

Resolution GA25-08

Separation and Reform of the Leadership Development and Elections Committee and Emergency Nurses Association Elections

Whereas, the current structure of the Emergency Nurses Association's (ENA's) Leadership Development and Elections Committee (LDEC) combines two distinct and critical functions, leadership pipeline development and the vetting/selection of election candidates, into a single body, creating inherent conflicts of interest, diluting focus, and reducing overall effectiveness (ENA, 2023; ENA, 2024);

Whereas, the evaluation criteria, grading rubrics, and scoring methodologies used by the LDEC are not made available to ENA members, resulting in a lack of transparency that erodes trust in the electoral process and reduces member confidence in leadership selection (BoardSource, 2021; BoardSource, 2023; Tacon et al., 2017);

Whereas, the LDEC has no formalized, standardized training requirements for its members on equitable candidate evaluation, implicit bias awareness, or nonprofit governance, and there is no mandate that members have prior ENA Board service, thereby limiting their ability to fully and accurately assess candidate readiness for high-level leadership roles (Levashina et al., 2014; Lertsakulbunlue et al, 2024; Ramazanzadeh et al., 2023; Roch et al, 2012; Rosales-Sánchez et al., 2019);

Whereas, pursuant to Article IX, Section 1 of the ENA Bylaws and Section 2.01 of the ENA Election Rules, any candidate for the Board of Directors or the Leadership Development and Elections Committee must meet the eligibility requirements established in the ENA Bylaws, including but not limited to active ENA membership in good standing, required leadership experience, and timely submission of all nomination materials; and whereas under Section 3.01 of the ENA Election Rules, the LDEC retains the authority to review and certify applications, which enables it to exclude a candidate from the official slate even when that candidate meets all eligibility requirements as set forth in the ENA Bylaws (ENA, 2024; 2025).

Whereas, applicants to the ENA Board of Directors who are not selected for the official slate by the LDEC currently have no formal appeals process, no formal, structured, and consistent feedback mechanism, and no opportunity to correct misunderstandings or clarify qualifications, undermining principles of fairness, due process, and member (Chen et al., 2015; Colquitt et al, 2001; Pan et al 2018);

Whereas, many members have expressed concern over the growing frequency of uncontested elections, in which only one candidate is presented for many positions, a practice that limits member choice, diminishes competitive dialogue, and may discourage potential applicants from pursuing leadership roles (Hoff, 2018; International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research, 2025; The Synergist, 2025)

Whereas, the American Nurses Association (ANA), through its Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC), manages the development of its election slate in accordance with the ANA Election Manual (ANA, 2025), which does not require the slating of only one candidate for a position. Rather, the NEC may slate all qualified nominees who meet established eligibility criteria and align with identified leadership competencies, thereby fostering a competitive election environment; And whereas this process, by prioritizing merit-based selection and ensuring that voters have a choice between candidates, implicitly discourages uncontested elections and reinforces ANA's commitment to transparency, member engagement, and democratic governance (ANA, 2025).

Whereas, best practices in nonprofit governance, as outlined by organizations such as BoardSource and the Association of Fundraising Professionals, recommend separating leadership development functions from candidate vetting, implementing transparent evaluation tools, encouraging competitive elections, and establishing clear appeals processes to strengthen member engagement and organizational credibility (BoardSource, 2023;

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National Council of Nonprofits, n.d.; ASAE, 2018).

Resolved, that the Emergency Nurses Association should consider a bylaws change to restructure the current LDEC into two separate and distinct committees, one for Leadership Development and one for Elections, each with clearly defined scopes, responsibilities, and accountabilities. This will eliminate potential conflicts of interest and strengthen both leadership cultivation and candidate evaluation processes;

Resolved, that the Emergency Nurses Association should develop and implement a fair, timely, and transparent appeals and feedback process for all Board of Directors and LDEC applicants who are not selected for the official slate, ensuring that qualified candidates have the opportunity to address misunderstandings or provide clarifications before the slate is finalized;

Resolved, that the Emergency Nurses Association should adopt and publish transparent, evidence-based evaluation rubrics and minimum qualifications for Elections Committee members, including a strong preference for individuals with prior Board of Directors service, and require standardized training in equitable candidate assessment and nonprofit governance;

Resolved, that the Emergency Nurses Association should address member concerns regarding the practice of presenting only one candidate for many elections by establishing policies that encourage competitive slates whenever possible, thereby enhancing member choice, engagement, and confidence in the election process.

Resolution Background Information:

ENA relies on strong, capable, and representative leadership to advance its mission of promoting excellence in emergency nursing. One of the most influential gatekeeping bodies in ENA's leadership pipeline is the LDEC. The LDEC currently bears dual responsibility: developing future leaders and determining which members are placed on the official slate for the ENA Board of Directors. However, combining these roles in a single committee raises significant concerns related to conflict of interest, objectivity, and transparency.

