**CHAPTER ELECTIONS AND SUCCESSION PLANNING IDEAS**

- **Succession planning** should be part of the chapter’s strategic plan and the chapter should be ready for an election in April or sometime around that time. In my chapter, it is the responsibility of the whole board, but is coordinated by the past-president, who prepares the ballot. The future officers are, then, identified before NTI and can spend some time with the current officers, for mentoring and coaching, and will be better prepared for assuming the role in July.

- **Elections and succession planning** are perpetual. As soon as one election is behind us we need to be thinking of the next one, as far as getting people into place that will be interested in stepping into the leadership positions come spring. This way we are not scrambling trying to find people to run on the board, but rather have people in place that are working on committees and becoming familiar with the roles and expectations. The call for nominations goes out in March, with the ballot officially sent out in April or May. Election information is included in the newsletter, at the beginning of February, so the word gets out.

- Our chapter has a calendar template with all the important dates on it. One of our past presidents created the template. We have four chapter programs per year, so we utilize that form for 'recruiting' new officers, as well.

- Traditionally, our chapter waits too long to start our election process. This year the plan is to have a ballot ready by January, so elections can be completed in February. The hope is this will provide more mentoring time.

- Our chapter has people in "elect" positions, so they can be mentored for at least a year prior to taking that position. Our chapter also has two-year officer terms.

- We try to encourage people who we know are interested and are good leaders to run for our chapter board. By January, the nominating committee sends out the ballots. We have a deadline date of March 15th. The ballots are returned by mail and the Nominating Committee tallies the votes by April, so that by May we know who to send to the Chapter Leadership Development Workshop (LDW) at NTI.

- Our chapter has elections in January/February, so that when we have our annual chapter celebration in June, we can introduce the new board. The transition then occurs no later than August. The financial audits are done in early August.

- **Succession planning** should be started following the transition of officers. My chapter has the installation of officers in June. In the months of July and August, the chapter board meets for strategic planning, educational program planning and annual seminar program planning. There is a call (email) from chapter officers for committee members (especially for the Seminar Planning Committee). This usually identifies chapter members who can commit to the chapter's projects.

  Attendees for LDW are usually identified during the planning months of July and August. Traditionally, the president-elect & treasurer-elect attend LDW.
When the first monthly meeting starts in September, announcements include chapter officer positions that will be open for the next fiscal year. Nominations start in December and go through January. Nominations can be sent by email or submitted at the monthly meeting in January. Ballots with candidates’ bios are emailed in February. Voting ends the week of the annual seminar in April. Chapter members are given the chance to bring their ballots to the seminar. Election results are released by the Nominating Committee two weeks after the seminar.

- **Elections** should be planned as early as the start of the new fiscal year. Getting prospective leaders should always be included in the strategic planning from the start. If chapters only meet quarterly, this may be a priority at the beginning of the fiscal year.

- Survey monkey has been a great tool for our chapter. We send out a call for nominations, in April, and close the survey around the middle of May. At that time, we approach all the candidates that were nominated. Once they agree, they are placed on the ballot and the survey is re-opened for elections. We notify the winners, by July 1 and announce them publicly at our chapter awards banquet in mid July. Our first strategic planning session is in August, where we set our goals for that year. The president and treasurer are never replaced at the same time, so that there is always an experienced board member in those roles.

- We formerly had trouble with chapter nominations and elections. The Nomination Committee would attempt to contact chapter members to determine who was willing to run for office. Using this former process, members did not always respond to the attempted contact of the Nomination Committee.

However, the difficulty was resolved when we started the following process:

- We mailed a **Willingness to Serve Form** to all members on March 1st.
- Using the results of the responses to the form, the Nomination Committee assembles the ballot, which, after the Chapter Board approval, is mailed to all chapter members.
- Positions are assumed on July 1st.

**The Willingness to Serve Form is located in the Chapter section of the AACN web site. It is located in the Resource Library, under “Chapter Governance Resources”**.

- We send a **ballot** to our chapter members, using the chapter database and keep a copy of their responses in a specially marked folder, to safeguard that we have a quorum, which we quickly receive.

- Our 2011 election process went very well. We implemented some changes to move the complete process to an electronic format.

  - To find out people’s willingness to serve, we sent out a simple survey to our active chapter members.

  - During the nomination process, qualifications of members that indicated interest in one or more position were reviewed to make certain requirements for positions were met.

  - The Ballot was created as a Word Document. This allows the voters to enter their membership number or name, for eligibility verification, mark their candidates or write in the candidate of their choice, and email the completed ballot back to the Nomination Chair. The names and/or
membership number were blanked out after verifying eligibility to vote, and before final review and validation by the Nomination Committee and Board.

- Our survey was sent out March 25th and stayed open for four weeks, with a reminder send out after the 2nd and 3rd week, rendering a 25% survey return.

- The Election Ballots where emailed out in the first week of June, with a deadline of June 21st, leaving it open for the time required for electronic ballots. We were able to complete the election in just about three weeks, including notification of elected candidates.

- All ballots were returned by email and for the first time, we have been able to generate interest to a larger number of new chapter members.