

## APPENDIX 15: CHANGES IN THE ASA CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

From 1980 to 2003, ASA Council approved a number of changes to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association, which were subsequently approved by the membership through a mail ballot. These changes, published in Council Minutes or in *Footnotes* articles, are summarized below. Also included are dates when the membership referendum results were formally announced.

### A. Changes in the ASA Constitution and Bylaws: 1980–1990

- On January 23, 1981, Council approved an amendment to Article VI, Section 1 of the Bylaws by changing the minimum number of members required to establish a new section from 200 to 250, and keeping the existing limit to retain section status at 200 members (*Footnotes*, May 1981:7). The members approved this change in the spring of 1981 (*Footnotes*, August, 1981:20).
- The 1982 Council made two important modifications to membership practices, by changing the (a) definition of Association membership, and (b) dues structure. The objective of the membership change was to “shift the focus of the membership qualifications away from ‘status’ or ‘credentials’ criteria to commitment to the purposes of the Association.” (*Footnotes*, March 1982:1). Membership in the Association was defined as follows, “Persons subscribing to the objectives of the Association may become Members. Those subscribing to the objectives of the Association, but desiring fewer services may become Associate Members. Students enrolled in undergraduate or graduate institutions can become Student Members . . .” (*Footnotes*, August 1982:13–14)

Also according to this resolution, Council, as the elected representatives of the members, would have the authority to set dues for the membership up to cost of living adjustments. Increases in dues above cost of living adjustments required the approval of members through a mail ballot.

These measures were approved by the membership in spring 1982 (*Footnotes*, August, 1982:1).

- In January 1983, Council approved emeritus membership for persons 70 years of age or older, who on application for membership became entitled to all rights of active membership except journals, without further payment of annual dues, provided that at the time of application, they were dues paying members of the Association for the preceding 10 years (*Footnotes*, February 1984:10). Members voted to reinstate emeritus membership in spring 1983 (*Footnotes*, August, 1983:3).
- On September 1, 1984, Council approved changes to the structure of the Program Committee to increase its membership by two persons, because of the increased diversity of the membership of the Association, and the increased length and complexity of the Program. Article V, Section 3 of the Bylaws was amended to: “the Program Committee shall consist of nine to 11 persons: The President Elect, serving as Chair, the Vice President Elect, the Secretary, and six to eight other members of the Association selected as follows: Each year the Council will appoint four to six members from a list presented by the President-Elect. Two of the members shall be appointed for two-year terms and others for one-year terms . . .” (*Footnotes*, March 1985:15). Members approved this measure in the spring ballot of 1985 (*Footnotes*, August, 1985:1).
- On August 22, 1987, Council amended the ASA Constitution by adding the current President and Past President as voting members of the Committee on the Executive Office and Budget (EOB). Members of Council could be appointed as members of the EOB to the three positions having staggered three-year terms. Other minor working changes and deletions that updated the Constitution as part of the referendum (i.e., to make these changes) were also adopted (*Footnotes*, November 1987:15). These changes, which affected Article V, Section 5, Article 1, Section 5 and Article V, Section 4, and Article VII, Section 3 of the Constitution and Bylaws were approved by the members in spring 1988 (*Footnotes*, August, 1988:5).
- Two referenda were placed on the spring 1989 ballot for membership approval: (1) On August 27, 1988, Council voted to change policies with respect to emeritus membership, so that emeritus members would be affixed dues of \$15 (with a low income waiver on request), and would include free Annual Meeting registration in addition to preexisting benefits. (2) In January 1989, Council voted to adopt the eight-district proposal for revising the ASA election system. The Subcommittee on Redistricting recommended models for redistricting using criteria “such as regional social networks, as well as a nearly equal distribution of population among districts.” (*Footnotes*, April 1989:14) (A December 1988 *Footnotes* article focused on a discussion of a five- versus eight- district model.) Both measures (on emeritus benefits and fees and on redistricting) were approved by the membership in the referendum of spring 1989 (*Footnotes*, August, 1989:1).

- The 1990 Council adjusted the qualifications for the emeritus category: “Persons are eligible for emeritus membership at retirement, providing that they have been members of ASA for ten years.” (*Footnotes*, December 1989:15). By removing the existing restrictions of age 70 and consecutive ten-year membership prior to that age, emeritus membership became much more accessible. This measure was approved by the members in spring 1990 (*Footnotes*, August 1990:1).
- In January 1991, Council passed a resolution giving students the right to vote and hold office (*Footnotes*, May 1991:15). This referendum on changing the status of student membership was approved by the members in spring 1991 (*Footnotes*, August 1991:1).

