

# Recommendations of the ASA Workgroup on Organizational Efficiency of Committees July 16, 2009

## Executive Summary

This report makes recommendations for improving the organizational efficiency of ASA committees by changing the structure through which committees receive direction from and communicate with the ASA Board of Directors.

The constitutional principle underlying these recommendations is that the purpose of committees is to support the work of the Board—unlike chapters, sections, and other subgroups, whose activities are supported by the Board. In practice, the effective use of committees as “arms of the Board” has declined as the number of committees has climbed to its current level of 70. Most committees operate with little or no guidance from the Board, and with no direct communication with the Board.

The Committee on Committees is an administrative interface between the Board and committees, and it cannot provide oversight for committees because it lacks the decision-making authority of the Board. In the current committee reporting structure, two bureaucratic layers distance committees from the Board; see Figure 1. Committee chairs have no direct contact with the Board, reporting through liaison members of the Committee on Committees. The three Vice Presidents serve as liaisons between the Committee and the Board, but with no direct responsibility for committees. The Board receives a summary report from the Committee on Committees at most of its meetings, and it occasionally hears reports from committee chairs. These layers make it difficult for the Board to turn to committees for strategic work and to decide which committees should be dissolved or combined.

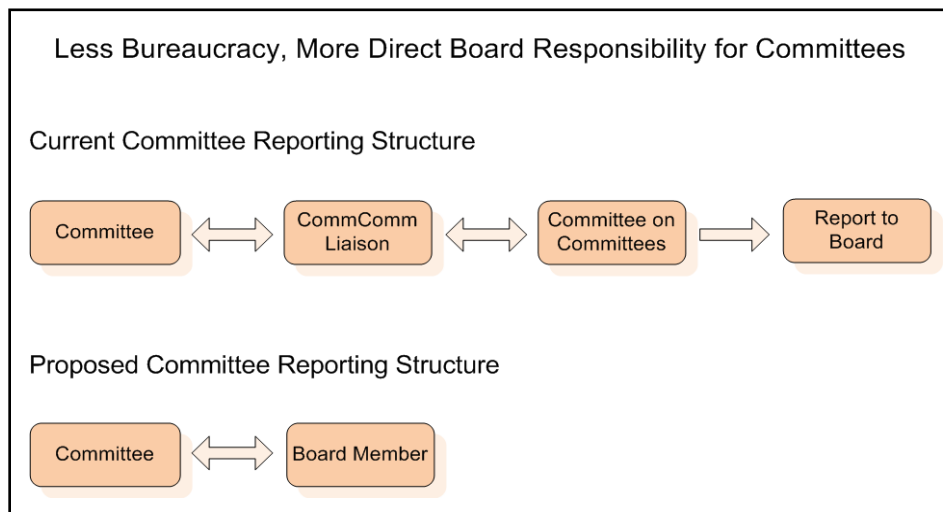


Figure 1. Current and Proposed Committee Reporting Structures

The recommendations in this report eliminate these extra layers by assigning each committee to a Board member who has responsibility for that committee; see Figure 1. For most committees, direct communication with Board members will occur in four new councils, so that chairs of committees in related areas can also interact with each other. However, each committee will have direct access to a Board member, whether or not it is part of a council.

Two major changes are recommended. The first is creation of committee councils for Awards, Education, Membership, and Professional Issues and Visibility. These councils are not new committees, nor are they policy-making “super committees”, much less another layer of bureaucracy. Instead, councils will facilitate Board oversight for committees by providing regular, direct communication between committee chairs and designated Board members. Councils will also assist committees in working with each other on issues of common interest, and in recommending actions to the Board. Vice presidents will chair the councils for Education, Membership, and Professional Issues and Visibility, and the Past President will chair the council for Awards.

The second major change is creation of a Leadership Support Council (LSC), which will advise the Board on the strategic use of committees. The LSC will be chaired by the President-elect. Four appointed members of the LSC will advise the President-elect on committee appointments, and they will assist the Vice Presidents and the Past President by serving as vice chairs of the committee councils. The Vice Presidents and the Past President will also serve on the LSC. The LSC is a new committee that will replace the Committee on Committees and the Committee Appointments Advisory Committee.

As council chairs, Vice Presidents will be expected to maintain contacts with committee chairs, lead high-level discussions at council meetings, and give annual presentations to the Board that describe committee activities and provide recommendations that require Board action. Vice Presidents will not be expected to be experts in the council areas, nor will they be elected on this basis. On the other hand, council vice chairs will be appointed on the basis of significant domain experience.

The proposed structure will require the Board—and Vice Presidents, in particular—to work more closely with committees as arms of the Board, a major change from its “arm’s length” relationship with committees. While the new structure does not reduce the number of committees, it will streamline the process of dissolving inactive committees and combining related committees. In the future, the Board should consider forming “other subgroups” as an alternative to creating committees.

The proposed structure benefits all stakeholders. Committee chairs will have a direct line of communication with designated Board members and the opportunity to learn from each other. Committees will be better utilized with work that is visibly aligned with the Strategic Plan. Presidents-elect will be advised on using committees to accomplish strategic goals and will receive assistance with appointments. The ASA membership will have a better understanding of committee contributions in strategic areas.

Board endorsement of the recommendations in this report will require approval of Bylaw revisions which are described in a separate document.

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Sections 1 through 5 motivate and present the main recommendations of the Workgroup. Sections 6 through 9 address operational aspects, including new roles and responsibilities. [Section 10](#) provides the perspective of the Committee on Committees and committee chairs on the recommendations. [Section 11](#) discusses the transition from the current structure to the proposed structure. [Section 12](#) recommends an alternative to creating committees for organizing activities that function independently of the Board.

### 1. Introduction

The committees of the American Statistical Association are the primary means by which the Board of Directors draws on the talent, experience, and volunteerism of ASA members to accomplish long-term goals and activities. Organizationally, the ASA’s ability to carry out its Strategic Plan hinges on the effectiveness of its committees.

In contrast to chapters and sections, which are intended to serve the interest fields and local needs of members, committees are intended to function as arms of the Board of Directors. While Governing Boards provide support for chapters and sections, the Board of Directors is directly responsible for creating and dissolving committees; providing governance and direction for committees; and communicating with committees and acting on their recommendations.

Currently the ASA has 70 committees, which fall into four categories defined in the ASA Bylaws:

- permanent committees of the Board, which are designated in the Bylaws. An example is the Budget Committee.

