



Vanderbilt Nursing has a long and rich history of shared governance culture. One of the first hospitals in the country to create [Nursing Staff Bylaws](#), Vanderbilt Nursing ratified its first set of bylaws in 1980. These bylaws define the structure of nursing governance, promote professionalism, and underscore the importance of nursing staff in decision making.

For 30 years now, nursing staff and leaders at Vanderbilt have been committed to shared accountability and decision-making regarding nursing practice. At the heart of this work is a unit/clinic board in nearly every inpatient, outpatient, procedural and peri-operative area across our broad and rapidly growing clinical enterprise. Unit Board is a vehicle for all voices and perspectives to be heard and collaborative problem-solving to take place at the point where patient care is delivered.

Our current definition of shared governance at Vanderbilt illustrates the belief in team work, ownership, and stakeholder input: "A dynamic staff-leader partnership that promotes collaboration, shared decision-making and accountability for improving quality of care, safety, and enhancing work life."

At Vanderbilt everyone has a voice. Share yours by getting involved in your local unit/clinic board or staff council, by serving as a Bylaws delegate, or through any number of other great participative opportunities available to you. Improve your practice and your work environment by getting involved!

For a review and summary of Shared Governance at Vanderbilt, review this article published in JONA (Journal of Nursing Administration) December 2007 "[Developing Leaders at Every Level: Accountability and Empowerment Actualized Through Shared Governance](#)" written by Shelley C. Moore and Sarah A. Hutchison from Vanderbilt.