

Association News

Voting in the Annual Election: Why Should You Care?

Norma D. McNair, MSN RN CNRN, Chair, Nominating Committee

The annual election process is upon us, and it will soon be time for you to take a few minutes to examine the candidates and vote. Your one vote does make a difference! Illinois law requires that 10% of the membership vote to certify an election—please be part of that 10%.

The process for electing AANN leadership is an important one, and it is carried out by presenting a slate of candidates who will provide strong leadership to the association.

The Nominating Committee (composed of AANN members) reviews and interviews all applicants for national office positions and ensures that the candidates represent the membership, are diverse in their professional roles, and are from all areas of the country.

The Committee's responsibility is to ensure that all suitable candidates are presented to the membership. Once a slate of candidates is prepared by the Nominating Committee, the membership decides who should be elected. This year's candidates reflect all of these characteristics, and I hope you will participate in the election process.

As in previous years, the election will be conducted online and will begin on October 1, 2008, and end on October 31, 2008. The link for the ballot will be on the AANN Web site and e-mail reminders will be sent out as the election date draws near.

AANN is a worldwide leader in the care of neuroscience patients, and our leadership reflects the caliber of our membership. To keep AANN in the forefront, strong leaders must be elected. And, to have leadership that represents the membership, you need to vote.

Strategic Planning: The Editor's Perspective

V. Susan Carroll, MSN RN CNE, Editor, Journal of Neuroscience Nursing

Those two words, *strategic planning*, conjure images of government and military bureaucrats mapping out big plans for the world. For many nurses, strategic planning forces us to relive the many hours in which we completed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analyses for our units, departments, or institutions. Brainstorming, "gang voting," and coming to consensus have been a part of our professional lives for as long as many of us have been nurses. Strategic planning did not, however, include much creativity, discussions of philosophical stances, or fun.

Oh, how things change! I had the privilege of being a part of the American Association of Neuroscience Nurses (AANN) Board's strategic planning exercise this past summer. Rather than being encouraged to come to the table to plan, we were coming to think—to think strategically. Sure, we had to consider the usual suspects (i.e., SWOT), but we did so from an ideological basis. We thought about questions such as what are the core purposes and values of AANN, how should we frame our goals so that these underpin our efforts to become the best possible professional nursing organization, and how can we build on our purposes and values to distinguish our organization and our members from other professional groups?

We made assumptions about our future within the broader framework of the future of health care, and we tried to identify the big issues we face and the goals that they will affect. Two or three key objectives on which to focus our best efforts and resources were also defined. As the

editor of the *Journal of Neuroscience Nursing (JNN)*, my participation in this experience helped put the future of one of our very public faces more clearly into AANN's big picture. *JNN* is, and will remain, a key component in the dissemination of neuroscience knowledge and the recognition of our members' expertise. Having input into AANN's future goals will allow me, as editor, to work with the *JNN* Editorial Board, our manuscript reviewers, and our authors to produce a publication that showcases our unique talents and the broad scope of our knowledge. I left the thinking sessions with a clear sense of *JNN*'s value as well as a clear sense of our future and the ways in which AANN will support it.

Strategic planning will continue to require hard work, teamwork, and consensus building, but I'm convinced we have the brains to do it right!

An Update from the NACNS Summit

Debbie Ferguson, MSN RN CCRN CNRN

I represented the American Association of Neuroscience Nurses (AANN) as an attendee at the fifth annual National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS) summit held July 10–11, at Sigma Theta Tau headquarters in Indianapolis. The primary focuses of the 2008 summit were the clinical nurse specialist (CNS) core competency examination currently under development in collaboration with the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) and the plans for using a portfolio with the core exam for certification of CNS's for whom there is no CNS exam available in their specialty. Other specialty members represented were the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS), the American Association of Occupational Health Nurses (AAOHN), the American Nurses Association (ANA), ANCC, the American Society for Pain Management Nursing (ASPMN), the Association of Community Health Nursing Educators (ACHNE), the Wound Ostomy Continence Nursing Certification Board (WOCNCB), the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN), the Board of Certification for Emergency Nursing (BCEN), the Competency and Credentialing Institute (CCI), the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA), the International Nurses Society on Addictions (IntNSA), the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), nurses in AIDS care, psychiatric nurses, and members of NACNS. All participants shared any specialty scope, standards, and competencies available for CNS's in their practice areas. The sessions the first afternoon outlined the journey toward doctoral competencies and the portfolio and credentialing processes used by other specialty organizations.

