN “explore opportunities for alternative governance structures that will support nimbleness, innovation, timeliness, collaboration, and inclusivity (e.g. advisory councils, different board models, expanded memberships, emphasis on generative role for governance).” In Summer 2016, the Board of Directors established the Governance Task Force.

Task Force Charge

1. Explore governance structures that support nimbleness, innovation, timeliness, collaboration, and inclusivity.
2. Consider advisory councils, different board models, and expanded membership opportunities.
3. Ensure membership constituents are provided opportunities for meaningful engagement and are optimally positioned for success.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The Governance Task Force met regularly over the two years through both in-person meetings and conference calls. The task force reviewed a wide range of background materials and resources, and benchmarked AACN’s current governance structure to other model associations and peer organizations. In addition, extensive discussion occurred in the areas of AACN membership, composition and practices of the Board of Directors, the nomination and election process, committee structures, and opportunities for other governance structures.

Early in the work of the task force, an important distinction was identified to distinguish membership engagement in the governance of the association from engagement in the programmatic work of AACN (e.g. developing member programs, task force work, etc.). The recommendations of the Governance Task Force will focus on the governance of the association. An addendum of other recommendations for further exploration will be included in the final report.

The AACN membership was provided numerous opportunities to provide input and feedback to the Governance Task Force. These opportunities included:

- 2017 Spring Annual Meeting - Task Force Update Program Session and Like Schools Discussion Topic
- August 2017 - Comprehensive Progress Report and Membership Survey
- 2017 Fall Academic Nursing Leadership Conference - Task Force Update Program Session, Focus Group and Membership Report
- 2017 Baccalaureate Education Conference - Focus Group
- 2018 Deans Annual Meeting - Task Force Concurrent Session on Saturday, March 24 and Membership Report

The task force has developed *draft* recommendations, which are included in this report. The draft recommendations were developed after extensive discussion and careful review of all gathered information.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Early in the task force's work, the following design principles were developed to describe attributes of the future governance system and to guide in the development of the recommendations.

1. Increase opportunities for member engagement and participation in the governance and leadership of the association (versus the programmatic work of the association).
2. Support the mission, goals, and work of the association.
3. Clarify the governance structure, roles, and authority (clarity and transparency).
4. Enhance nimbleness and timeliness.
5. Increase focus on innovation, creative thinking, and input from multiple perspectives.
6. Balance historical perspectives and institutional knowledge with new voices and ideas.
7. Strengthen diversity and inclusion, both in terms of individual backgrounds and types of schools.
8. Increase opportunities for collaboration within the association and with external partners.
9. Provide opportunities for members to make a meaningful contribution and have real input.

10. Support the development of volunteer leaders, provide opportunities for new deans to assume leadership roles more quickly, and propose ways to continue to engage former deans.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

The DRAFT recommendations of the Governance Task Force are categorized in four areas under Membership, Board of Directors, Nominations and Elections, and Other Governance Structures.

Membership

1. Maintain current categories of AACN membership (Institutional, Provisional Institutional, Emeritus, Honorary, and Honorary Associate), with the primary membership remaining at the institution level.
2. Maintain voting/governance representative as the Chief Nurse Academic Officer (Dean/Director).
3. *Continuing Discussion Item* - Expand institutional membership criteria to include that one or more of the programs at the institution is accredited or pursuing accreditation by CCNE or other USDE-recognized nursing accreditation agency.

Board of Directors

1. Increase the number of seats on the AACN Board of Directors from 11 to 13 to include two representatives from nursing practice. Practice members would not be eligible to serve as Officers.
2. Limit board member terms to no more than four consecutive terms (maximum 8 years) without a break in service.