- standing committees, which are designated in the Bylaws. Examples are the Committee on Publications and the Committee on Meetings.
- continuing committees, which are established and dissolved by the Board. Examples are the Advisory Committee on Continuing Education and the Committee on Applied Statisticians. These committees have no specific lifetime, but their charges must be reviewed periodically.
- *ad hoc* committees, which are established by the Board for a specified period of time and then dissolved. An example is the Committee to Propose an Approach to Individual Accreditation.

In addition, the ASA is represented in 20 “outside organization” committees, which are links between the Association and other mathematical and statistical organizations, who govern these committees.

The President-elect appoints most of the chairs and members of the 70 ASA committees. The President-elect also appoints one to three representatives to the 20 “outside organization” committees. In all, each President-elect must now make over 160 appointments, a formidable task.

As the number of committees has increased, the organizational structure of committees has become inefficient. Problems have been pointed out by committee chairs, committee members, and the Committee on Committees, prompting a study by the 2006 Task Force on Committee Organization and Management. The Task Force reported that the ASA has an unusually large number of committees compared with similar associations and recommended better Board communication and oversight for committees, along with improvements in the committee appointment process. These improvements are a goal of the ASA’s new Strategic Plan, which the Board adopted in March 2008.

In the fall of 2008, President-elect Sally Morton acted on this goal by appointing the Workgroup on Organizational Efficiency of Committees to do the following:

1. Propose an overhaul of the ASA committee structure to make it more efficient and effective in serving as an extension of the Board and meeting the mission of the organization. This overhaul need not be constrained by the existing Bylaws, as was the work of the 2006 Task Force.
2. Consider how the committee structure should receive more on-going guidance and two-way communication from the Committee on Committees and the Board of Directors, as appropriate.

The members of the Workgroup are Margo Anderson (chair of the Committee on Committees), Alicia Carriquiry (2007-2009 Vice President), Susan Devlin (past chair of the Committee on Committees and chair of the 2006 Task Force), Linda Gage (former chair of the Committee on Committees and member of the 2006 Task Force), Stephen Looney (former chair of the Committee on Membership), Robert Rodriguez (2006-2008 Vice President), and Ronald Wasserstein (ASA Executive Director). Responsibility for leading the Workgroup was assigned to Bob Rodriguez and the chairs of the Committee on Committees. Sally Morton asked the Workgroup to collaborate with the Committee on Committees, and she encouraged the Workgroup to consider what could be accomplished without expanding the existing Board structure.

## 2. Obstacles with the Current Committee Reporting Structure

Stakeholders in the ASA's committees currently face a variety of obstacles and unmet needs.

- The Board finds it difficult to know which committees to turn to for recommendations or for delegation of work. The Board needs better understanding of the areas in which committees contribute in order to decide which committees should be working together, which should be activated, and which should be dissolved. Improved understanding is also essential for deciding whether a proposed committee should be created.
- Presidents-elect need advice on how to use committees to accomplish their agendas. Without such guidance, it becomes simpler to create task forces for projects that might be carried out by existing committees, leading to over-reliance on task forces and under-utilization of committees.
- Each President-elect is now faced with the daunting task of making over 160 committee appointments. As recommended by the 2006 Task Force, the Appointments Advisory Committee was created to assist Presidents-elect, and this support is proving to be invaluable.
- While some committees are highly productive and maintain close ties to the Board, the chairs of many other committees indicate that they are not receiving adequate direction from the Board. Committee on Committees liaisons to committees report that chairs and committee members often wonder what they should be doing. Other committees have learned to operate on their own, doing work that is useful, but not necessarily aligned with the strategic needs of the ASA or coordinated with the work of other committees.
- Some committees do not file reports. Many committee chairs feel that “no one is listening” when they do submit reports or offer recommendations, and many chairs are unaware of what other committees are doing in related areas.
- The Committee on Committees, which is the interface between the Board and the committees, is mired in administrative tasks such as reviewing committee charges and soliciting committee reports. Members of the Committee are selected for their extensive service on committees, but their experience and knowledge are underutilized in performing these tasks and serving as liaisons.
- The ASA membership at large is inadequately informed about committee accomplishments and how these accomplishments contribute to the long-term, strategic goals of the Association.

These issues stem from two root problems.

1. Communication between committees and the Board is inadequate because it is passive and indirect, percolating through two degrees of separation (see Figure 1). Committee on Committees liaisons are conduits for information between committee chairs and the Committee. In turn, the chair of the Committee submits reports to the Board and is notified about Board decisions.
2. No Board members are designated to provide executive oversight for committees. While the Committee on Committee tries valiantly to serve in this role, it lacks the decision-making authority of the Board and the familiarity with Board-level issues needed to provide executive oversight. All three ASA Vice Presidents are *ex officio* members of the Committee; however, their current role is not to provide oversight or direct communication with committees, but rather to facilitate communication between the Committee and the Board.

### 3. Key Changes: Committee Councils and Leadership Support Council

The Workgroup recommends two major changes in the organizational structure of committees:

1. **Creation of committee councils for Education, Membership, Professional Issues and Visibility, and Awards.** These four councils are not new committees, much less another layer of bureaucracy. Instead, councils will facilitate oversight, communication, and collaboration by providing regular opportunities for chairs of committees in related areas to meet together with a Board member who will chair their council. The Vice Presidents will chair the first three councils, and the Past President will chair the Awards council.
2. **Creation of a Leadership Support Council (LSC).** The LSC will be chaired by the President-elect. Appointed members will advise the Board on the strategic use of committees, assist the President-elect with committee appointments, and assist the Vice Presidents and the Past President by serving as vice chairs for the committee councils. The LSC is a new committee that will replace the Committee on Committees and the Committee Appointments Advisory Committee.

Figure 2 illustrates the close, interlocking relationship between the Board and the Councils. For example, as highlighted in red, the chair of the Council for Membership is a Vice President, who also serves on the LSC. The vice chair is an appointed member of the LSC.