## B. Changes in the ASA Constitution and Bylaws:1991–2002

The following changes to the ASA Constitution and Bylaws were enacted from 1991 to 2002:

- In February 1992, Council made changes to the *Organizer’s Manual* aimed at promoting diversity in nominating Program Committee members. A Council subcommittee was also appointed to revise language in the ASA Bylaws and *Organizer’s Manual* to correct for minor inconsistencies that emerged during this process “so that formal policies and current practices would be in greater conformity” (*Footnotes*, May 1992:22). The referendum on changes in appointing the Program Committee passed in spring 1992 (*Footnotes*, August 1992:1).
- In January 1996, Council voted to eliminate the emeritus membership category and to incorporate those members in the regular income categories (*Footnotes*, July/August 1996:18–19). This measure was approved in the spring 1996 ballot (*Footnotes*, July/August 1996:1,3). (The membership voted on the change to the Bylaws on the elimination of the emeritus category in spring 1997.)
- In January 1997, Council approved a number of changes in the ASA Bylaws based on suggestions from the Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE), the Executive Office, and ASA legal counsel. These changes included: “(1) the elimination of the Emeritus Membership category and clearer definition of conditions of membership, including the requirement to comply with the provisions of the Code of Ethics; (2) clarification of the nomination process played by at-large members of Council and the need to ensure the anonymity of individual voters; (3) clarification of the role of the Vice President on the Nominations Committee and the inclusion of the Committee on Professional Ethics as a constitutional committee; and (4) clarification of guidelines for section formation and operations.” (*Footnotes*, July/August 1997:15). Members approved changes in the Bylaws in spring 1997 (*Footnotes*, July/August 1997:1).
- In January 1998, in changing the ASA Committee structure, Council approved a number of amendments to the ASA Constitution and Bylaws. Council action on the committee restructuring is in *Footnotes*, May/June, 1998:10–11; a summary of results from the vote by the membership on the amendments is summarized in *Footnotes*, July/August, 1998:5), and is presented below:
  - **Amendment 1:** (approved) To amend Article V of the ASA Bylaws to add the Committee on Sections.
  - **Amendment 2:** (approved) To amend Article V of the ASA Bylaws to add the Committee on Awards,
  - **Amendment 3:** (approved) To amend Article V, Section 7 (c) of the ASA Bylaws so that the ASA President recommends members to serve on the Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE).
  - **Amendment 4:** (approved) To amend Article V, Section 4 of the ASA Bylaws so that the ASA Secretary recommends members to serve on the Committee on the Executive Office and Budget (EOB).
  - **Amendment 5:** (approved) To amend Article II, Section 2 (d) and Article V, Section 2 of the ASA Bylaws to reduce the Committee on Nominations to 11 members and eliminate elections by districts
  - **Amendment 6:** (approved) To amend Article V, Section 1 (a) of the ASA Bylaws to remove ASA journal editors as members of the Committee on Publications.
  - **Amendment 8:** (approved) To amend Article V of the ASA Bylaws to remove Section 6, in its entirety, regarding the Membership Committee.
  - **Amendment 9:** (approved) To amend Article II and Article V of the ASA Bylaws to remove the Committee on Committees.

[Only one Amendment (Amendment 7) was not approved: To amend Article II and Article V, Section 1 (a) of the ASA Bylaws so that the Committee on Publications is appointed by Council on recommendations of the President rather than elected by the voting members of the Association.]

- On August 25, 1998, after a survey of lapsed emeritus members, Council voted to reinstate the emeritus membership category for persons who have been ASA members for at least ten years and are retired from their primary employment, with such members receiving *Footnotes* but no journals as part of this membership (*Footnotes*, January 1999:10). In February 1999, Council moved to amend the ASA Bylaws through a referendum in the 1999 ballot to permit reintroducing the emeritus membership category (*Footnotes*, July/August:13). The measure to reinstate the emeritus membership was approved by the members in spring 1999, and became effective in the 2000 membership year (*Footnotes*, July/August 1999:1).
- In January 2000, Council approved a change to the Committee on Sections, requiring a revision in the Bylaws to Article V. Committees, Section 5: “The Committee on Sections shall consist of nine members. Six members shall be appointed by Council for three-year terms based on the recommendation of the President. Three of these members shall be appointed from among the Association membership and three shall be appointed from among the Council members-at-large. Three members shall also be elected for three-year terms by current section chairs from among current section chairs according to section membership size. All terms will be staggered” (*Footnotes*, September/October 2000:15). This amendment was approved by the membership in spring 2000 (*Footnotes*, July/August 2000:1).
- In February 2001, Council voted to establish a new Committee on Committees with the composition and scope recommended by the Task Force on the Reexamination of the Committee on Committees and the Committee on Nominations, and to seek approval of this in a referendum after the Annual Meeting.

