**Chapter Election Procedures**

The AGO National Bylaws state the following regarding chapter elections:

1. Chapters may hold elections annually or biennially in even-numbered years.

2.By December 31 of an election year, the chapter executive committee must appoint a chapter nominating committee consisting of at least three members, a majority of whom are not on the executive committee. If a chapter operates on a biennial election cycle, the nominating committee must be appointed in odd-numbered years.

3. The nominating committee must nominate at least one person for each office. Each chapter must elect a dean, secretary, and treasurer; other officers are at the discretion of the chapter. Incumbent officers may be nominated for re-election, unless restricted by chapter operating procedures.

4. The nominating committee is strongly encouraged to nominate a number of persons in excess of those needed to fill the place of members-at-large of the executive committee who are resigning or whose terms expire in the current year, unless restricted by chapter operating procedures.

5. Chapter officers' terms are for one year in the case of chapters with annual elections, or for two years in the case of chapters with biennial elections. As noted in the National Bylaws, Article VII, Section 4: Members at large of the Executive Committee of a Chapter shall hold office for three (3) years (in the case of chapters with annual elections) or four (4) years (in the case of chapters with biennial elections) or until their successors have been duly elected, with one third of the members of the Executive Committee being elected at each election, or in cases of biennial elections one-half of the officers at each election.

6. The slate of nominees submitted by the nominating committee must be delivered to the executive committee, recorded in the minutes, and announced in writing to the membership by March 1. If a chapter operates on a two-year election cycle, the announcement to the membership must be by March 1 of even-numbered years.

7. Additional nominations may be made by petition of at least five voting members in good standing and should be received by the secretary no later than April 1 (or within 30 days after the members have been given the nominating committee's slate, whichever is later).

8. The election must be concluded by May 31. See "Balloting Procedures" in this section for procedures. A plurality (more votes than for any candidate) of votes cast is sufficient for election.

*It is imperative for the dean to inform the nominating committee members of their duties and timeline. A solid, well-run organization relies on committed, trustworthy officers. It is important that the committee nominate candidates who understand the duties of their office and assist the chapter.*

Given the above, when a prospective nominee is being contacted by a member of the committee the following information should be transmitted to the nominee:

1.We wish to nominate you for the following position in the chapter.

2.The duties you must perform are set forth in the chapter’s operating procedures.

3. You are expected to attend and participate in board meetings.

4. If you cannot attend a board meeting your input is expected via email or telephone call to the dean.

5. We hope you can attend chapter meetings.

6. Can you do all or most of the above?

*If the potential nominee cannot or will not do the above it might be wise to consider another colleague for the position. In seeking a nominee for a position, attempt to match work experience with the office. For example, if a member has a job that demands clerical skills, that member would have the experience for the position of chapter secretary, or if a member works in the financial industry, that member would have the experience for the position of chapter treasurer.*

**Election Timetable**

If your chapter operates on a two-year election cycle, voting must be held in even-numbered years.

**December 31**: Deadline for chapter executive committee to appoint nominating committee.

**March 1**: Nominating committee's slate must be given to the executive committee, recorded in the minutes, and announced to the membership (in writing).

**April 1**: Additional nominations made by petition (see National Bylaws, Article VIII. Section 3. Chapter Office.) are due to the chapter secretary by this date, or within 30 days of the announcement of the nominating committee slate (whichever is later).

**May 31**: Elections must be held by this date. Once elected, new officers should immediately begin to attend executive committee meetings, with voice but no vote, until their official terms begin.

**June 30:** End of term for chapter officers and executive committee members whose terms have expired.

**June 30**: Officer Roster updates are due at National Headquarters through ONCARD.

**July 1**: New officers begin their terms.

**Ballot Procedures**

There are four methods of conducting a chapter election:

1. By mail

2. In person at a general chapter meeting

3. By a combination of the two above methods

4. Online.

**By Mail**

Voting is conducted entirely by mail. Ballots are sent to all voting members two to three weeks in advance of the election deadline. The members return ballots by mail by a specified date to the chapter secretary. Ballots should be opened by two auditors who are not candidates. Mailed ballots are not to be signed nor is a proxy statement included. Rather, the envelope is marked "BALLOT" and must have the name of the voting member handwritten on it.

**At a Chapter Meeting**

It is important to announce well in advance that the election will be held at a particular chapter meeting. Provisions should be made for absentee voting. Eligible voting members should mark their ballots and cast them in such a way that their selections remain confidential. A written ballot is recommended.

**Combination Method**

This procedure was developed by the Richmond (Virginia) Chapter, and was approved by a registered parliamentarian. It is recommended to all chapters that utilize the combination method.

1. Ballots for enclosure in chapter newsletters and those for in-person balloting should be prepared on different colors of paper.
2. Mailed ballots are not to be signed nor is a proxy statement included. Rather, the envelope is marked "BALLOT" and must have the name of the voting member hand- written on it. The mailed ballots are opened only by the auditors at the time all the ballots are counted. No late ballots should be permitted.
3. Upon receipt, names of ballot-by-mail voters are checked off the voter roster.
4. These are double checked at the time of the in-person balloting.
5. For the in-person election, ballots of the second color are distributed to eligible members who have not mailed in their ballots.

***Precautions:***

*1. The deadline for receipt of all mailed ballots must be prior to the meeting at which votes will be cast in person.*

*2. All mailed ballots should be removed from their envelopes and placed with the in- person ballots prior to counting, in an endeavor to preserve the anonymity of the voters.*

**Email and Online Voting**

The National by-laws of the AGO do allow electronic balloting. Ballots including the Chapter Nominating Committee slate and candidates nominated by qualified petition shall be prepared by the Secretary and distributed either by email or by using an online voting service. The following reminders and recommendations are offered:

1. Sufficient care must be taken to ensure that ballots reach every eligible Voting Member. Some members who do not have email service may need to receive their ballot by the postal service.

2. Any form of online voting should be completed before any in person voting takes place.

3. It is recommended that voting by email not be used as it does not provide adequate security or anonymity in most situations. Instead, options are available for free voting online through websites such as <https://www.opavote.com/nonprofit-elections> or <https://electionrunner.com/> that can provide secure and fair election results.