Nominations and Elections

1. To broaden membership representation, expand the Nominating Committee to six members including five elected members and the immediate past AACN Board Chair.
2. Supplement current Nominating Committee matrix with a “board competency matrix” developed by the Governance Committee to ensure the Nominating Committee is aware of the needed expertise, skills, and perspectives for board service.
3. Issue the Call for Nominations for Practice representatives through the AACN membership and other associations. Practice representatives would have to be

the chief nurse officer (or similar level senior nurse executive with ultimate responsibility for all nursing practice within the organization).

Other Governance Structures

1. *Continuing Discussion Item* - Distinguish current Committees to be either Board (Governance) Committees or Programmatic (Advisory) Committees. Board Committees would include Finance Committee, Governance Committee (new committee) and Audit Committee (new committee). A Board member would serve as the Chair of the Governance Committee and the Treasurer would serve as the Chair of the Finance Committee. The Governance Committee responsibilities would include development of the Board competency matrix to help inform the work of the Nominating Committee and Board orientation/assessment.
2. *Continuing Discussion Item* - Programmatic (Advisory) Committees would include Membership, Program, Government Affairs, and Diversity/Inclusion Committees. A member would serve as the Chair of Programmatic Committees with Board liaisons appointed.
3. *Continuing Discussion Item* - Establish a Joint Council whereby the Chairs of Committees, Task Forces, Advisory Groups, Like School Groups, Leadership Network Steering Committees, and the GNSA Leadership Council are provided opportunity to share feedback and comments directly to the Board of Directors. The Joint Council would meet virtually as needed with a minimum of one meeting annually.
4. *Continuing Discussion Item* - Establish a Leadership Resource Advisory Group for former deans who would like to continue their affiliation with AACN. Members would self-select and would meet once a year at the Fall Meeting.
5. *Continuing Discussion Item* - Establish a Corporate Advisory Group. Members would be comprised of AACN's strategic business partners. Members would meet once a year at the Fall meeting.
6. *Continuing Discussion Item* - Establish a Past Board Chair Advisory Group - Members would meet once a year at the Fall Meeting.
7. *Continuing Discussion Item* - Establish an Advisory Board - Members would be selected based on advisory needs of Board of Directors and could include representatives from secondary education, public, consumers, practice, etc.

DRAFT - OTHER AREAS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

1. Enhance communication and transparency regarding AACN's governance structure and processes. Additional communications should be provided regarding the volunteer process, and there should be increased communications with the membership about the nomination and election process to help ensure understanding and engagement and to promote transparency.
2. Provide a broader Call for Volunteer opportunities for Committees, Task Forces, and Advisory Groups. The call for application process would advance multiple goals: increasing the number of people engaged in the work of AACN, creating a leadership pipeline for the future, and increasing awareness of the nominations process.
3. Committees (including the Nominating Committee), Task Forces, and Advisory Groups should reflect the characteristics of the AACN membership (e.g., geographic representation, membership diversity, type of institution/program).
4. Look at the naming and number of Like School groups. Allow membership to continue to self-select. Board will continue with assigned Board liaisons and have the opportunity to report back to Board, similar to current process. In addition, the facilitators of the Like School groups would be invited to participate in Joint Council Meetings.
5. Expand information provided in the Call for Nominations to include desired Board competencies for service provided by the Board of Directors. In addition to self-nominations, the Nominating Committee would recruit individuals who bring the desired mix of skills and experience to the board, encouraging non-traditional candidates to consider standing for election. Continue to share information with the membership regarding the current Nominating Committee process to develop and advance a balanced slate of candidates, including the current Nominating Committee matrix (which includes institution type, size, geographic location and diversity), and the committee's consideration of past experience both within AACN and outside the organization, as well as conflicts of interest.
6. For the Call for Nominations for Board, practice representatives emphasize need for experience in leadership positions at the national level.
7. Review and update responsibilities for current Committees to reflect current best practices and streamline processes.
8. Incorporate regular process for focus groups at all AACN events as an opportunity to invite, connect, and engage with the membership in smaller settings.
9. Explore alternative methods of voting (e.g., proxy, electronic/online).

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

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