

Updated: May 2, 2018

At its November 2017 meeting, the AIHA Board approved two significant changes to our Bylaws. These changes would revise the definitions of membership categories and institute a new process for nominating Board officers.

UPDATE: During the first quarter of 2018, Board leaders and the AIHA CEO traveled across the country and canvassed local sections and other groups for their feedback. The Board also received correspondence from various member stakeholder groups, including the local sections council, student local section leadership, and the Fellows SIG. In response to this feedback, the Board has been reviewing member concerns. This topic is scheduled to be discussed further at our upcoming meeting on May 20th at AIHce in Philadelphia.

Following this meeting, a Bylaws amendment summary document which summarizes the Board's positions will be prepared and circulated to all **voting AIHA National members**. During a 30-day comment period, members will have an opportunity to submit feedback on whether they agree or disagree with the Board's proposed changes. For items where they disagree, they will be encouraged to provide written edits to the Board's proposed language. After 30 days, no additional comments will be accepted. The Board will review and adjudicate comments received, and subsequently amend as needed the proposed changes approved at the May 20th meeting. These amendments will then be incorporated in a special ballot to be distributed during the summer.

Issue #1: Proposed Amendments to AIHA Membership Classes

UPDATE: These items reflect current Board thinking as of May 1st except where noted below.

- 1. Why eliminate the Affiliate and Associate membership classes and incorporate those members into the Full class?** *First, IH practitioners who may not have a four-year degree would benefit from AIHA's programs and services. Second, we would become more inclusive, which is necessary for AIHA to remain a sustainable, thriving organization; thus, all members of this expanded Full class will have voting privileges and the right to serve on committees. Finally, eliminating the Affiliate and Associate membership classes would also help simplify AIHA's dues structure. NOTE: Young Professionals (age 30 and under) would be included in the Full membership class but charged discounted dues.*
- 2. Why expand the definition of International members?** *The AIHA brand promise resonates strongly around the world. This change would enable ANY professional not residing in the USA or Canada to join AIHA at a discounted rate while receiving access to benefits (in electronic format only). A reduced membership fee for International members is justified because certain AIHA services, such as government relations support and other affinity programs, do not apply to these individuals. The proposed amendments would also allow the UK and Australian association members currently enjoying a limited number of free AIHA services under the Global Access Program to upgrade their membership for a relatively small investment. (GAP provides access to the digital Synergist, the Synergist Newswire and Synergist Weekly e-newsletters, and Safety Matters.) All International members would be granted voting privileges while retaining rights to serve on committees.*

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- 3. Why change the definition of a Student member?** *Over the years, the number of individuals claiming “student” status has grown due to lack of clarity as to what constitutes a student. It is more appropriate to limit Student membership, as specified in the proposed amendments, to those who are enrolled in full-time undergraduate or graduate programs. The Board’s consensus is that part-time students are more likely to be employed. All Student members would be granted voting privileges while retaining rights to serve on committees.*

UPDATE: In response to concerns voiced by the Student Local Sections leadership about the inclusivity of the proposed student membership definition, the Board now supports including both full and part-time students in the definition of a student member, with the provision that part-time students must take at least one-half the credit hours required for full-time status and that all student members may submit proof of student status via statement from a faculty advisor, transcript, or other means confirming the number of credit hours.

Issue #2: Proposed Amendments to Board Officer Self-Nominations

UPDATE: The board has received some feedback questioning the appropriateness of the proposed by-law changes for the AIHA officer nomination process. As a result, the Board is continuing discussions on whether to maintain the previous bylaw wording for nominating officers via a contested race of two nominees per officer position, to move forward with the new proposed wording for nominating a slate of one nominee per officer position, or to consider a new alternative.