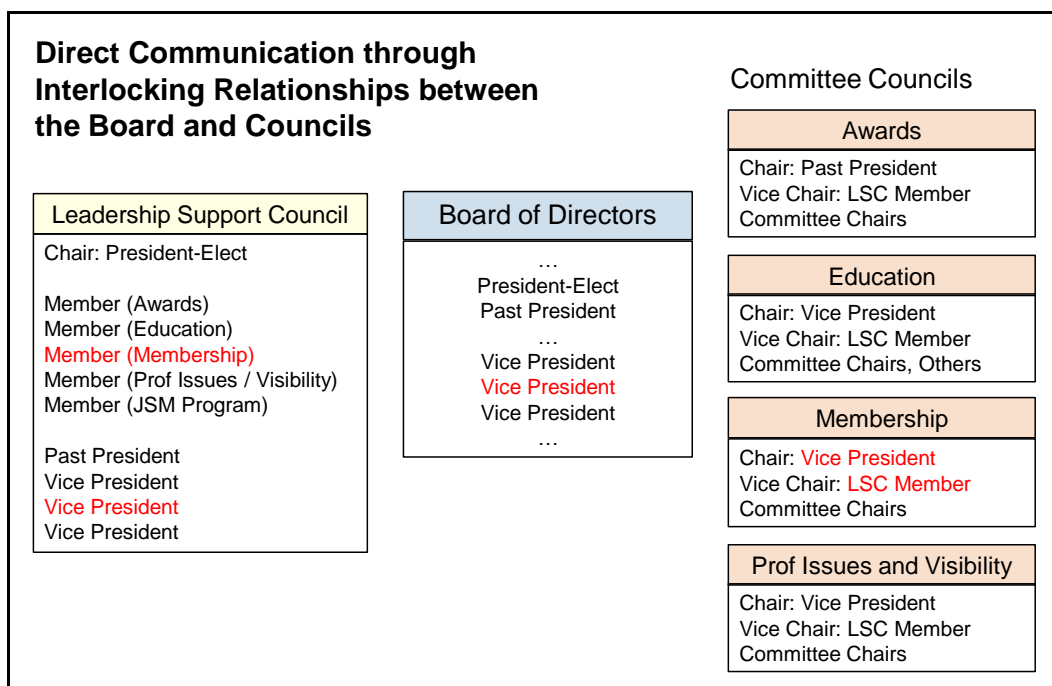


Figure 2. Relationship of Board and Councils

The Workgroup recommends that the Past President and Vice Presidents serve as council chairs (and not as *ex officio* members) because this is the most direct and effective way for them to represent the Board to the councils and the councils to the Board.

## 4. Committee Councils

Four councils will facilitate Board oversight for committees, direct Board communication with committees, and collaboration among related committees:

- Council for Awards, chaired by the Past President
- Council for Education, chaired by a Vice President
- Council for Membership, chaired by a Vice President
- Council for Professional Issues and Visibility, chaired by a Vice President

Again, these councils are not new committees—they are simply vehicles by which the Past President and the Vice Presidents communicate with their assigned committees and assist them in working with each other on substantive issues of common interest.

Committee councils should serve three functions<sup>1</sup>:

1. Provide Board direction and guidance for committees through direct communication with a Board member (top-down communication).
2. Recommend actions and initiatives to the Board—especially activities that will accomplish goals of the Strategic Plan (bottom-up communication).
3. Assist committees in working with each other on substantive issues of common interest and in learning from each other about ways to work more effectively within the ASA (peer-to-peer communication).

Each council will periodically conduct high-level reviews to assess whether its current mix of committees is serving the needs of ASA, whether committees understand what the Board wants them to do, and whether any committees should be retired or combined. [Section 8](#) describes these activities in detail.

In addition to serving the three functions listed above, the responsibilities of councils are as follows:

1. Prepare an annual report for the Board on the health of committees in the council area. See [Reporting](#) in [Section 8](#).
2. Assist the Vice President in advising the President-elect on ways that committees might support presidential initiatives. As alternatives to creating independent task forces, recommend committees or temporarily appointed subcommittees that could be assigned to an initiative.
3. Assist the Vice President in advising the Board on use of committees to support new projects. When the Board is launching a project, it should ask the Vice Presidents to approach relevant councils or the LSC for recommendations on use of committees and subcommittees.
4. Support the President-elect and the LSC in ensuring that the individuals with the right qualifications are appointed to committees; see [Documenting Committee Member Qualifications](#) in [Section 8](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Some of these functions will be new for committees that have grown accustomed to operating independently of the Board and of each other.

## Composition of Committee Councils

Each committee council will consist of the following members:

- a chair (either a Vice President or the Past President) who convenes meetings and guides discussion of strategic issues.
- a vice chair, who is an appointed member of the Leadership Support Council. The vice chair assists the chair, provides continuity and experience in the committee area, and coordinates feedback for the appointment process.
- committee chairs, who provide expertise based on their experience serving on and heading committees.

## Assignment of Committees to Councils

Table 1 indicates the initial assignment of committees to councils. This is based on an analysis that considered current committee activities; their potential relationship to the work of the Board; their potential contribution to the Strategic Plan; and their primary sources of guidance (Board, Executive Director, ASA staff, other). This assignment can be reviewed by the Leadership Support Council and changed based on input from committee councils. Furthermore, councils are not closed groups; see “Flexibility of Councils” below.

## Focus Areas of Committee Councils

The **Council for Awards** will be responsible for the Association’s portfolio of awards, making recommendations to the Board on all matters relative to awards and awards policy, including consideration of new awards and the consolidation or elimination of awards. This council should also consider the minimum number of members that an awards committee needs to accomplish its work. Currently, many awards committees have nine members, and the Council should have the flexibility to recommend reducing this number.

The **Council for Education** comprises—along with education committee chairs—representatives from the Section on Statistical Education, the Section on Teaching of Statistics in the Health Sciences, and the ASA Education staff. This council will provide guidance to the Board regarding statistics education issues, and it will provide structure and processes through which initiatives, policies, and directions in statistics education can be identified and realized.

The **Council for Membership** comprises committees that can support the Membership Growth area of the Strategic Plan in a broad sense: by identifying ways to meet the needs of underserved groups (such as applied statisticians and young statisticians); by considering ways to build and retain membership in traditional sectors of the ASA; and by serving the needs of minority groups within the ASA.

The **Council for Professional Issues and Visibility** comprises committees that build visibility and support for the statistics profession and promote the use of statistics in other fields. Within the Strategic Plan, this council is well-positioned to serve the areas of Public Awareness and Visibility and Impact in Policy Making. It is expected that the ASA’s Director for Science Policy will interact with this council. An important distinction between this Council and the Council for Membership is that the latter deals with *internally facing issues*, whereas the former deals with *externally facing issues*.