In a special referendum held in October 2001, ASA members voted on whether to support the reestablishment of the Committee on Committees (COC) as recommended by Council in February 2001, and to modify the ASA Bylaws (Article V. Committees. Section 8. Committee on Committees) as follows:

- (a) The Committee on Committees shall be responsible for making ranked recommendations to Council for appointments to all Award Selection Committees and Status Committees. Additionally, the Committee on Committees shall make ranked recommendations to Council for appointments to the Awards Committee, the Committee on Professional Ethics, and the at-large portion of the Committee on Sections. The Committee on Nominations will have the responsibility of nominating the candidates for the Committee on Committees.
- (b) The Committee on Committees shall to be composed of eight members each serving two-year terms. Four are to be elected at-large and four in seats reserved for specific institutional constituencies (one seat each for members employed by PhD granting institutions; by MA and four-year institutions; by 2-year schools; and by non-teaching institutions and in self-employment), with two at-large and two reserved seats up for election each year. (*Footnotes*, July/August:22 as presented on the Special Referendum Ballot).

The membership overwhelmingly endorsed the reestablishment of the Committee on Committees in the referendum (*Footnotes*, November 2001:1).

### C. Changes in the ASA Bylaws: 2003

In February 2003, Council voted to make changes to the Bylaws in order to clarify certain articles, or to resolve inconsistencies and other technical problems that had been detected in a thorough review of the Constitution and Bylaws by ASA legal counsel. For each proposed change, ASA legal counsel provided recommendations for specific word changes for Council consideration. Council approved the following changes (subsequently approved by the membership in the spring of 2003). The changes to the Bylaws, which are summarized below, appear in full in the Official Reports and Proceedings (*Footnotes*, May 2003:28–29).

- *Formal Council Actions Between Meetings*: A conflict existed between the ASA Constitution Article IV, Section 5 and Bylaws Article III, Section 6, and both were in conflict with the District of Columbia laws under which ASA operates as a corporation. Council voted to permit Council actions between face-to-face meetings either by teleconference or by unanimous written vote after requests for actions are submitted by mail, electronic mail, fax or by other means.
- *Nominations of Members to Award Selection Committees*: Inconsistencies existed between Sections 7(a) and 8(a) of Article V of the Bylaws after the responsibility for nominating members to the Awards Selection Com-

---

mittees shifted back to the Committee on Committees. Council voted to change Bylaws Article V Section 7(a) to place responsibility for nominating members to the Awards Selection Committees with the Committee on Committees, and to amend Bylaws Article V Section 7(b) to remove the word "President" and replace it with "Committee on Committees."

- *Method of Annual Election:* At the August 20, 2002 meeting, Council voted to offer members the option of voting by electronic means as well as by paper ballot in the 2003 election. Due to changing means of communication, Council also asked legal counsel to propose amendments to the Bylaws to make the method of voting more flexible. Council voted to change the Bylaws suggested by removing all references to a specific method of membership voting (mailed ballots) and give Council the authority to determine the procedures to be followed provided that such procedures protect the privacy of members and ensure an accurate and fair count.
- *When the President-Elect Assumes the Presidency:* Article II, Section (1) required an adjustment due to the shift to a four-day Annual Meeting. Council voted to amend the Bylaws to begin the term of office for officers on the last day of the Annual Meeting in the year during which they are elected.
- *Clarification of Emeritus Membership Status:* Council unanimously voted to make persons eligible for emeritus membership at retirement from their primary employment as sociologists, providing that they have been full voting members of the Association for at least ten years.
- *Publication of Annual Financial Audit:* Legal counsel recommended that Bylaws should be general and not restrict an association to only one particular method of communication (e.g., in this case the Bylaws specifically direct that audits be published in *Footnotes*). Council voted to make the report of the audit, and the reporting of members' resolutions, available in an appropriate Association publication or by other means as deemed necessary by the Council.
- *Publication of Council Meeting Minutes:* Council discussed how to disseminate the Council Minutes most effectively. Council voted unanimously to authorize the Executive Office to place a copy of the full, approved Minutes of Council meetings on the ASA website, and to place a summary of selected actions and discussions in *Footnotes*.

The membership approved the seven proposed amendments in spring 2003 (*Footnotes*, July/August 2003:6).