

Questions from April 30, 2013 Webinar

What are the requirements to run for Senior Vice President?

The only requirement is that the Senior Vice President for Councils must be a professional member of the Society.

Will there be more regions?

Yes. The new structure anticipates an increase in the number of regions., This would allow the RVPs to provide better support to Chapters partly by reducing the Chapters per Region. Some populous states such as California and Texas may become Regions again. In addition, as the Society continues to grow globally, it's anticipated that the need for Regional representation outside the United States will grow as well.

How do the RVP's get elected going forward ?

The same as now. The Regional Nominations Committee will submit candidates to the Society Nominations and Elections Committee for approval. A regional election will determine the winner.

Regarding the eight BoD members: Is there potential that a disproportionate number of these eight spots could be filled by one Region or even one Chapter?

All Executive Committee and Council Vice Presidents have never all (or even mostly) been from the same region. The Nominations and Elections Committee always takes geography into consideration when selecting candidates for election.

This new model appears to have fewer pathways from the membership to the board, rather than more. Specifically, one board member representing all members and Councils, rather than eight members (RVPs) representing our diverse membership. The five Directors don't appear to represent any group of members or interests. How will we ensure member interests are represented?

There are more pathways to the board since the number of RVPs will increase and there would be a new council VP for COCRA. The experience of these positions will build the resume of the RVP and Council VP for consideration for board candidacy. The Council VPs represent all of the membership. Likewise, the board members elected by the membership will also represent all of the members. RVPs will continue to represent the chapters and regions.

I am interested in any dialogue that has taken place to formally include a representative from the academic world/institutions either in a council or as a director at large? Has that discussion in some fashion formally taken place as this process has unfolded?

Input has been received from the academic community and will be a continuing voice in the governance process.

How does this help ensure regional representation? Under the current system, we have our RVP to represent our region, but under the new format the Director-at-large position is elected society wide. It is very likely that areas of the country will be completely left out of representation on the board.

All geographical segments of the country (regions and chapters) will be represented on the Council on Chapter and Regional Affairs. All areas of practice will be represented on the Council on Practices and Standards. All of both would be represented on the House of Delegates. The goal is for the board to be relevant, strategic and nimble.

How is Society ensuring accountability for operational decisions made by councils with a "hands off" approach?

The board is and under the new model remains the governing body of the Society. Society Operating Guidelines (SOG) are approved by the board and entities of the Society are obliged to conform to these SOGs.

My concern is the 8 BoD votes coming from 'national vote' rather than regional votes. It appears to me that this would decrease local chapter input at the regional level. I contend that the coasts don't necessarily care what the mid-west may need- the needs may be different. Also, population (i.e. national votes) appear clustered w/ large cities and these tend to be along the coasts thus building-in an inherent 'edge' to those regions. --I think I'm referring to what you have called the "at large" positions.

We have no evidence that the coasts vote more than the Midwest. In fact, some evidence suggests the opposite. Years of analysis and experience tend to show that chapter needs do not vary by region. Mostly they vary by size. Member needs, also, don't vary as much by region/geography as they do by age, practice area and type of employer (e.g., big vs. small; regional vs. national vs. global).

What are some examples of the strategic issues-I would think there would be more operational issues and a lot more work at that level than at the strategic level-so why do we need all the board members working on fewer issues-seems out of balance to me.

Separating operational issues from strategic issues does not mean minimizing operational issues. Oversight of issues will remain a core responsibility of the ASSE Board. However, day-to-day operational issues will be addressed at the Council level. Councils have the expertise to handle these issues without Board involvement. This change will result in a more efficient decision making process and free up Board time so they can focus on strategic issues related to the profession and the Society. Strategic issues are no fewer and are more challenging and ever changing. Some examples of strategic issues may include:

1. Health is the next big frontier for SH&E professionals. What does ASSE need to do to take a leadership role in advancing our members interest in occupational health and wellness?
2. How can ASSE increase the global influence of the SH&E profession? (global standards, partnering with global SH&E organizations, working with global SH&E organizations and agencies, etc.)

Why don't you stagger the terms of the Members-at-Large?

Terms on the BoD will continue to be staggered as they are now.

As a member of my Chapter's Ex Com I do not see how this change brings the management of ASSE closer to me. I am active on the Regional Op Com and have a voice in Regional affairs and a voice on the board. I do not see this with this model. How often do you expect the Senior VP for Councils to appear at the Regional or Chapter Level?

The elimination of Areas brings the RVP in direct contact with chapter leaders to the benefit of both. Under the new model you will still have a voice at the Region and the same "voice" on the CoCRA where chapter and regional decision will be made.

Are there any paid positions? Which ones, what is annual salary?

The only paid position on the Board of Directors is the staff Executive Director / Secretary position. This is a non-voting position.

So the HOD vote on the plan would be at the 2014 meeting?

At this point, the Board of Directors (BoD) is seeking feedback from members and chapters. There is no plan to bring this before the HoD for a vote at the June 2013 meeting. However an electronic vote could occur prior to the 2014 HoD meeting.

I am concerned that the nominations and elections committee who will be selecting the slate of the BoD at large positions has no tie to the membership anymore. They are past officers who no longer serve as an elected capacity. How will absolute power be addressed?

The proposed governance model will enable ASSE to increase the field of qualified candidates for board-level positions. By expanding opportunities for member involvement and engagement, and by establishing a mentoring process, the Society will be able to better identify, recruit and mentor members interested in ASSE leadership at the earliest stage. The availability of additional qualified candidates, along with the checks and balances contained within the nominating and elections process, will ensure that ASSE puts forth a highly qualified candidate slate year after year. Further, using past officers takes advantage of those most highly experienced in Society leadership and those less likely to have a personal or political agenda since their time of greatest involvement has passed.

How will restructure of the national board assist in the sustainability of the local chapter? Reason for asking membership engagement is cited as a reason for restructure but nothing in this proposal appears to help the local chapter. Also, the proposal calls for additional elected positions (new regions, CoCRA VP) which adds to the burden for more volunteerism.

The first purpose of this model is to improve the functioning of the Board of Directors not to solve all of the problems of the Society. However, there is a logic supported by our outside consultant to start at the top of the organization first and work down.

The growth of member engagement is in the practice specialties, common interest groups and globally. It is only fair that these areas be given more focus.

It is intended to benefit chapters by reducing the workload of the RVP thus leaving them more time to focus on Chapters and to add Regions so that each RVP has fewer chapters to focus on. The true burden of volunteerism is taking up too much of a volunteer's time on administrative activities which are not enjoyable, do not best use the volunteers talents and abilities, and don't make a difference in the world.