Council	Committees
Awards	Bryant Scholarship, COWIS-Cox Scholarship, Deming Lectureship, Dixon Award, Excellence in Statistical Reporting, Founders Award, Noether Awards, Outstanding Statistical Application, Waller Award, Wilks Medal, Youden Award
Education	ASA/MAA Joint Committee, ASA/NCTM Joint Committee, Continuing Education, Outreach Education, Statistics in Two-Year Colleges, Student Pro Bono Statistics, Teacher Enhancement  Note: Also includes representatives from the Statistical Education Section, the Teaching of Statistics in the Health Sciences Section, and the ASA Education staff
Membership	Applied Statisticians, Career Development, International Relations in Statistics, Membership Retention and Recruitment, Membership Surveys, Minorities in Statistics, SPAIG, Statistics and Disability, Women in Statistics
Professional Issues and Visibility	Census Advisory, Energy Statistics, Federally Funded Research, Gay and Lesbian Concerns, Law and Justice Statistics, Privacy and Confidentiality, Professional Ethics, Representatives to AAAS, Scientific Freedom and Human Rights, Scientific and Public Affairs

**Table 1. Initial Assignment of Committees to Councils**

A number of committees are not assigned to councils and are not listed in Table 1. For example, the Publications Committee communicates directly with the Board through the Publications Representative, whereas by design, the Fellows and Nominations Committees function independently of the Board. As indicated in Table 2, these other committees have been assigned to various Board members, so that every ASA committee can receive oversight from a Board member with whom the chair can communicate directly to address concerns and raise questions.

Board Member	Council Committees	Other Committees
Past President	Awards	
Vice President	Education	
Vice President	Membership	
Vice President	Professional Issues and Visibility	
Executive Director <sup>2</sup>		Archives, Fellows, Nominations, Radiation and Health Organizing, Representatives to Outside Organizations, Survey Review
Publications Representative		Publications, Management Committees
Treasurer <sup>3</sup>		Development, Finance
Council of Sections Representatives		Meetings
International Representative		International Relations in Statistics <sup>4</sup>
President-elect		Leadership Support Council
President (for year n)		JSM Program Committee (for year n)

**Table 2. Board Oversight for ASA Committees**

Although the primary responsibility for committee oversight falls to the Past President and the Vice Presidents, the other Board members listed in Table 2 are responsible for ensuring that the work of the Board gets done through its committees by helping to direct Board issues, ideas, and initiatives to the appropriate committees, and by bringing committee responses, activities, and concerns to the Board. Committees considering long-term, strategic goals of the Association may recommend actions or initiatives to the Board through their designated Board members.

### Flexibility of Councils

Committee councils are intended to be flexible, recognizing that some strategic activities and some committee interests will span more than one council area. The interlocking compositions of committee councils and the LSC (see Figure 2) will aid this flexibility.

<sup>2</sup> The Executive Director regularly assists awards committees and can be a resource for the Council for Awards.

<sup>3</sup> The Development Committee is assigned to the Treasurer with some involvement by the Executive Director.

<sup>4</sup> This committee is also assigned to the Council for Professional Issues and Visibility.

- The President-elect can draw on any combination of councils for assistance with a presidential initiative, and one of the functions of the LSC ([Section 5](#)) is to advise the President-elect on which committees can serve as resources. If additional resources are required, these can be provided by creating subcommittees to a council or a combination of councils.
- Likewise, councils offer flexibility for committee chairs, and there are many ways in which chairs in one council can “access” other councils. For example, they can ask their council chair to communicate with the chair of another council. Or they can ask for time on a council agenda to discuss a matter that best fits with another council (the council chair can ask a representative from the other council to participate).
- There will also be situations in which a subset of the committee chairs in a particular council needs to work together. The council chair can ask the vice chair or one of the committee chairs to convene these meetings. [Section 8](#) discusses council activities in detail.

In summary, councils are not closed groups, but rather structures that ensure communication.

### Relationship of Committee Councils to the Strategic Plan

Table 3 illustrates how committee councils broadly align with areas of the Strategic Plan. Of course, councils and committees can contribute to more than one area.

Area of Strategic Plan	Committee Council	Other Committees
Membership Growth	Membership, Awards	Fellows, Nominations, Survey Review, Archives
Public Awareness	Professional Issues and Visibility	
Visibility and Impact in Policy Making	Professional Issues and Visibility	
Meetings		Meetings, JSM Program
Publications and Information Needs		Publications, Management Committees
Education	Education	
Financial Status		Development, Finance
Organizational Efficiency	Leadership Support	

**Table 3. Alignment of Committee Councils with Strategic Plan**

## 5. Leadership Support Council

The Leadership Support Council (LSC) is responsible for advising the Board about the use of committees in strategic activities that span all ASA committees or that are not directly covered by one of the four committee councils. The LSC also provides a venue for council chairs and vice chairs to discuss issues that span the areas of two or more councils; see [Flexibility of Councils](#) in [Section 4](#).

The Leadership Support Council has two primary tasks:

1. To assist the President-elect with identifying candidates for committees and making appointments to committees, while recognizing that the President-elect has the final say in making appointments. This includes helping the President-elect to make appointments that bring experience and diversity to committees, and to complete the appointment process (especially for committee chairs) by August 1. The LSC adds continuity to this process by working with the ASA office to create and maintain guidelines and to identify special needs.
2. To advise the President-elect concerning the effective use of committees in presidential initiatives designed to meet the goals of the Strategic Plan.

The Leadership Support Council is a new high-level advisory committee that replaces the Committee on Committees and the Committee Appointments Advisory Committee, both of which will be dissolved. The LSC will preserve the advisory role of the latter, but not the administrative role of the former. The work currently done by the Committee on Committees will be streamlined and redistributed as discussed below and in [Section 8](#).

The LSC will consist of five members appointed by the President-elect:

- four members who serve as vice chairs of the committee councils (see [Section 4](#)). Each of these four members will also help the President-elect identify candidates and make appointments needed for committees in their designated areas. Assistance with appointments for committees in other areas will be assigned to these members so as to balance their workloads.
- one member who is responsible for coordinating JSM sessions that are proposed and organized by committees. This member will represent committees on the Program Committee.

The President-elect, the Past President, and the three Vice Presidents are *ex-officio*, voting members of the LSC. The LSC is chaired by the President-elect. This is a natural fit because the President-elect is the officer who makes the most use of the LSC, not only for making appointments, but also for setting priorities for the coming year in consultation with the Board and under the umbrella of the Strategic Plan.

In addition to the two primary tasks described above, the LSC will be responsible for the following activities:

- orientation of committee chairs. This can be organized largely by ASA staff with guidance from the appointed members of the LSC.
- orientation for incoming Board members on the use of committees to accomplish strategic goals.
- working with ASA staff to periodically review the committee website to continually improve functionality for committees and membership.

