



An Overview of AACN Public Statements

As the voice for professional nursing education, AACN issues position statements, white papers, and Board-endorsed statements to publicly express its view on academic issues, emerging trends, and other areas of common interest. To clarify how these different documents are developed and disseminated, the AACN Board of Directors has created this handy reference to explain the rationale behind using these modes of communication.

Position Statements represent the official view of AACN and require a vote by the membership. These statements are typically developed by an AACN-appointed task force charged with making recommendations on a critical issue for the organization or evolve out of a Board-endorsed statement (see below). Prior to a review by the membership, the AACN Board must vote to approve a statement and then recommend that it go forward to the membership for endorsement as an organizational position. AACN members are provided multiple opportunities to review and provide feedback on draft versions of these documents. Per AACN bylaws, draft position statements must be circulated to members at least 30 days before the Business Meeting where the statement will come forward for a vote. Position statements are approved by a simple majority of the members present at the Business Meeting where the vote occurs. Examples of position statements include the AACN “Essentials” for baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral education and the *Indicators of Quality in Research-Focused Doctoral Programs in Nursing*. See <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Publications/positions>.

White Papers are also typically produced by an AACN task force, but these statements do not require a vote of endorsement by the membership. White papers are developed for issues that are evolving and for which no clear statement of position is currently evident. These papers usually involve a survey of the membership and include a variety of recommendations for future consideration. White papers do not come forward to the membership for a vote. They are approved by the AACN Board and circulated to provide background information about an emerging issue that impacts nursing education. Examples of white papers include *The Hallmarks on the Professional Nursing Practice Environment* and *The Education and Role of the Clinical Nurse Leader*. See <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Publications/WhitePapers/List.htm>.

AACN Board Statements are developed in response to issues requiring a timely response on the part of the organization. In fulfilling its legal obligation to govern, the Board may endorse statements on behalf of the organization when there is a perceived sense of urgency and a potential risk for not responding in an expeditious way. AACN members may elect to endorse these statements as official positions of the organization and may request that these statements come forward for a vote by the entire membership. Examples of Board statements include the *AACN Board of Directors’ Assumptions for Guiding the Implementation of Strategic Initiatives* and *AACN Joins with the AAMC as a Friend of the Court in the Grutter v. Bollinger Case*. See <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/MembersOnly>.