



Final Report
Ad Hoc Committee on Governance Review
December 2018

Members

Wayne Foster, PhD, CCC-A/SLP, Chair
Robert Augustine, PhD, CCC-SLP
Charles Bishop, AuD, PhD, CCC-A
Melanie Hudson, MA, CCC-SLP
Regina Lemmon, PhD, CCC-SLP
Tena McNamara, AuD, CCC-A/SLP
Wren Newman, SLPD, CCC-SLP
Arlene Pietranton, PhD, CAE
Gail Richard, PhD, CCC-SLP
Jennifer Simpson, AuD, CCC-A
Chelsea Werner, MA, CCC-SLP
Andrea Falzarano, CAE, Ex Officio



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

Introduction

The March 2007 *Governance Structure and Process Committee Report* proposed a new model for ASHA’s governance, and it has been a decade since the implementation of that model. Best practices in association management suggest a periodic review of governance to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, in 2017, ASHA’s Board of Directors (BOD) appointed the Ad Hoc Committee on Governance Review (hereafter, “Ad Hoc GR,” “Ad Hoc Committee,” or “the Committee”) to review and evaluate aspects of the 2007 changes to ASHA’s governance structure and processes. The work of the Ad Hoc Committee was to be completed by December 2018. The ensuing report details the work and recommendations of that committee.

Members of the Ad Hoc Committee

Wayne Foster, PhD, CCC-A/SLP
Chair

Robert Augustine, PhD, CCC-SLP
Chair of the Committee on Leadership Cultivation

Charles Bishop, AuD, PhD, CCC-A
Chair of the Audiology Advisory Council

Melanie Hudson, MA, CCC-SLP
Chair of the Speech-Language Pathology Advisory Council

Regina Lemmon, PhD, CCC-SLP
Member of the Speech-Language Pathology Advisory Council

Tena McNamara, AuD, CCC-A/SLP
Member of the Audiology Advisory Council

Wren Newman, SLPD, CCC-SLP
Member of the Committee on Nominations and Elections

Arlene Pietranton, PhD, CAE
ASHA’s Chief Executive Officer, Internal Consultant

Gail Richard, PhD, CCC-SLP
ASHA Immediate Past President, 2017

Jennifer Simpson, AuD, CCC-A
Member of the Committee on Nominations and Elections

Chelsea Werner, MA, CCC-SLP

Past President of the National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NSSLHA) and past member of the Advisory Council

Andrea Falzarano, CAE

Director, Association Governance Operations, Ex Officio

ASHA engaged *Paul D. Meyer* of Tecker International, LLC (www.tecker.com), to assist in the assessment process. Meyer has past experience with ASHA as the consultant during the 2007 governance restructure and worked with the Ad Hoc GR throughout the process.

Ad Hoc GR members represented more than 120 aggregate years of ASHA experience on a wide variety of committees, boards, and councils.

Ad Hoc GR's Charge

The Ad Hoc GR was charged with conducting a review and evaluation of aspects of ASHA's governance structure and processes to determine whether they meet the Association's current governance needs. Aspects to be addressed included reviewing and, if necessary, making recommendations regarding

- opportunities and processes for meaningful member input and engagement to inform the BOD, including the Advisory Councils (ACs);
- qualifications for BOD service;
- nominations and election process for ASHA's BOD and AC elections; and
- voter participation in ASHA's BOD and AC elections.

The Review Process

Meyer guided the Committee through a multi-step review process. It included an in-depth analysis of extant data, collection of additional information, identification of strengths/needs, determination of potential improvements (with alternative models), and determination of final recommendations based on association best practices, research, and data gathered. The following table summarizes the timeline of the work of the Committee.

| Project Steps | Date |
|---|-----------------|
| Planning of Conference Call | March 5, 2018 |
| Committee Conference Call to Establish Timeline | April 30, 2018 |
| Face-to-Face Meeting for Project Design Session | May 21–22, 2018 |
| Qualitative Telephone Research by Consultant | June/July, 2018 |
| Committee Conference Call | July 24, 2018 |

| | |
|--|--|
| Face-to-Face Meeting to Review Data and Generate Recommendations | September 5–6, 2018 |
| Initial Findings Report | September, 2018 |
| Sharing of Initial Findings With BOD | October 13, 2018 |
| Committee Conference Call | October 31, 2018 |
| Final Recommendations/Generation of Draft Report | November 1–19, 2018 |
| Final Conference Call | November 19, 2018 |
| Final of Report | November 2018 |
| Submission of Final Report to BOD | December 2018 |
| BOD Consideration of Recommendations | February 2019 |
| Development of Communications and Implementation Plan | TBD, pending BOD approval of recommendations |

In the first face-to-face meeting, members established guidelines for the work of the Ad Hoc GR. These guidelines are delineated in the four subsections that follow.