The ENA Board of Directors holds a high degree of influence over policy, advocacy, and member engagement. Selection for board candidacy should be based on equitable, evidence-informed evaluation processes. However, multiple members have expressed concerns that LDEC decisions are not guided by clear, standardized rubrics, nor are applicants provided the opportunity to appeal after receiving feedback. Additionally, members have voiced growing concern about the frequency of uncontested elections, in which only one candidate is presented for a given seat. While this may occur for various reasons, the perception of limited choice can discourage member participation, reduce confidence in the electoral process, and limit the diversity of thought and experience within ENA leadership.

Furthermore, there is no requirement that all LDEC members have prior experience serving on the ENA Board. This creates a significant misalignment between those selecting candidates and those who understand the true scope and complexity of board service. This deficiency in evaluator experience raises questions about the committee's ability to assess board readiness effectively.

Best practices in nonprofit governance recommend separating leadership development functions from the evaluation and vetting of election candidates. According to BoardSource's report *Leading with Intent* (2021), such separation minimizes unconscious bias, clarifies purpose, and reduces internal power dynamics that can influence candidate selection. In addition, organizations that provide an appeals process, publish candidate evaluation criteria, and require evaluator training have demonstrated improved fairness, trust, and satisfaction among their membership (Tacon et al., 2017). Ensuring competitive slates whenever possible is also recognized as a best practice for preserving member choice and strengthening organizational democracy. Currently, there are no known ENA resources that publicly outline the LDEC's decision-making process, scoring rubrics, or minimum training standards for committee members. Without transparency in its evaluation tools, the

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qualifications of its members, or clear policies that support competitive elections, the LDEC currently lacks the accountability expected of a committee tasked with shaping the organization's leadership. This resolution seeks to modernize and realign ENA's internal structures with best practices in nonprofit board governance, leadership development, and ethical oversight. Implementing these changes will address member concerns about fairness, transparency, and choice in leadership selection. Implementing this resolution would fill a significant procedural gap and ensure that all ENA members have access to a fair, evidence-based path to leadership.

Relationship to ENA Bylaws, Mission, Vision, and Strategic Initiatives:

This resolution directly supports and strengthens ENA's governance structure by aligning with the organization's Bylaws, Mission, Vision, and Strategic Initiatives, particularly in the areas of transparency, leadership development, and member engagement.

Bylaws

According to the ENA Bylaws, the organization is governed by member-elected leaders and supported by committees and councils that reflect the collective will and input of the membership. The Bylaws establish the LDEC but do not prohibit its restructuring. There is no clause that precludes the creation of two separate entities to fulfill the distinct functions of leadership pipeline development and candidate evaluation. This resolution would preserve the integrity of ENA's democratic processes by ensuring that committee structure and practices align with core principles of due process, fairness, transparency, and member choice, tenets that underpin the very purpose of bylaws in nonprofit governance.

Mission

ENA's mission is "to advance excellence in emergency nursing." Strong, credible, and inclusive leadership is essential to achieving that mission. By reforming the LDEC to improve fairness, transparency, and representation, and by promoting competitive elections wherever feasible, ENA ensures that those leading the organization are selected through a process rooted in integrity, merit, and openness. Establishing an appeals process, transparent evaluation tools, and policies that encourage multiple candidates per position fosters a sense of fairness and empowerment among members, encouraging broader participation in leadership roles.

Vision

The ENA Vision of "a healthy world through the advancement of emergency nursing" includes the implicit need for visionary, capable, and diverse leaders who reflect the needs and experiences of the broader membership. Reforming the LDEC supports this vision by creating more inclusive and competitive pathways to board service and ensuring that leadership reflects a wide range of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences within emergency nursing.

Strategic Initiatives

This resolution aligns with several ENA Strategic Initiatives, particularly the following:

- **Leadership Development:** Separating leadership development from elections will enable a dedicated body to focus more deeply on mentoring, education, and succession planning, without the conflicting obligation of selecting who "makes the slate."
- **Governance and Transparency:** Introducing a formal appeals process, publishing evaluation rubrics, requiring evaluator training, and addressing uncontested elections promotes transparency, accountability, and trust in leadership selection.
- **Member Engagement and Inclusion:** When members understand the rules, believe the process is fair, and feel they have meaningful choices in leadership elections, they are more likely to engage, apply for leadership roles, and remain committed to the organization.

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By addressing structural flaws, supporting competitive elections, and enhancing trust in ENA's internal processes, this resolution advances the organization's capacity to develop the next generation of emergency nurse leaders while remaining aligned with ENA's core values of integrity, inclusivity, accountability, and member engagement.

Financial Considerations/Operations Impact

The scope of work outlined in the resolved clauses has a fiscal impact of less than \$10,000. Upon final outcomes of General Assembly, initiatives will be evaluated for resource planning in alignment with ENA's strategic plan and operational goals.

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