Participants anxiously returned the next day to learn more about the CNS core exam and portfolio processes to date resulting from the NACNS/ANCC collaboration. Information was presented regarding the adoption of 500 clinical hours for initial preparation and the three Ps—pharmacology, pathophysiology, and physical assessment—to be included in curricula. Participants discussed what the exam is intended to measure and whether initial certification should focus on expert practice or entry level of practice. Measurement of competency through a portfolio was reviewed, noting that an online product is to be available. The College Health Nursing group is set to conduct a trial of the product beginning in early 2009. The portfolio will essentially show the logical analysis or linkage of knowledge in competencies found in the documentation and will be measured as pass or fail; the intent of the portfolio is to show the essence of the CNS's role.

At the end of the day, there were many more questions posed than answers given, for this is an evolving process. Communication and collaboration at these types of meetings are part of the development process to keep stakeholders well informed and, in fact, help shape the final process. In summary, for the neuroscience CNS seeking specialty certification (because no examination is currently available), the new advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) model is a possible mechanism for being recognized. The portfolio option demonstrates specialty competency and is something that a CNS can work on over time; consideration can begin now as to projects or CNS work that can demonstrate, via this portfolio, that the CNS has these competencies.

The NACNS summit is an important meeting for the stakeholders to be able to gather and be part of developing the future of CNS practice, and it was a pleasure to represent our group there.

CNS Core Competencies Under Discussion

A group of about 20 nursing organizations representing the National Consensus Process for Core Clinical Nurse Specialists Competencies recently convened to discuss nationally recognized educational standards, role competencies, and specialty competencies for the clinical nurse specialist (CNS). The group hopes to publish a final document on the issue by the end of the year.

Spearheaded by the American Nurses Association (ANA), the group comprises organizations such as the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS), the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), and the AACN Certification Corporation. The group has obtained feedback from the stakeholder organizations as well as other key nursing organizations on the preliminary draft, and ANA or NACNS will likely publish the final document.

According to AANN representative Cathy Cartwright, MSN RN PCNS, the group discussed both the relevancy and necessity of core competencies for entry-level CNS's who are recent graduates. "The nationally recognized educational standards, role competencies, and specialty competencies not only help define the role of Clinical Nurse Specialists new to the field but [also] assist graduate nursing programs in teaching core competencies to students," Cartwright said.

Core competencies include behavioral statements related to direct care, consultation, systems leadership, collaboration, coaching, research, and ethical decision-making, moral agency, and advocacy. Behavioral statements related to direct care competencies, for example, include "conducts comprehensive, holistic wellness, and illness assessments using known or innovative evidence-based techniques, tools, and direct and indirect methods" or "obtains data about context and etiologies (including both nondisease and disease-related factors) necessary to formulate differential diagnoses and plans of care and to identify and evaluate outcomes."

For more information, contact Cathy at cartwrightc@health.missouri.edu.

Member Benefits

There are many benefits associated with your membership in AANN. These include

- Electronic vehicles—online membership directory, Job Mart, bulletin boards, e-mail discussion lists, and more
- Discounted rates for the esteemed Certified Neuroscience Registered Nurse (CNRN) examination
- Volunteer Activity Board—new area of the AANN Web site that allows you to express interest in volunteer opportunities within AANN through a user-friendly, electronic format

Be sure to take advantage of these benefits to make the most of your membership!