

I. Serenity Prayer: ACA

II. Members Present: Bonnie, Miles, Charlie, Marcia, Carole, Mary Jo, Matt

III. Purpose: *As an ad hoc committee of the ACA WSO, our purpose is to research the service structures of other global fellowships in order to recommend how ACA should best organize its service structure to serve its growing fellowship nationally and globally.*

IV. Goals:

A. Research and define regions for a recommendation to the ABC and ACA/WSO Board

B. Research and Recommend a Process to Elect Trustees

OLD BUSINESS

1. Motion to table the minutes from the July 31 meeting. (Marcia)

Second: Carole

Decision: Passed unanimously...if there are no minutes they cannot be approved.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Review of Issues in ACA Nomination and Election of ACA Trustees (Charlie)

Marcia read the document below, written by Charlie.

Trustee Nominations and Selection: Key Issues

When it comes to boards of trustees, all fellowships, not just ACA, have to strike balances between management competence, solid recovery, and accountability to the greater fellowship—while putting spirituality ahead of politics. The following reflect some key issues that have arisen in ACA in recent years, that might serve as a starting point when we consider other fellowships.

As an overview, it's fair to say that ACA trustee selections are going through a period of rapid change, from a relatively closed process to one that is more open and representative. At the same time, the rules are less stable than in the past, and have raised concerns about introducing politicized candidate slates that could undermine ACA's spiritual integrity.

Here are some issues that have been identified in the last 12-18 months:

Open or closed election system? An important starting point is that until recently, ACA had a comparatively closed system for selecting board members. The board nominated and elected new board members. The only fellowship role was an annual ratification vote by ABC delegates. This led some to complain that the board was not sufficiently accountable to the fellowship. By contrast, many fellowships have other players, not just board members, involved in trustee elections.

Detailed eligibility criteria, or not? Compared to some fellowships, which require demonstrated periods of "clean time," as well as demonstration of service accomplishments, and these criteria are publicly ACA

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eligibility requirements are limited. New board members must have attended five of the previous seven teleconference calls.

Emphasis on a “working” board? At the same time, ACA has a “working” board, where trustees do a lot of hands-on activity, directly supervise staff, etc. It is important that new trustees understand what they’re getting into and demonstrate a history of “rolling up their sleeves.”

Formal vetting, e.g., by nominating committees? ACA vetting of candidates is informal. Board members interview new candidates and vote on them. A number of fellowships have nominating committees, which screen candidates and make recommendations to the annual business meeting. Typically, these committees have a mix of stakeholders to assure a breadth of perspectives.

Should board size be fixed, or fluid? Some fellowships have a fixed number of board members, with set numbers of at-large, regional, and other categories of trustees. Other boards fluctuate, and some have as many as 28 trustees. ACA has a maximum of 20 under bylaws, and 15 under the OPPM, but often the number of trustees is much smaller, between five and seven.

Is the board selection process clearly spelled out? Until April, the board chose all new trustees. While this led to complaints of exclusion, the process was stable. In early April, the board affirmed that regions meeting set criteria could nominate new trustees. In San Diego, four new trustees were nominated via floor nominations and delegate votes—a process with no ACA governance. So at this time, trustee selection is a mishmash of multiple different sources (board election, regional nominations, and delegate floor nominations).

How to balance openness, spirituality, politics, and fitness to serve? The floor nominations in San Diego were not scheduled, and caught many in the room by surprise. While all new trustees happily were people with strong track records, it was quickly recognized that such a system could be easily “gamed,” and even open the door to competing slates of candidates lobbying delegates for their votes. Is this desired, or do other models better balance openness and other concerns?

Open process, versus closed elections? At the same time, the ability of the fellowship to advance candidates, without seeking favor with existing trustees, was widely welcomed. There has been talk, both among delegates and trustees, of widely publicizing eligibility criteria.

It is my hope that this is a valuable summary. It is my hope that discussing these issues up front, to figure out our shared values, will help us frame issues as we look at other fellowships.

Charlie led the discussion:

The proposal is not coming in a vacuum. In San Diego, the Board found themselves with three new members and no ideal what the process was. It was decided then that the process had to be clarified. Before this the Board literally picked their own members: it was an odd, closed system. Now we are quite wide-open and people can be nominating people who meet no qualifications. Looking at other fellowships, they do things in different

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ways. Some are quite simple, others are quite elaborate, with qualifications and interviewing. It seems that it would be good to look at nominating committees, because it would involve people who aren't on the board, would have a voice in this.

Discussion:

This needs to be done. Our system has been very spotty when it comes to vetting candidates. At times it seemed that the goalpost for qualification kept being moved. The fellowships that go with a nominating committee seem to have a pretty clear set of expectations. It allows for people to nominate from any position. They can even nominate themselves. We want the expectations to be very clear and transparent, and not something that can be abused.

Floor nominations were a part of the 2015 ABC, but there was no advance notice to the fellowship or idea of what was supposed to happen. In San Diego, we had 5 floor nominations. While one was a Regional Representative and three were in the process of being interviewed by the board, this was disorienting. The OPPM says any candidate has to be approved by the Board, but the Board felt awkward with the nominees at the table, not necessarily sure how to go about approving or disapproving; whether they even had that choice.