- 1. Why change how Officers are nominated?** *AIHA has conducted elections for Directors and Officers to serve on the Board of Directors for many years. The self-nominations and elections process is managed by the AIHA Board Nominating Committee. AIHA’s Past President serves as Chair of the committee, and its membership comprises two of the most recent Past-Presidents, three current Board members, two members-at-large, and the current Chair of the Local Sections Council. (It should be noted that the Board is considering modifications to the membership of the Nominating Committee to include more at-large members. Over the last several years the Nominating Committee has struggled to identify at least two qualified candidates for Officer positions, willing to accept a nomination and stand for election. There are many reasons for this, including:*
 - a. Retirements: Senior members are volunteering less as they retire from the profession.*
 - b. Time constraints: The need to balance work, family, and volunteer commitments prevents members from being able to commit to a leadership role.*
 - c. Competition: Individuals are hesitant to be on a ballot where they may oppose friends, colleagues, or business associates in a membership-wide election process.*
 - d. Previous nominations: Individuals who accepted nominations but lost in previous elections are very hesitant to accept another nomination.*

In consideration of these challenges, we surveyed dozens of other professional societies, and found predominantly that organizations were moving AWAY from contested races for several reasons. Based on this research and the increasing difficulty in finding qualified candidates, the AIHA Board is proposing a Bylaws change that affects how the association elects the Officers of the Board. The proposed process is intended to ensure that the membership retains a strong voice in determining AIHA’s leadership.

2. How would the proposed process work?

- *AIHA would continue to solicit self-nominations from the membership for all positions: At-large Directors, Secretary-Elect or Treasurer-Elect (in alternating years), and Vice-President.*
- *For At-large Directors, there is NO change to the process currently in place. For each open seat, the Nominating Committee identifies two nominees, whom are then ratified by the Board. The general membership elects new Directors through the current e-ballot process each February.*
- *For Officers, the Nominating Committee would select one candidate for Secretary-Elect or Treasurer-Elect and one candidate for Vice-President. Officer candidates recommended by the Nominating Committee would be reviewed and ratified by the Board, followed by a ratification ballot by the general membership.*
- *AIHA would continue to allow for “write-in” candidates for inclusion on the ballot for At-Large Director positions if they receive 200 signatures/votes in the allotted time frame noted in the Bylaws.*

Regardless of whether this issue is advanced or not, the Board is committed to reevaluating the current nominations process, including how the nominating committee is formed (e.g., considering applicants via an open-call process). The goal is to enhance transparency and inclusion to the broader membership. An updated policy is being drafted, which will include the information below.

3. What specific criteria would the Nominating Committee rely upon to select Officers?

- AIHA is a relatively large and complex organization. The Board of Directors plays a critical role in the association and is the “face” of AIHA. The Board establishes the organization’s strategic direction and goals, and monitors progress toward reaching those goals on behalf of the membership. Desired attributes include:
- a. A demonstrated record of distinguished service and the potential for further contributions
 - b. Demonstrated performance at the highest level in scientific, industrial, public sector, and/or educational communities
 - c. A commitment to devote the time necessary to effectively perform Board duties
 - d. Demonstrated expertise in industrial, environmental or occupational hygiene.
 - e. Prior Board or other leadership service in which an individual has been recognized as having advanced our strategic initiatives in some capacity, such as:
 - Service as an officer in a local section within the last five years
 - Service as chair for a volunteer group within the last five years
 - Sustained active involvement in volunteer group(s), the mentoring program, or other Association activities
 - Service on a national task force, advisory panel, strategic focus group, etc., on behalf of the Board in the last five years
 - Participation in AIHA Leadership Workshops, AIHce, or other AIHA programs
 - Participation at a high level in another leadership role in allied association
 - f. Collaboration/professionalism: Demonstrated ability to work well with Board members, volunteers, staff, etc., to achieve results.
 - g. Finally, for officer positions, although NOT required, service as an at-large Director (or previously in another officer role) can provide the critical foundation needed to have a successful and impactful term.

FAQ DOCUMENT FOR AIHA BYLAW AMENDMENTS

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Following the selection process, the Nominating committee is committed to following up with all those not selected to encourage them to self-nominate in the future, as well as recommend other leadership opportunities that may be of interest.

If you have further questions, please contact [AIHA President Deborah Nelson](#) or [CEO Larry Sloan](#)