1. Scope of Work for the Ad Hoc GR

Following a detailed review of the Committee charge, the members of the Committee agreed upon a series of items considered within the scope of the project.

- Election/nominations process
- Role of the ACs
- Board succession planning
- Qualifications of BOD candidates
- Formal representation on BOD
- Informal input to BOD
- Composition of Committee on Nominations and Elections (CNE)
- Cultivation of leaders
- Voting process
- Adherence to ASHA’s commitment to diversity
- Opportunities for meaningful engagement of members in ASHA governance

2. Criteria for Committee Success

The Committee articulated the following success factors for the project:

- Recommendations should align with the *Strategic Pathway*.
- Decisions should be knowledge based.
- Recommendations should ensure meaningful opportunities for members' professional engagement.
- End results should ensure diversity and be responsive to the needs and expectations of ASHA members.

3. Current Status: What Is Working Well/Not Well in the Current Governance Structure

The Committee discussed what has worked well in response to the previous governance changes and what has not worked well for ASHA since the changes were made.

What has worked well:

- The governing process is more efficient, with 16 individuals reviewing proposed decisions rather than a large body of 150, as in the past.
- BOD discussions are more focused and manageable.
- BOD decisions are timely and can move quickly to address issues and concerns.
- Audiology representation on the BOD is assured through designated positions.
- The BOD assists with planning the ACs' agendas for the annual March meeting.
- Long-range planning is more focused and effective.
- Orientation with new BOD members works well.
- The use of smaller groups (ACs) enables effective discussion of ASHA's initiatives and goals; this was not the case with the Legislative Council (LC).
- The Special Interest Groups (SIGs) have evolved in both size and contributions to the Association.
- The BOD has increased its ability to identify and discuss issues.
- Member engagement has increased.

What has not worked well:

- Elected BOD and AC members do not always represent the broad demographics of ASHA.
- Member participation in ASHA elections remains low, at approximately 4%–6%.
- There is hesitation for members to agree to be a candidate on an election slate without knowing who they would be running against.
- There is difficulty in securing nominations from each state on the ACs.
- Engagement by AC members declines beyond the March face-to-face meeting.
- There is confusion regarding the AC role(s) and responsibilities (e.g., state representation).
- BOD involvement in "leadership cultivation" is limited.

- There is little to no involvement of the current BOD members in helping to identify qualified candidates for BOD positions.
- The CNE may be limited to the nomination application information completed by an individual, which may not always be accurate or complete.
- Specified qualifications for BOD positions are insufficient, particularly for the position of President-Elect.
- The multiple leadership and leadership development opportunities in ASHA are not well coordinated or leveraged with the nomination process.

4. Committee Research

The Committee systematically and exhaustively analyzed a wide range of extant data/information. The Committee members determined that additional information from a select group of respondents would act not only to reinforce (or deny) the Committee’s initial findings but also to add depth to the findings.

During August 2018, Tecker International, LLC, conducted a series of 28 qualitative research telephone interviews with key ASHA stakeholders to provide additional information to the Committee. The questionnaire constructed by Tecker International, LLC, was based on a series of questions developed by the Committee; the interviewees were members recommended by the Committee. The interviewees included the following:

- Speech-language pathologists
- Audiologists
- ASHA leaders from the SIGs and ASHA Committees, Boards, and Councils (CBCs)
- Past and present members of the ASHA BOD
- AC members
- Early-career professionals
- ASHA Chief Staff Officers
- National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA) members

The results of the qualitative research were presented to the Committee during the September 2018 face-to-face meeting. The members of the Committee considered all the internal data, results from the Committee’s research, national trends in association management, and best practices in association management to then generate a series of four (interconnected) recommendations.

Recommendations

The recommendations from the Ad Hoc GR are presented below. The interconnections between the recommendations will be easily recognized. The members of the Ad Hoc GR are of a single voice regarding these recommendations; there were no final dissenting opinions. The Ad Hoc GR unanimously determined that if any of these recommendations are accepted and implemented, a formal timeline and communication plan should be developed to introduce the changes to the ASHA membership. The Ad Hoc GR believes that the majority of ASHA members will recognize the merit and importance of the proposed governance changes when appropriate rationale and data are provided to support the recommendations.