- advising the Board on committee policy questions such as starting points for terms of service.
- advising the Board on the creation of a new committee (see “Creation of New Committees” below).
- reviewing committee charges as described in [Section 8](#).

## Annual Cycle for Council Meetings

The following annual cycle is anticipated:

- During January to July, the LSC will advise the President-elect on appointments.
- Early in the year, the LSC will advise the President-elect on the use of committees to accomplish strategic goals.
- In the fall, the LSC will update requirements for committee members to aid the appointment process.

To carry out its responsibilities, it is expected that the LSC will meet at least four times each year, mostly through phone conferences. The appointments advisory work of the LSC can largely be done by email.

## Creation of New Committees

When the need for a new committee is perceived, the Board should turn for guidance to the LSC, which in turn may decide to obtain input from one or more councils. The LSC should draft the charge and composition of the new committee and recommend assignment of the committee to an appropriate council or Board member; see Table 2. The recommendations of the LSC will be returned to the Board for action.

The Workgroup recommends that Board action include approval of the type (continuing, standing, ad hoc), charge, and composition of the new committee, but that the Board leave to the LSC the assignment of the committee within the council structure. That way, if reassignment is needed, Board action is not required.

The Workgroup also recommends that the Board consider the creation of “other subgroups” as alternatives to committees; see [Section 12](#). The LSC should advise the Board on this option and assist in determining the appropriate reporting mechanism for the subgroup.

## 6. Dissolving Committees

Stakeholders in the ASA committee structure often comment that “the ASA has too many committees” and ask what can be done to reduce the number. The current process for dissolving committees is cumbersome and time-consuming. The Workgroup recommends streamlining the process as follows:

1. The council chairs will be expected to identify any committees assigned to their councils that are inactive or are not needed; this should be done through careful discussion with the chairs of these committees, who may initiate such discussion. In consultation with the vice chair, the chair will recommend dissolution or restructuring (as appropriate) to the LSC, which will in turn make a recommendation to the Board. This should expedite Board action since the LSC includes five Board members.
2. This consideration should be ongoing and not wait for a seven-year cycle. Note that this recommendation does not require a change to the Bylaws, which state, “The life of a Continuing Committee may not exceed seven years without a review for its need by the Board of Directors.”

Note that the Workgroup deliberately avoided considering the dissolution of specific committees because this was not part of its charge, nor did it have the expertise or the breadth of representation needed to undertake such consideration. Only the dissolution of the Committee on Committees and the Committee Appointments Advisory Committee was considered. This was done with care and with guidance from the Committee on Committees. Note that the full function of the Committee Appointments Advisory Committee will be carried forward by the LSC.

## 7. Responsibilities of Vice Presidents

The Workgroup has carefully considered the workload of Vice Presidents in recommending their new role as chairs of committee councils.

Currently, all three Vice Presidents serve as *ex officio* members of the Committee on Committees, but they do not work directly with committees. The second-year Vice President is the liaison between the Committee on Committees and the Board. The third-year Vice President chairs the Budget Committee and serves on the Executive Committee. According to the Bylaws, the search committee for a new Executive Director must be chaired by a Vice President. In recent years, Vice Presidents have been asked by Presidents-elect to chair task forces, which is also a major time commitment.

As chairs of councils and members of the LSC, Vice Presidents will participate in approximately eight meetings per year (four Council meetings and four LSC meetings). To a large extent, the time involved in chairing a council will be offset by the time that Vice Presidents currently spend with the Committee on Committees (eleven meetings per year, including the annual retreat.) Furthermore, the Vice President will be assisted by a council vice chair. [Section 8](#) recommends an annual cycle of council activities and discusses the responsibilities of the Vice President and the council vice chair.

In their capacity as council chairs, Vice Presidents will be expected to learn about committee issues, maintain contacts with committee chairs, and lead high-level discussions at council meetings. Vice Presidents can best represent the Board to committees (and committees to the Board) in this role.

Vice Presidents will not be expected to be experts in the areas represented by their councils. (This could unintentionally alter the nature of the vice presidential position, and that is not the intention of the Workgroup’s recommendation.) Council vice chairs, on the other hand, will be appointed on the basis of deep experience in these areas, and they will be qualified to provide strong support for the Vice Presidents.

Improved use of committees as “arms of the Board” should result in less reliance on task forces. As Presidents-elect consider the Strategic Plan and begin planning their presidential initiatives, they should consult with the Leadership Support Council (which includes the Vice Presidents) to determine how committees might serve to accomplish their goals. This practice should shift some of the work currently done by task forces to committees or to subcommittees consisting of committee members and additional, temporarily appointed members. Again, the intent is for the Board to work with committees as much as possible.

The Workgroup anticipates the continuing need for task forces in situations that cannot be addressed by existing committees. In such cases or when Vice Presidents must take on other special assignments, flexibility will be needed in order to balance their workloads. Other Board members, such as the senior representatives from the Councils of Chapters and Sections, might be asked to chair a task force (there is precedent for this) or to chair a committee council.

### **Assignment of Vice Presidents to Committee Councils**

Vice Presidents are elected in a three-year rotation through the academic, government, and industry sectors. The Workgroup does not recommend any changes in the election process for Vice Presidents. While chairing a committee council will be one of the general responsibilities of Vice Presidents, experience in a *specific* council area will not be a consideration in nominating or electing individuals for the office of Vice President. However, it is important that the responsibility of chairing a committee council (and the council assignment) be communicated to prospective candidates for this office.

A schedule is needed for assigning Vice Presidents to councils. With three councils and three vice presidents, a simple assignment would be to associate a specific sector vice president with a specific council. For example, one could assign the government Vice President to Membership, the academic Vice President to Education, and the industry Vice President to Professional Issues. However, this could unintentionally change the nature of the vice presidential position, suggesting that that the government Vice President is “Vice President for Membership”. That is not the intention of the proposal. Thus, an assignment schedule that rotates the councils across the sectors is desirable.

Table 4 illustrates one such schedule that minimizes the turnover in council chairs. The notation  $S_n$  indicates the Vice President from sector  $S$  in year  $n$  of office. For example,  $A_1$  denotes the academic Vice President in his or her first year.

