

## ASSE Board Restructure: How Members Will Benefit

The term *restructure* is certainly not foreign to anyone these days. As the global economy continues its slow and uneven recovery, corporations often use the term to label efforts to remain competitive, control costs and shore up market share. In ASSE's case, it refers to the Society's proposed governance model that responds to continued membership growth and expanding member needs, changing patterns in member engagement, and a long-term vision to make ASSE more responsive, efficient and effective.

Articles in the April and May issues of *PS* outlined the new structure and answered FAQs. The restructure website (<http://restructure2013.asse.org>) contains additional resources, including links to a webinar video and slides. The proposed changes have also been discussed at local chapter and regional operating committee meetings. That said, you may still be wondering, What's in it for me? Let's consider how members will benefit if this proposed governance model is approved and implemented.

### It Starts & Ends With Members

As ASSE President Rick Pollock, CSP, said during a webinar on the proposed model, "It all starts with us, with members." In those remarks, he is referring to both the member-driven process involved in arriving at the proposed structure (which was discussed in the April and May issues of *PS*), as well as the primary expected outcomes: Provide better service to members at all levels and be seen as a leading voice in the global SH&E community.

By reducing the size of the Board of Directors (BOD) from 16 members to 10, reconfiguring the board positions and changing how most of these leaders are elected (Society-wide rather than by region), and adding an outside voice through a public director, the BOD will be better positioned to manage strategic issues and those related to leading the global SH&E profession. This will raise the profile of the SH&E profession and its practitioners worldwide, which will lead to greater influence in the workplace, with legislators and among the public at large.

In addition, as ASSE increases its efforts to educate the business community about the value that safety practitioners deliver in protecting people, identifying and assessing risks, and implementing cost-effective solutions, ASSE members will gain greater recognition in their workplaces as valued contributors and partners in a business's success.

The proposed structure also provides for a stronger member voice. The addition of five at-large directors (ASSE members) will give all members the opportunity to elect eight BOD members. This will increase the value of each member's annual vote, generate greater interest in the election of ASSE leaders and create additional opportunities for member engagement. Under the new structure, the House of Delegates (HOD) will increase in size slightly (by 8). ASSE also will continue its initiative to engage delegates at a higher level in strategic planning, and in the Society's efforts to manage and advance the profession.

### Key Proposed Changes

- Decrease BOD from 16 to 10 members.
- Add one public member.
- Elect 8 BOD members Society-wide.
- Separate governance function from operations function.
- Eliminate the Executive Committee.
- Expand regions (anticipated) for additional chapter support.
- Operate practice specialties and common interest groups more transparently.

It is also important to understand that when the BOD comes together to deliberate issues, each director does so based on the best interests of all members and the Society as a whole, not only those of a specific constituent group. By adding the at-large directors, ASSE will be better able to focus on member issues, respond quickly to changes related to the larger world in which the profession operates and identify ways to better serve members and the profession. The expected outcome is expanded representation and sharing of member ideas, and expanded representation of the profession.

This proposed structure also recognizes that members have less and less time to volunteer with organizations such as ASSE. In some cases, volunteer roles can seem almost like a second job. This has been particularly true at the region vice president (RVP) level. Under the proposed governance structure, RVPs will be able to dedicate more time to provide expert support to their chapters, focus on sharing best practices for chapter management, and educate chapter leaders about resources that are available to them.

The changes will also allow RVPs to work more closely with chapter delegates. Through these interactions, the RVPs will be able to mentor and guide those interested in growing into leadership positions as well.

It is also anticipated that more RVP positions will be added to support chapters. This will create volunteer opportunities that offer a manageable scope of involvement and create an additional pathway for growing into leadership positions. Over time, this will produce a large, evergreen pool of skilled and experienced members engaged in leading the Society.

ASSE's current governance structure is regionally focused and chapter-centric, yet members are shifting from geographic engagement to industry-specific and common interest methods, and they are engaging virtually more than face-to-face. The proposed changes will create an organizational structure that engages members beyond where they live, and focuses on who they are, what they do, where they work and the solutions they need.

Overall, the proposed governance model will enable better representation of members and the profession, and create more opportunities for engagement and volunteerism. The result will be a stronger ASSE.

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