Recommendation #1: Create a Leadership Profile and Tracking System

Background

ASHA members who are interested in volunteering for ASHA's many CBCs can submit an application form, and their name is placed in the Volunteer Committee Pool. This pool frequently includes as many as 600 ASHA members interested in being appointed for the approximately 30–40 CBC vacancies that occur in a given year. Members can remain in the Volunteer Committee Pool for years without being selected—leading to frustration. CBC chairs also can find it difficult to sort through the Volunteer Committee Pool applicants to identify candidates with the appropriate expertise, experience, or credentials for specific appointments. The Ad Hoc GR found that the current Volunteer Committee Pool system does not represent an effective mechanism for identifying the most qualified candidates for ASHA volunteer positions.

In addition, ASHA has several leadership development programs, including mentoring opportunities, for members. However, there is little collaboration or interface among the various leadership development programs to identify pathways for members to become involved in volunteer service opportunities with ASHA.

The options considered by the Ad Hoc GR were to (a) maintain the current system without changes, (b) reconfigure the current system by adding elements of ASHA's Leadership Development Program, or (c) develop a leadership profile and tracking system. The Committee is recommending Option C, which is described in more depth below.

Recommendations

- A. *Create leadership profiles.* Members would build leadership profiles (via an online system) that could be updated. These profiles would highlight member experiences, competencies, leadership training, and other pertinent skills. The Committee on Leadership Cultivation (CLC) should determine the specifics of a new leadership profile and tracking system, integrating its current work into this new system.
- B. *Enable search options.* When openings on CBCs become available, the individuals responsible for filling those positions could identify ASHA members who have the appropriate expertise by conducting a search of the online ASHA leadership profiles. Using this approach, members might also be able to receive feedback on why they were not selected and take action to improve opportunities for a future appointment selection.

Rationale

Since 2013, ASHA has placed greater emphasis on leadership cultivation through the work of the CLC. The goal of the CLC is to oversee leadership development efforts, cultivate future BOD leaders, and provide broad strategic coordination of all leadership development efforts to ensure a strong pipeline of diverse, talented, qualified, and willing candidates for all committees, boards, and councils. The proposed leadership profile and tracking system would integrate the work of the CLC with the current Volunteer Committee Pool process.

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|--|
| With the proposed model, ASHA members would have a clearer understanding of how to advance toward a leadership pathway of interest. | Modifying the current system to create the profiles will require time and cost. |
| The proposed model eliminates the Volunteer Committee Pool process and the frustration that members experience using this model. | A new model would require education of ASHA membership regarding the purpose of the new system and how to navigate it. |
| ASHA already has a member profile system that might be modified for a leadership profile and tracking system. | |
| The proposed model could identify specific competencies needed, and members could provide evidence in their profile on how they acquired the desired competencies. | |
| A leadership profile and tracking system could provide members with feedback regarding other ways to volunteer and/or micro-volunteer. | |
| The proposed model could help ASHA create new micro-volunteering opportunities by tapping into the profiles. | |
| The proposed model may help create a wider net of diversity for the CBCs. | |

Recommendation #2: Create Member “Crowd Source” Opportunities

Background

Prior to 2007, the Legislative Council (LC) functioned as a state representative body with governing authority that interacted with the ASHA BOD on a regular basis. With the governance restructure in 2007, the ACs were established to replace the LC’s governance role but maintain the advisory/feedback role. In addition, the BOD liaisons to ASHA CBCs increased the breadth and scope of advice/feedback. The advent of social media and other advanced communication technology increased the potential for more direct and timely communication between ASHA membership, staff, and leadership.

Recommendations

- A. *Enhance social media.* Enhance the current social media systems to improve opportunities for members to identify trends and issues, provide input and feedback, and interact with the BOD and CBCs. Conversely, ASHA would have additional vehicles that it could use to share information with members regarding current initiatives and developments.
- B. *Explore alternative technologies.* Explore alternative technologies to current options (e.g., face-to-face, GoToMeeting, and conference calls) to allow meetings and interactions with volunteer CBCs that are interactive, personal, and productive.

Rationale

The success of the SIGs is evidence that ASHA members will take advantage of additional opportunities to engage on topics of professional interest. ASHA should explore new communication technology to enhance member satisfaction while providing the BOD and ASHA staff with additional and highly dynamic feedback/input.