Council	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Education	A1	A2	A3	G3	G1	G2	I2	I3	I1
Membership	I2	I3	I1	A1	A2	A3	G3	G1	G2
Prof Issues	G3	G1	G2	I2	I3	I1	A1	A2	A3

**Table 4. Assignment of Vice Presidents to Councils**

## 8. Activities of Committee Councils

This section explains how committee councils can carry out their responsibilities (see [Section 4](#)). The suggestions provided in this section are not meant to be highly prescriptive, but rather to provide councils with helpful guidelines for getting started. Councils need to be flexible, and over time they should develop and document their own best practices.

### Discussion Topics for Councils

The following topics are suggested for ongoing discussion by councils, as appropriate to the area covered by the council:

1. Consider whether committees are operating with sufficient knowledge of the Board’s direction, especially with respect to the Association’s strategic plan. Provide input and response to the Board regarding strategic direction.
2. Share process, successes, and problems (this is especially useful for Awards committees).
3. Orient new chairs.
4. Review whether the ASA has an effective mix of committees in the council area. Recommend to the Board whether any committees should be created, combined or eliminated. See the discussion of charge reviews below.
5. Resolve overlaps or duplication in committee goals and activities.
6. Discuss whether committees are getting people with the right qualifications.

### Documenting Committee Member Qualifications

The council vice chair should document committee member qualifications (such as special needs, skills, diversity, and experience) for input to the LSC, and for inclusion in a general document maintained by ASA staff on the time commitment and experience required for each committee. One paragraph per committee should suffice, and chairs should review this occasionally. This benefits the appointment process and is useful for Presidents-elect. Councils are the best place to bring this information together.

## Reporting

For many years, committee chairs have filed end-of-year reports, and the reporting process has been administered by the Committee on Committees. The Workgroup recommends eliminating the current reporting system and implementing the following steps:

1. Once a year, each of the Vice Presidents will give a presentation to the Board that describes the health of committee activities in the areas represented by their respective councils and provides recommendations or questions that need response from the Board. (In some cases, the council vice chair might be invited to do the presentation.) This presentation should allow time for Board discussion or follow-up as needed. Accompanying the presentation will be a report that considers the area as a whole and includes key accomplishments, concerns, and obstacles for committees.

The three presentations will be rotated so that one presentation will be given at each Board meeting. This step will replace the current practice of inviting one or two committee chairs to give presentations to the Board, and so no additional time should be required in Board meetings. Note that this step does not apply to the Council for Awards, although a similar update might be given by the Past President as needed.

2. In preparation for the council presentation, each committee chair will prepare a one-page summary of successes, concerns, and obstacles. The summaries will be discussed at a council meeting to assist the chair in preparing the report and deciding what to highlight. If there is a major issue involving a particular committee, the chair of that committee can be invited to speak to the Board as part of the presentation.
3. After the presentation, highlights of committee activities will be distilled by the council vice chair for inclusion in the Committees section of the ASA website, where they will be visible to the membership.

The benefits of these steps are as follows:

- Committee chairs will have more incentive to prepare summaries, knowing how the information will be used in the Vice President's presentation to the Board.
- A presentation of related committee activities "as a whole" is more likely to elicit Board discussion and response.
- Publicizing the work of committees in related areas should improve the membership's understanding of how committees work, and it should encourage participation in committees.

## Annual Cycle for Council Meetings

The only annual face-to-face meeting anticipated for each council is a meeting at JSM. At this meeting, the council chair should present a message from the President-elect if the President-elect is not able to attend. The vice chair should provide orientation for new chairs at some point, but with administrative detail covered only in a handout. Chairs-elect should be invited, especially if orientation will be provided. Note

that this meeting will replace the current Committee Chairs meeting, which is organized by the Committee on Committees and is attended by the three Vice Presidents.

During the year, other council meetings can be conducted as conference calls. A council meeting is anticipated just prior to the Board of Directors meeting at which the council chair will give a presentation (see “Reporting” above), with follow-up after the Board meeting to review Board response and recommendations. In the summer or fall, the vice chair should lead a discussion of whether committees are getting people with the right qualifications. Council meeting minutes should be taken and posted to the website by an ASA staff member or the vice chair.

In order to carry out their activities (see [Section 4](#)), councils should meet two to four times per year. It is expected that the Awards Council will need to meet only twice annually, and that other councils will need to meet more often, depending on the current activity level.

## Flexibility

Councils have flexibility for addressing special issues and activities. The council chair has the option of convening a subset of the council to discuss an issue that is relevant to some of the committees. The chair also has the option of temporarily appointing a subcommittee for the council, which can include individuals who are not necessarily members of the council. Subcommittees can qualify for financial support, and creating a subcommittee does not require Board approval.

## Preparation and Review of Committee Charges

In past years, the Committee on Committees has spent considerable time reviewing and updating committee charges. In the future, the following process is recommended:

1. An ASA staff member prepares a list of committee charges that are due for review at the beginning of each year and makes editorial recommendations such as changes needed for consistency and correctness.
2. The staff member sends the list to the council vice chair for management and the proposed editorial changes to the committee chair for discussion by the committee.
3. The committee chair reviews content and updates the charge if necessary.
4. The council reviews the committee and its charge from a strategic perspective (this should be a minor agenda item, and only one or two of these reviews will be needed per year). The council considers whether the charge fits with the strategic direction of the ASA and recommends action to the LSC.
5. The LSC reviews the recommendation, prepares the final wording of the charges, and sends a recommendation (continue or dissolve the committee) to the Board. The charge is an information item for the Board agenda.

## Working with Individual Committees

The designated Board member (Vice President, Past President, or other as indicated in Table 2) will maintain direct contact with individual committees through their chairs. In the case of committees assigned to councils, the vice chair will assist in this responsibility. Thus, each committee has a hot-line to the Board through a designated Board member.

The council chair and vice chair should be familiar with the work of their assigned committees. To ensure this familiarity, the appointment of the vice chair should overlap with the term of the chair.

If time permits, it would be highly desirable for the council chair or vice chair to participate in at least one of the annual meetings of each of their assigned committees. This should be done with the approval of the committee chair or when requested by the committee chair.

## 9. Representatives to Outside Organizations

The ASA's committee structure currently includes representatives to some 20 other organizations. These representatives participate in "outside organization committees", which are not ASA committees in the usual sense (they are not intended to function as "arms of the Board"). Furthermore, there is considerable variation in the nature of these outside organizations and ASA's relationships with them. Nonetheless, these relationships are important to the ASA, and they need to be managed appropriately. Some of these representatives have expressed concern that they do not have a clear communication process, i.e., they do not know how to be heard.