The first order of business was to clarify the situation since it was not addressed in the OPPM. There were possible implications for our non-profit status, or the possibility that the group hosting the ABC could overwhelmingly put their own people on the Board in a future session.

The point of the questions is to get us thinking about the values we want to come out of this. Is there anyone would like to go back to the past process? What was proposed in 2015 as to qualifications? A certain amount of service done for the fellowship to qualify them. We used whoever showed up because of a lack of candidates. There was a disconnect that was based on "not being organized." Whatever was the sticking point in 2015 has changed a lot. We are getting volunteers at greater numbers.

Do we have anyone who thinks eligibility requirements should not be required? We need to know who is going to work and who is not. You will never get an adult who doesn't want to work to work. It would be better to see a history of how the person works. People could write recommendations about how they work with others. We also need to spread out the representation so it doesn't all come from one place. That can become its own voting block. We can start broadly and have smaller designations ready. Right now, intergroup reps can be on the board of trustees. Regional trustees have a term of one year. We may want to change that. The term of trusteeship may not be the same as the length of time they are elected from the region.

What is the total composition of the board? Fellowships deal with board composition in differing ways. We need to consider certain categories of board members to represent the total fellowship.

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Whenever a person runs for a position in AA, they have to stand in front of the total group to give their resume. Then the fellowship chooses. We need regional trustees so that governance doesn't come from just one place. Even if regions don't develop the way we think, we could still have region-based representation.

We could have a regional setup to address areas without a regular region. We could do some recruiting. Sounds like outside entity coming into develop something. If you don't have a region, you could have a smaller board, but the space could be held. Region 2 has an interesting model of providing support.

Whatever our process is, it should be clearly spelled out. Right now our rules are quite scattered.

Debtors Anonymous Candidate Presentation

Eligibility criteria:

- **Two categories**
 - Debtor Trustees
 - Non-debtor Trustees (*Too many trust issues in the ACA membership. Some trustees are professionals involved in the business. Hard to find non-ACAs to be on a working board. Who is not an ACA?*)
- Board members need to have 3 years of abstinence (*People think this is important, but don't know how to measure it. Some limits have to be in place. 5 years?*)
- No more than three trustees from any one region
- There is a nomination packet that is submitted to a nomination committee. (*Bonnie will do some research about the nominating committee before the next meeting.*)
- No regional trustees

Narcotics Anonymous Candidate Presentation

Eligibility criteria:

- Up to 18 members
- Elected by roll call vote. Must get 50% to serve.
- 6 year terms
- Regional delegates
- Human Resource Panel
- Extensive criteria
 - History of independent work and good group process.
 - Familiar with service Structure
 - Administrative Skills

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- **Ability to donate the time**
- All members have a minimum 10 years clean
- Panel
 - Panel will communicate with fellowship to publicize openings and keep them informed.
 - Interview all potential candidates who meet clean time
 - Facilitate election process.
 - Conference selects panel
 - Board, Co-facilitator, Panel all elected 60% of vote
- Challenges have to be done in writing

Discussion

While we may want to seek out people with certain skills, we don't want to load the Board with professional people. It is critical to have trustees with good programs and common sense to guide the fellowship. If we need skills, at some point we may be able to hire special workers who have them.

The nominating panel would have to have the same qualifications as the trustees. In NA, the panel and the trustees seem almost like parallel bodies. Their conference controls the panel. Our conference is not yet strong enough to do this, but maybe in the future.

NA develops their people. You get very strong candidates that know what they are doing. The World Pool matches candidates with needs. When you get to that level, you have been vetted so much!

The membership should decide who will or will not be on the board. In NA this is the situation. Our organization lets the board approve of nominees rather than taking the one who is presented by the fellowship.

We can talk about electoral and regional processes at the same time. We are in a research process, not a deciding process. Things will seem muddled for awhile. By the time we are finished listening we will come to really good decision. We need some definition, but we might decide we need all things decided right away. We don't need to know the total structure before starting with major pieces. We need to deal well with our current situation.

We need to do something about the nominations now. Start thinking about it.

CONCLUSION--We agree on the following:

1. Broad representative board.
2. Criteria for board members.
3. Regional representatives meet the same criteria as board trustees.

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4. A clear, set process so people know what to do to qualify for the board.
5. A nominating committee to receive nominations, vet candidates, and recommend qualified candidates to the board.

Charlie will start putting something together that begins to draw on tonight's discussion. We need to wrap this up before November. We keep talking about the electoral process, but we don't have a popular election. The ABC ratifies those that are chosen. We want to get our input into the nominating of candidates. Let's talk about what type of nominating committee we want. We could make this a policy decision and get started. Charlie will create a "straw document" that we can start working on.

People can suggest organizations to hear about on Slack, or Marcia will choose.

NEXT MEETING: Monday August 28, 2017 at 8 PM EDT