



AccessAbility SIG Election Procedure

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Background

Officers are elected each year prior to the AccessAbility SIG (A-SIG) business meeting at the Annual Conference so that new officers may attend this meeting as representatives of the A-SIG. Ideally, the elections are completed by two weeks prior to the conference.

Document Purpose

The purpose of this document is to clearly communicate the complete A-SIG electoral process from initial identification of candidates until the final certification of election results.

Related Documents

Please see also the following:

- A-SIG Transition Plan
- A-SIG Succession Plan
- A-SIG Job Descriptions for Officers and Key Positions
- A-SIG Membership Procedure
- A-SIG Five-Year Strategic Plan
- A-SIG Rechartering document (includes mission statement, goals and objectives, strategies, and activities)

Procedure Objectives

The primary objectives of the A-SIG election procedure are to ensure that (1) the best qualified candidates are identified and (2) the nomination and election process is clearly communicated to the members in sufficient time for them to study the candidates and make an informed decision. Additionally, when properly and completely followed, the documented procedure ensures that (3) the elections are open, honest, and above reproach or suspicion of any kind.

Terms of Office

Elected Offices: The official term of office is for the next community year (July 1, 200X to June 30, 200X+1). However, with the approval of the Steering Team*, the three elected officers may extend their term for 1 year without having to be re-elected.

Appointed Offices: The term of office is at the discretion of the SIG manager and the appointed officers.

For a description of the officers, see the “A-SIG Job Descriptions for Officers and Key Positions” document.

Procedure

The election procedure, which essentially begins immediately after the new officers take office, involves the following steps:

1. **Identifying and grooming leadership candidates**

Elected officers carry some of the responsibility for identifying and grooming their replacements, with help from the nominating committee. (See the “A-SIG Succession Plan.”) Officers are in a natural position to identify members who they would most want to take their places. The sooner after the elections that these potential leadership candidates are identified, the more time they have to be groomed and prepare for the challenges of a specific position. This is subject, of course, to officer recommendations, nomination, and the final vote by the membership.
2. **Appointing the Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee consists of at least two A-SIG members. These members must not hold an elected position in the A-SIG and they are not eligible for office in the election following their appointments. The Nominating Committee members should be identified and appointed by the A-SIG manager as soon after the elections as possible to allow them to work with the elected officials for the majority of the community year. The Nominating Committee establishes the beginning and ending dates for the election, with input from the A-SIG manager. These dates are included in the e-blast that identifies the candidates (step 4).
3. **Identifying nominees**

At least one nominee must be chosen for each elected leadership position. (See the “A-SIG Job Descriptions for Officers and Key Positions” document.) These selections must be completed prior to the official start date of the A-SIG elections. The Nominating Committee uses various methods to identify candidates and establish their intentions prior to the election:

 - Seek input from the current A-SIG officers, each of whom has ideally identified one or more strong candidates for the position that he or she will be vacating at the end of the community year. (Note that with the approval of the Steering Team, elected officers do have the option of continuing to a second term without having to be reelected.)

- Ask for volunteers from the membership via e-blast.
 - Seek nominees via personal telephone calls and/or e-mail messages.
4. **Announcing the slate of candidates**
The slate of candidates is announced to all A-SIG members via e-blast no later than 30 days in advance of the election deadline.
 5. **Appointing the Tellers Committee**
The Tellers Committee is appointed by the A-SIG manager no later than two weeks prior to the cutoff for receiving ballots, but ideally by the official start date for the elections. Tellers Committee members familiarize themselves with the voting process and oversee that process to ensure its integrity is maintained at all times. The Committee also finalizes the method or methods to be used by A-SIG members in casting their ballots.
 6. **Campaigning**
Campaigning is allowed in accordance with the latest “STC Campaign Guidelines” document.
 7. **Conducting the vote**
The vote is conducted in accordance with the method or methods decided upon by the Tellers Committee (step 5). Votes are sent directly and simultaneously to all members of the Tellers Committee.
 8. **Tabulating and announcing the results**
The Tellers Committee tabulates the votes immediately following the voting deadline and informs the Nominating Committee and the A-SIG manager of the results. The Nominating Committee ensures that the results are immediately communicated to the A-SIG member via an e-blast. They also create an “election results” article for inclusion in the next edition of *Achieve!*
 9. **Installing the new officers**
New AccessAbility SIG officers are officially installed at the A-SIG business meeting at the STC Annual Conference. New officers who are not attending the conference are installed in absentia.
 10. **Overlap.**
During the period from the conference to the beginning of the new community year (July 1), outgoing A-SIG officers share responsibilities with the incoming officers to ensure a smooth transition. (See the “A-SIG Transition Plan” document.)

* The Steering Team is comprised of all elected and appointed officers, other active A-SIG members, and senior advisors from the original Special Needs Committee. The A-SIG manager invites members to join this governing body at his or her discretion. No A-SIG member who requests membership in the Steering Team shall be denied such. Note that the A-SIG’s Five-Year Strategic Plan calls for the development of codified bylaws for governance of the community in 2006-7. This will take time; in the mean

time, the Steering Team serves as an informal “check and balance” on the officers. Elections and major decisions such as a name or logo change are conducted via referendum of the full community; routine administrative and operational matters are conducted by the officers, under the oversight of the Steering Team and the Assistant to the President (AP) for Virtual Communities.