

Taskforce on Governance and Structure
American Philosophical Association Board of Officers
Final Report
July, 2012

Members:

Margaret Atherton

Richard Bett

Catherine Elgin (chair)

Dom Lopez

Robin Smith

Ernest Sosa

The taskforce was charged to consider how, or whether the APA governance and structure should be modified to enable the Association to better perform its functions. The divisional structure is unique among learned societies. Since the divisional meetings are apt to be most salient in most members' relation to the APA, the other functions the Association performs may be eclipsed. Moreover, which responsibilities belong to the National Office and which to the divisions is not always clear. Without trying to eliminate the divisional structure, we have four recommendations to redress the balance.

We recommend:

1. That the APA adopt a mission statement and post it prominently on its web site. A draft mission statement is Appendix A of this report.
2. That the Board create a Budget and Coordination Committee, which serves as a subcommittee of the Board. The Committee shall be chaired by the Chair of the Board and shall additionally consist of the Secretary-Treasurers of the Divisions, the Executive Director, and the Treasurer. The Committee shall meet no less than once every six months. Its charge is to coordinate in allocating funds, staff, and other resources so as to achieve the objectives of the Association, with special attention to objectives of the Association that are not within the remits of the Divisions. Others may serve, as requested, as consultants to the committee. The Committee may meet by teleconference or videoconference. Although its remit extends beyond purely financial matters, the creation of this committee implements the Board's resolution of November 2011 to create a finance committee. One major goal in forming this committee is to provide a way for the Secretary-Treasurers to formalize the informal collaborations they already engage in. Another is to facilitate their working more closely and collaboratively with the National Office.
3. That the by-laws be revised so that they no longer specify the length of term for the initial appointment of the Executive Director.

Rationale: as the job of the Executive Director is changing, it seems desirable to give the Board more flexibility in deciding how long an initial term of office should be.

4. That Board membership be revised as follows:

1. Past Presidents of the Divisions will no longer sit on the Board.
2. Three new Members at Large will be added to the Board, these members being elected by direct vote of all Regular Members of the Association to a three year term, with terms to be staggered.
3. One Student Associate will added to the Board, to be elected to a two year term by direct vote of all Student Associates.

Rationale: As things stand, no members of the Board are directly elected by the members of the APA in general. Thus Divisional procedures for choosing Divisional officers determine, either directly or indirectly, all members of the Board. Members at Large would represent the APA membership as a whole rather than the membership of their the divisions. Since Student Associates do not belong to divisions, they are currently unrepresented on the Board. The decision to drop Past Presidents from the Board is motivated by a desire to keep the Board roughly the size it now is.

Recommendations 3 and 4 require revisions in the National By-Laws. The revisions are as follows:

The first sentence of Article 7.7 (a) should be revised to say 'The Executive Director shall be appointed by the Board for an initial term of no more than five years, and may be reappointed indefinitely thereafter to mutually agreed upon terms of no more than five years each.'

Current Article 7.3 (c) should be eliminated. Current Articles 7.3 (d) and 7.3 (e) should be renumbered 7.3 (c) and 7.3 (d) respectively.

A new article 7.3 (e) should be added as follows: 'Three Members at Large, to be elected by mail or electronic ballot of all Regular Members of the Association, for three year terms, with one member to be elected each year and the terms to be staggered.'

A new Article, here labeled 7.3 (f) should read 'A Student Representative of the Board, to be elected by mail or electronic ballot of all Student Associates from among the current Student Associates, to a two year term of office.' (We have proposed a two-year term since, on the one hand, graduate student status is relatively short-lived, but on the other hand, a term of less than two years is insufficient for the holder of the office to become familiar with the operations of the Board.)

Current Articles 7.3 (f) – (j) should be renumbered 7.3 (g) - (k).

Nominations: As is the case for committee memberships, any member of the Association can nominate a member for the office of Member at Large, and any Student Associate can nominate any Student Associate for membership on the Board. (Self-nominations are acceptable.) Nominations are referred to a Nominating Committee, consisting of the three divisional representatives. The Nominating Committee produces its own list of candidates, after collecting relevant information about nominees and determining that those nominated are willing to serve. The Nominating Committee should put forward at least three nominees for each vacancy.

Each candidate should provide a statement concerning him/herself and his/her candidacy, to be posted on the APA's web site during the election period and included with the ballots.

Implementation: To effect the staggering, in the first election of At Large Members, the person with the most votes will have a three year term; the person with the second highest number of votes will have a two year term; and the person with the third highest number of votes will have a one year term.

Our recommendations do not supersede those of the Hanson Report. We endorse the recommendations of that Report and strongly recommend that they be implemented.

Appendix A

APA Mission Statement

The American Philosophical Association promotes the discipline and the profession of philosophy by representing and advocating for philosophy both within the academy and more broadly in the public arena. It supports the professional development of philosophers at all levels of the profession, from pre-college through community colleges, four year colleges, and graduate and post-graduate training.

Scholarship: The APA fosters scholarship by publishing Proceedings and Addresses of interest to the entire philosophical community and newsletters on a variety of topics of interest to different subgroups of the Association. It sponsors conferences and conventions, including three annual divisional meetings. It gives occasional grants for specialized journals and conferences, and supports smaller, more focused philosophical associations. The Association fosters international cooperation, working with foreign counterparts on issues of common concern. It gives a variety of prizes and awards for philosophical excellence and contributions to the profession.

Teaching: The APA publishes a newsletter on teaching philosophy and sponsors sessions on teaching at divisional meetings. It supports the development and dissemination of teaching materials and techniques at all levels. It provides support for efforts to teach philosophy in primary and secondary schools. It underwrites activities fostering interest in and appreciation of philosophy in the wider community.

Career Development: Being committed to fair equality of opportunity in the hiring process, the APA publishes *Jobs for Philosophers*. It requires that departments that advertise in *JFP* attest that they do not discriminate against members of underrepresented groups. It provides resources for interviewing job candidates at divisional meetings. It collects benchmark data on the profession, including information about the race and gender of members. It fosters inclusiveness by providing grants for programs that promote diversity outreach. It provides information about non-standard careers.

Advocacy: The APA is active in the defense of professional rights of philosophers. It advocates for part-time and under employed philosophers, and for philosophers whose professional rights are at risk. It works with other relevant organizations, including the ACLS, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and their international counterparts on issues of common professional and educational concern. It represents the discipline in a variety of public fora. It provides a voice on public issues relevant to philosophy. It provides support to threatened departments.