

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. Members will vote on these proposed amendments during a special election to be held in July 2018. The Board has prepared this document to help address questions that may be on your mind.

Issue #1: Proposed Amendments to AIHA Membership Classes

- 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.*
- 1. 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.*
- 2. 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.*
- 3. Why remove the reference to Board eligibility in the Bylaws?** *It is best practice for associations to keep operational considerations out of their bylaws so that Boards of Directors can respond appropriately to circumstances that change over time. Removing the reference to Board eligibility would give future AIHA Boards of Directors greater flexibility in deciding which membership classes are eligible to serve without having to formally amend the Bylaws. Future Boards might determine that allowing other classes of membership to be considered for Board service is in AIHA's best interests.*

Issue #2: Proposed Amendments to Board Officer Nominations

- 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 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 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. The general membership would elect the Officers through the current e-ballot process, but there would be no contested race for these positions.*
- AIHA would continue to allow for an individual to be placed on the ballot for an At-Large Director position if they receive 200 signatures in the allotted time frame.*

- 3. What specific criteria would the Nominating Committee rely upon to select Officers?** *These criteria would be the same factors the Nominating Committee currently considers and include:*
- a. Prior Board service in which an individual has been recognized as having advanced our strategic initiatives in some capacity: AIHA is a large, complex organization. Service as an at-large Director can provide the critical foundation needed for an Officer to have a successful and impactful term.*
 - b. Service as an officer in a local section within the last five years*
 - c. Service as chair for a volunteer group within the last five years*
 - d. Sustained active involvement in volunteer group(s), the mentoring program, or other Association activities*
 - e. Service on a national task force, advisory panel, strategic focus group, etc. on behalf of the Board in the last five years.*
 - f. Participation in AIHA Leadership Workshops, AIHce, or other AIHA programs.*
 - g. Leadership experience: Individuals who have served as the task lead or Chair of a Board-sanctioned team, project, committee, or initiative.*
 - h. Collaboration/professionalism: Demonstrated ability to work well with Board members, volunteers, staff, etc. to achieve results.*

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