Representatives should know they can give advice to and ask for help from the ASA Board through a designated representative. The Workgroup recommends that this representative be the Executive Director, recognizing the Executive Director's role and experience in dealing with external organizations.

Representatives to outside organizations are currently appointed by the President-elect with assistance from the Advisory Committee on Committee Appointments. The Workgroup recommends that the LSC turn to the Executive Director as a resource in recommending these appointments.

The Workgroup notes that the Board of Directors (per Article VI, Section III of the ASA Bylaws) has the responsibility for appointing representatives to outside organizations. This responsibility has been delegated to the President-elect.

## 10. Feedback from the Committee on Committees and Committee Chairs

The emergence of the organizational issues discussed in [Section 2](#) has been a long-standing and often-discussed concern of the Committee on Committees. Drawing on this experience, the Committee has collaborated closely and constructively with the Workgroup.

Both the former Committee chair, Susan Devlin, and the current Committee chair, Margo Anderson, are members of the Workgroup, and Susan Devlin chaired the 2006 task force which laid the foundation for the Workgroup. Bob Rodriguez, the Workgroup chair, served on the Committee as the 2006-2008 Vice President, and Alicia Carriquiry, a member of the Workgroup, serves on the Committee as the 2007-2009 Vice President.

The full Committee has been regularly apprised of the Workgroup's activities. In January 2009, at the Committee's annual retreat, Bob Rodriguez presented an early version of this report. The Committee strongly supported the proposed changes, with suggestions that improved subsequent versions.

During May and June, the members of the Committee who serve as committee liaisons presented a draft of the Workgroup's recommendations to their assigned committee chairs. These members are Julia Bienias, Janet Buckingham, Dallas Johnson, Virginia Lesser, Frank Rockhold, Nagambal Shah, and Al Tupek.

Overall, the committee chairs supported the recommendations. They indicated that the proposed changes would help committees be better connected with the ASA, and that the changes would help committees to be listened to by the Board. Committee chairs felt that direct contact with a Board member would be helpful, and that being able to share concerns and successes with other committee chairs would be valuable.

Committee chairs perceived the benefit of councils as places for committees to collaborate with one another. They felt that the proposed changes would help in appointing the right mix of committee members. Chairs hoped that the new structure would motivate active participation by committee members who might not otherwise see the benefit of committee activities. They also felt that the new structure would facilitate the process of consolidating committees by bringing together chairs of committees with overlapping interests.

One committee chair summed up his comments as follows: "What's ultimately important is the impact and alignment of each committee's activities with the mission, vision, and strategic direction of ASA. The proposal seems to emphasize more streamlined, direct communication between committees and the Board. This is a clear positive, from my perspective."

Committee chairs raised a number of specific concerns and made suggestions. The Workgroup used this input to modify and clarify details of its recommendations, as follows:

1. Some chairs wondered if councils would be another layer of bureaucracy separating committees from the Board. The recommendations now clarify this point, emphasizing the opportunity for direct contact between committee chairs and the Board members who chair the councils.
2. A few chairs questioned the initial assignment of their committees to particular councils. In two cases, the most recent committee activities were clearly aligned with a different council, and so these committees were reassigned. Inevitably, some committee interests will span more than one council area, and [Section 4](#) (see [Flexibility of Councils](#)) now explains that committees will have “access” to other councils. [Section 4](#) also explains that assignments can be reviewed and modified by the LSC if committee activities change direction.
3. Several chairs asked for more information about the areas covered by councils (these differ from the committee groups assigned to Committee on Committees liaisons). [Section 4](#) now explains the focus areas of councils and their alignment with the Strategic Plan.
4. In response to input from education committee chairs, the [Council for Education](#) includes representatives from the Section on Statistical Education, the Section on Teaching of Statistics in the Health Sciences, and the ASA Education staff.
5. A few chairs asked whether it will become easier for the Board to dissolve committees which are no longer needed. [Section 6](#) recommends a streamlined process for this purpose.
6. A few chairs wondered whether the Vice Presidents should have committee domain expertise in order to chair councils. This is not necessary for reasons explained in [Section 7](#), but council vice chairs will be appointed on the basis of domain experience.
7. Some chairs asked about the work involved in council meetings. Council activities are described in [Section 8](#).
8. A suggestion was made to review the new structure after a certain number of years to determine whether it is working more effectively. The Workgroup recommends that this be done by the Strategic Plan Review Committee; see [Section 11](#).
9. The need for documenting council activities was pointed out. This is addressed in [Section 8](#).
10. There was concern that unless the Vice Presidents are given direction on how to conduct council activities, the councils will be “just another layer of management” without any improvement in efficiency. Recommendations for council activities are now provided in [Section 8](#). There was also concern about the workload for Vice Presidents; this is addressed in [Section 7](#).
11. Some chairs asked whether council chairs and vice chairs will be able to attend committee meetings at JSM. [Section 8](#) suggests that council chairs or vice chairs attend at least one committee meeting each year, as time permits.
12. Some chairs wondered whether the Council for Professional Visibility and Issues will work with the ASA’s Director of Science Policy to focus policy issues. Councils will have considerable flexibility for doing their work, as explained in [Section 4](#).

## 11. Transition Plan for Implementing Recommendations

The Workgroup has considered the steps needed to implement the recommendations presented in this report, and it has drafted the transition plan below as a model if the Board endorses the recommendations and recommends the accompanying Bylaw changes at its August 2009 meeting. This plan also assumes that the Bylaw changes proceed without delay through the amendment process and are approved by the Board at its December 2009 meeting.

Successful implementation requires a transition process that establishes the LSC and fully prepares the LSC, together with the chairs and vice chairs of committee councils, for their roles. This must be done before the Committee on Committees and the Committee Appointments Advisory Committee are dissolved. Ideally, this process should be completed by the end of 2009 in order to synchronize with the committee appointment cycle and to enable the 2010 President-elect, council chairs, and council vice chairs to work effectively within the new structure.

### Transition Steps

Table 5 outlines key steps and responsibilities in the transition process. A Vice President assigned to guide the transition process will work out other details, in consultation with the Committee on Committees and the Executive Director.