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|--|
| The proposed recommendations would offer additional opportunities for members to share information with the BOD and CBCs. | Technology options for virtual participation can be expensive and would require training for member use. |
| Presenting different technology options that members can use to engage with ASHA will provide an opportunity for more members to consider volunteering—members who otherwise may not do so due to time constraints with travel. | |

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|---------------|
| The use of technology would allow the interactions between ASHA leadership and membership to be timely and direct. | |

Recommendation #3: Sunset the ACs

Background

The 2007 ASHA governance restructure process replaced the LC with an Audiology Advisory Council (AAC) and a Speech-Language Pathology Advisory Council (SLPAC). The Advisory Councils were composed of one speech-language pathology and one audiology member per state, international and U.S. territories. These bodies were created to provide the BOD with advice and feedback on initiatives and professional issues. The ACs met face-to-face once per year but were expected to remain active and engaged throughout the year via electronic communication. The Chairs of the ACs serve as members on the BOD.

Based on evidence, the Ad Hoc GR determined the following:

- Although the March face-to-face meeting provided an opportunity for the BOD to present information to the ACs, very little new information or input was generated at the meeting that was assistive to BOD initiatives.
- It is challenging to maintain active engagement of the ACs throughout the year via electronic communication, despite implementation of multiple strategies by the Chairs and BOD.
- The BOD has multiple ways of obtaining advice and feedback from the membership that is focused and targeted to specific issues, such as the formal BOD liaisons to each of ASHA’s CBCs and SIGs.
- The March face-to-face AC meeting has included a Capitol Hill visit day. This advocacy effort was viewed by the AC participants, the BOD, and ASHA legislative advocacy staff as an important opportunity for a large body of ASHA members to meet and discuss issues with Congressional offices from the respective states.
- The ACs have functioned as one avenue for leadership development and a path toward volunteer participation on ASHA’s CBCs and the BOD.

The Ad Hoc GR considered four options relative to the ACs. These included the following: (a) keep the ACs as they are currently structured; (b) maintain the ACs but reduce the size and eliminate the state elections; (c) enhance the role(s) of the ACs with increased governance authority; and (d) sunset the ACs, as described below.

Recommendations

- A. Maintaining the ACs is no longer well-substantiated by need or purpose and should be dissolved.
- B. The two current BOD positions held by the AC Chairs should be maintained and designated as “Members-at-Large.” The BOD Members-at-Large will include one audiologist and one speech-language pathologist with staggered, 3-year, elected terms. (See Recommendation #4 for details on the elections process.)
- C. An annual ASHA Legislative Advocacy Day should be developed in collaboration with the ASHA Governmental Affairs and Public Policy Team to maintain the opportunity for a strong presence on Capitol Hill by the membership.

Rationale

- The current size and composition of the BOD is one element of the 2007 governance restructure that is working well. The Chairs of the ACs have functioned as audiology and speech-language pathology members-at-large, assisting in decision making and adding an important membership “voice” to the BOD. Maintaining these positions under an alternative designation would maintain (a) the balance of disciplines represented on the BOD and (b) the number of BOD positions.
- The high costs of maintaining the ACs (e.g., meeting, election process) is not being offset by the value of contributions provided by these bodies. Additionally, the BOD has multiple sources from which to obtain feedback in addition to the current ACs.
- The advantages of the advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill can be realized in an alternative format.
- Recommendation #1 will provide a more formal process for leadership cultivation and for ASHA CBC volunteer participation.

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|---|
| Adding the Members-at-Large positions maintains the composition and function of the current BOD structure. | There would be no contact with the legislators from all 50 states (i.e., the Capitol Hill visit that occurs during the annual March meeting). |
| The BOD has multiple avenues for obtaining information (e.g., ASHA’s many committees, boards, and councils). These avenues can be enhanced (see, e.g., Recommendation #1). | There would be no “large body” of ASHA members functioning in a formal input capacity. |
| The proposed recommendations eliminate the necessity of planning an agenda for the annual March AC meeting. | The proposed recommendations eliminate opportunities for ASHA members to mingle/network. |

| | |
|---|---|
| The proposed recommendations eliminate efforts to maintain engagement of AC members after the March meeting. | The proposed recommendations would remove the opportunity for ASHA to build a cadre of potential leaders. |
| The proposed recommendations eliminate the consistent confusion that AC members have regarding their roles and responsibilities. | |
| The Capitol Hill visit can be retained by organizing it in an alternate format. | |
| The costs typically dedicated to the March AC meeting can be directed instead toward an alternate Advocacy Day event on Capitol Hill. | |

Recommendation #4: Implement a Hybrid Elections Process for the ASHA BOD.

