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| **Western Institute of Nursing** **Conflict of Interest Policy Statement** | |
| **Policy** | Rationale |
| Background In the history of the Western Institute of Nursing (WIN), it has happened that a member of the Board or of a Committee has found herself/himself/themself in a position where she/he/they must participate in a decision which represents, in truth or appearance, a conflict of interest for her/him/them. Such a conflict usually arises when the individual has a vested interest in the outcome of a decision; e.g., a committee member judging a contest has a vested interest in the outcome if she/he/they is associated with one of the contestants. To avoid the appearance of impropriety, WIN must develop and institute a policy to guide the Board in such a situation. | This policy statement serves to guide the Board in situations where a conflict of interest may arise. This policy will not only help guide the Board’s behavior, but also help ensure that any Board decision would not be interpreted as unethical by another party. |
| Disclosure In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence and nature of her/his/their conflict of interest to the Board and any relevant committee members as soon as she/he/they becomes aware of such a conflict. For this purpose, an interested person shall include any Board member or member of a committee of the WIN. A conflict of interest shall include:   1. a relationship with an entity with which the WIN has a proposed transaction or agreement; 2. any compensation arrangement with the WIN or with any entity or individual with which the WIN has a proposed transaction or arrangement; 3. residency in a state under consideration for annual conference location; 4. a Board member’s endorsement, including any apparent endorsement, of any candidate for office, whether at the local, state or national level; 5. any other conflict of interest that may arise, it being intended that the foregoing sub-paragraphs are set forth as examples only, and should not be deemed an exhaustive list of all potential conflicts that may occur. | Honest and timely reporting of a conflict of interest (COI) is important to the fair functioning of an association. Furthermore, a delay in reporting a COI would make suspect any decision made with the participation of the interested person. It could be argued that those who participated in the original discussions in the presence of the interested person would be biased in any reconsideration of such a decision due to their previous exposure to the interested person’s arguments. With a limited number of Board members available to make decisions, it is important that any actual or possible COI be reported before any discussion of the relevant issue occurs. |
| Recusal and Investigation  After disclosure of the conflict of interest, the interested person shall leave the Board or committee meeting while the issue is discussed and voted upon. The remaining Board members or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists by a simple majority vote. Should the remaining committee members number less than three, the President shall appoint a disinterested Board member to help discuss and vote upon the issue. If a conflict of interest is found to exist, the President shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested board member to participate in the discussion. Should the interested individual be the President, the President-Elect or Past President shall make such appointment. No issue shall be voted upon by less than three Board or committee members. | At least three members must vote upon an issue in order to establish a simple majority vote. Thus, any decisions about the COI or the issue related to it must be made by at least three individuals. |
| Failure to Disclose  If a Board member or committee member has reasonable cause to believe that an interested person has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, the Board or committee member shall inform the interested person of the basis of such belief and afford the interested person an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose. If, after hearing the response of the interested person and making such further investigation as may be warranted by the circumstance, the Board shall determine that the interested person has in fact failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, the Board shall take appropriate steps to protect the WIN. | The WIN must act to protect its integrity by ensuring that no decision is made where a COI exists. To make a decision where one or more members of the Board or a committee has a COI would call into question the credibility of the WIN and, thus, compromise its ability to transact business. When the outlined measures fail to prevent making a decision in the presence of a COI, the Board must address the issue to maintain the WIN’s good name. |
| Record of Actions  The minutes of the Board shall contain the name of person(s) who disclosed or otherwise were found to have an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the conflict, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, the Board’s decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed, and any action taken by the Board as a consequence the conflict of interest. | Should a decision be called into question, the record will show that the Board followed WIN policy to identify and prevent any COI from influencing Board and committee decisions. |

I have read this statement and believe that I am in compliance. If I find that at some future time I am not in compliance, I will immediately notify the WIN Board of Governors.

Name Signature Date

Approved: Board of Governors

April 22, 2009