Date	Step	Responsibility
August 1, 2009	Appoint a Vice President to be responsible for overseeing the transition process. <sup>5</sup>	President Morton
August 2 (JSM)	Inform committee chairs about the transition to the new structure and the process for completing 2009 reports; email follow-up.	Committee on Committees, Workgroup Chair Rodriguez
September-October	Inform Committee on Committees and Appointment Advisory Committee members that these committees will cease as of December 31, and thank them for their service.	President Morton, Executive Director Wasserstein
September	Inform ASA membership about new structure in <i>Amstat News</i> .	President Morton, Rodriguez

**Table 5 (cont'd on page 23). Transition Plan Assuming Approval of Recommendations and Bylaw Changes**

<sup>5</sup> Of course, this is a decision of the Board, but the Workgroup suggests 2009-2011 Vice President Chuang-Stein, since we understand that 2010 Senior Vice President Schenker will be working on other Board projects.

Date	Step	Responsibility
September-October	Appoint the four members of the LSC who will serve as council vice chairs. <sup>6</sup>	President-elect Pantula with input from Margo Anderson, Chair of Committee on Committees
September-October	Assign Vice President Schenker, Vice President Chuang-Stein, and incoming Vice President Little to councils. <sup>7</sup>	President Morton and President-elect Pantula
November	Brief council chairs and vice chairs on their responsibilities.	Wasserstein, Rodriguez, and Anderson
November	Brief incoming President-elect Geller on function of LSC.	Wasserstein
November	Geller meets with appointed members of LSC to discuss committee appointment process for 2010.	Wasserstein, Geller; input from Appointments Advisory Committee and Linda Gage
December Board Meeting	Brief report from Vice President on transition process. Board acknowledges Appointments Advisory Committee and Committee on Committees members for their service.	Morton and Wasserstein
December	For each council, appropriate Committee on Committees liaisons brief the chair and vice chair on status and activities of committees.	Council vice chairs
December	Update document with responsibilities of Vice Presidents (see <a href="#">Section 7</a> ).	Senior Vice President Alicia Carriquiry
December	Prepare preliminary procedures documents for committee councils and LSC (see Sections 4, 5, 6, and 8).	Vice President assigned to guide transition process
January 2010	Each council has a preliminary meeting with chairs to discuss new structure and council activities (see <a href="#">Section 8</a> ). Follow-up discussion by council chairs and vice chairs.	Council chairs and vice chairs

**Table 5 (continued). Transition Plan Assuming Approval of Recommendations and Bylaw Changes**

<sup>6</sup> It is recommended that some members of the Committee on Committees be transitioned to the LSC to leverage their expertise and knowledge.

<sup>7</sup> If the Presidents follow the proposed rotation in Table 4, this would assign Vice President Little to Education, Vice President Chuang-Stein to Membership, and Vice President Schenker to Professional Issues and Visibility.

## Documentation of Council Procedures

The Workgroup strongly recommends that councils document their responsibilities and procedures, and that preliminary documents be prepared prior to the initial meetings of the councils in January 2010. Sections 4 and 8 of this report provide the starting point for a committee council procedures document, and Sections 5 and 6 provide the starting point for an LSC procedures document. These documents should be updated annually.

[Section 7](#) can be used to update the current document that describes the responsibilities of Vice Presidents. This document is maintained by the third-year Vice President.

## Long Term Review

The startup phase for the new organizational structure is likely to take one or two years. The Workgroup recommends that the structure be reviewed after three or four years to assess its effectiveness. Since the proposed structure addresses a goal of the Strategic Plan, the Workgroup suggests that the review be done by the Strategic Plan Review Committee.

## 12. “Other ASA Subgroups” as Alternatives to Committees

In March, 2007, a revision to the Bylaws was made, adding Article XIII, which allows the creation of “other ASA subgroups.” The new Bylaw and related procedures approved by the Board at that time prescribe the method by which such subgroups are formed, but they provide little guidance regarding the ways in which such subgroups might be used to meet the ASA’s needs—and in particular how subgroups might offer an alternative to creating committees.

This “other subgroups” category was introduced to meet the needs of groups not met by “councils, sections, chapters, or committees.” In fact, the Bylaw was created because one particular group had such a need. For many years, a group of representatives from academic departments of statistics operated more or less within the auspices of the ASA, but had no official status. Immediately upon approval of Article XIII, the Caucus of Academic Representatives was chartered, the only ASA subgroup chartered in this way as of this date.

The Workgroup recommends that the Board consider other subgroups as an option when considering formation of a committee. As an example, in 2008, the Board created a Committee on Student Pro Bono Statistics. Among other things, the Committee was charged to “encourage and facilitate the establishment and growth of student-driven pro bono statistical programs and to encourage members of these programs to become active in ASA.” Support for this committee came from the Special Interest Group on Volunteerism in Statistics, and from the Sections on Statistical Education and Statistical Consulting.

Whereas a committee can consist of only a few members, had this group been constituted instead as an ASA subgroup (be it a caucus, assembly, organization, etc.) to promote student pro bono statistics, it would have had at least 50 members, a leadership group set by its charter, and so on.

Other committees (for example, the Committee on Gay and Lesbian Concerns in Statistics) might have been better served by being able to form a larger group—not so large as a section perhaps, but much larger than a committee. Among other things, organizing as a subgroup might provide more options for meetings and for other ways to communicate.

Size is not the only factor that distinguishes subgroups from committees. Another factor is purpose: committees are primarily a means for accomplishing goals set by the Board, whereas “other subgroups” are appropriate for other interests and goals that merit organizational support and recognition. In this way, such subgroups are more like sections or chapters, although of course they are distinct from these entities.

Thus, each time the Board creates a new committee, and perhaps even when a new section is under consideration by the Council of Sections Governing Board, the purpose and timeframe for the proposed committee (or section) should be reviewed in the context of the new organizational structure and the Strategic Plan to determine if designation as a committee (or section) is appropriate, or whether an alternative, such as an “other subgroup,” would better serve the interests of the ASA. In the case of committees, the Leadership Support Council would be an appropriate body to advise the Board. Of course, in the case of sections, the Council of Sections Governing Board would provide this guidance.

When a new subgroup is formed, the LSC should assist the Board in determining the appropriate reporting mechanism for the subgroup. In some instances, the subgroup would report through a Vice President, as was envisioned by the Board when Article XIII was added to the Bylaws. However, depending on its purpose, the subgroup might be assigned to one of the committee councils, report through the Executive Director, or perhaps even through the Council of Sections.

## Acknowledgments

The Workgroup is grateful to the members of the Committee on Committees who compiled feedback from committee chairs on an early draft of the recommendations presented in this report. These members are Julia Bienias, Janet Buckingham, Dallas Johnson, Virginia Lesser, Frank Rockhold, Nagambal Shah, and Al Tupek. The Workgroup is also grateful to the many committee chairs who provided thoughtful questions and suggestions on this draft.