Background

- The percentage of eligible voters who participate in the annual elections has been less than 6% for more than a decade, with a decline to 4% in the most recent years. Therefore, a small minority of members determines positions on the ASHA BOD.
- Despite using a variety of methods to inform the membership of information regarding the candidates, a consistent complaint is that members do not exercise their vote because they do not feel qualified to make a decision regarding candidates. Even the (expensive) production of candidate videos, campaign web pages, and *Leader* magazine election supplements has not mitigated the “lack of knowledge” complaint or acted to increase voter participation.
- The Ad Hoc Committee believes it is important that the BOD members represent the diversity of the ASHA membership and, at the same time, possess the skills and experience needed to accomplish the work of the BOD. The current elections process does not guarantee either the diversity or the experience that is optimal for the function of the BOD.
- Securing three well-qualified candidates for each BOD position has frequently been difficult for the CNE. In addition, there are routinely open positions on the ACs, despite multiple attempts to secure at least one candidate for open positions.
- Currently, the BOD has no direct role in leadership succession planning, despite their intense interaction with CBCs and individuals who make valuable contributions to the work of those groups.

The Ad Hoc GR considered four options relative to the ASHA elections process. These were as follows: (a) ASHA maintains the current system, (b) the CNE slates all positions, (c) the CNE

slates all positions except the President-Elect, and (d) the CNE slates all positions except for the newly formed Members-at-Large positions (see Item 4C below).

Recommendations

- A. Modify the elections process for the BOD to a hybrid election. In this model, the CNE would slate the President-Elect and Vice President positions, following a nominations process that is open to all members. Members would have the opportunity to ratify or object to the slated candidates.
- B. The CNE would identify three candidates for the two Member-at-Large positions—one position designated for audiology and one position designated for speech-language pathology (formerly held by the Chairs of the ACs)—that would be elected by the membership (i.e., audiologists vote for the Audiology At-Large position, and speech-language pathologists vote for the SLP At-Large position). These positions would mirror the other BOD positions with a 3-year, staggered term.
- C. The ASHA membership would have the opportunity to nominate candidates for all BOD positions, including the two Members-at-Large. The BOD would have an opportunity to review candidate names prior to CNE review to voice any serious concerns or objections to the CNE. The CNE would maintain an independent review of the candidates and would generate the slate.

Rationale

- The slating process would ensure that (a) composition of the ASHA BOD represents the diverse membership of ASHA and (b) well-qualified individuals are chosen to serve in the designated positions. The current process aims to ensure a diverse and balanced pool of candidates, but that goal is not always realized following the election results.
- The CNE is an independent body that would review nominations and identify candidates who have the appropriate experience and expertise to fill BOD positions. The inclusion of the Past President on the CNE is recommended to (a) provide the CNE with information on current initiatives and expertise requirements of the BOD and (b) assist that individual in understanding the process required to chair the CNE as Past President.
- A review process by the BOD prior to CNE review of candidates allows for BOD involvement in succession planning by sharing experiences with individuals currently serving on CBCs.
- The current elections process requires ASHA staff to generate more than 150 different ballots (for each of the states and territories). This is a complex, time-consuming, and expensive process for a small number of members who participate in the voting process. In addition, following the AC elections, it is typical to have to engage in multiple appointments to fill open positions on the ACs.
- The Ad Hoc GR considered a wide variety of hybrid election/slating options and has selected a model that maximizes advantages and minimizes disadvantages.

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|--|
| The proposed model would offer the opportunity for enhanced BOD diversity and qualifications. | Although member participation in ASHA elections has been very low, there is likely to be a perception among members of “loss of voice” in ASHA governance. |
| The proposed model would offer the opportunity for succession planning by the BOD. | Member trust issues could arise with the implementation of the proposed model. |
| The proposed model would simplify the current costly and complex elections process. | |
| The proposed model would eliminate the problem associated with identifying three candidates for BOD positions. | |
| The proposed model would continue to allow member voting on At-Large positions. | |
| The proposed model would support the slating of minority members (e.g., audiologists, men) in BOD positions. | |

Conclusion

The Ad Hoc Committee on Governance Review engaged in its task with due diligence. Discussion was candid, honest, and productive. Committee members were encouraged to voice their opinions and reactions in a supportive and respectful atmosphere. This enabled the group to make difficult decisions that were determined to be in the best interests of ASHA moving forward.

As the BOD deliberates on these recommendations, we hope that the report provides enough information to justify and substantiate the reasons for the suggested changes to the Association.

The Ad Hoc GR felt that it is imperative to form an Implementation Committee that can be charged with developing a communication plan and implementation plan for each of the recommendations endorsed by the BOD. Several members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Governance Review would be willing to assist in that process if the BOD deems it appropriate. The Committee has appreciated the opportunity to be part of this important task and looks forward to the BOD’s decisions.