

Ad Hoc Committee on Governing Council Engagement
Final Report to the Governing Council & Executive Board

Purpose of the Ad Hoc Task Force

The purpose of the Ad Hoc Task Force, in line with APHA Your Way, was to identify best practices to ensure engagement throughout Governing Council Activities.

The task force was approved at the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Governing Council with two stated objectives:

1. Identify opportunities for improving the Governing Council experience, engagement, and activities.
2. Identify and disseminate best practices in the Councilor role to the member units by examining existing member unit activities.

Overarching Goal:

Engage, motivate, and activate our Governing Councilors.

Ad Hoc Task Force Members

Task Force members were recruited through an application and vetting process. Individuals were selected based on criteria including length of service on the Governing Council, Section Representation, leadership roles within APHA, and familiarity with the Governing Council and APHA Processes.

Role	Name	Affiliation
Speaker of the Governing Council	Aaron Guest	Aging & Public Health, Environment, Public Health Education & Health Promotion
Parliamentarian	Greg Ullrich	Law
Speaker Appointee	Barb Giloth	Past-Speaker & Public Health Education & Health Promotion
CoA Representative	Kaye Reynolds	Texas Public Health Association
Smaller Section	Andrea Thau	Vision Care
Midsize Section	Lisa Flaherty	Medical Care
Large Section	Ashley Love	Public Health Education & Health Promotion, Epidemiology, Health Informatics Information Technology
Student Representative	Bunmi Ogungbe	Student Assembly
Non-Voting Representative	Lisa Carlson	Past-President
Staff Liaison	Courtney Taylor	N/A

Meetings Schedule

The Ad Hoc Task Force met the first Wednesday of each month from February to May and July through October. The months of February-May focused on identifying the purpose of the Ad Hoc Committee, collecting data, identifying themes for the final report, and preparing the report for the mid-year meeting of the Governing Council. The months of July-October focused on developing the final report from the collected data.

Sub-committees conducted work through e-mail in between the monthly meetings.

Data Sources

The Ad Hoc Task Force used a variety of data sources to inform our recommendations. These include:

- Mid-Year Meeting & Annual Meeting Governing Council Evaluations
- APHA Your Way Study Findings
- Collection and Analysis of All Affiliate Bylaws
- Section Operation & Leadership Manuals

We reviewed these materials to identify common strengths, opportunities, and challenges.

Distinguishing the Executive Board from the Governing Council (Decision Making)

The Governing Council of the APHA is a representative body that draws members from all parts of the Association. Three of its most important functions include approving policy proposals that will guide Association advocacy, electing national officers, including the President, Treasurer, Speaker of the Governing Council, and Executive Board members, and approving changes to the bylaws. In addition, the Governing Council must approve dues increases and the creation of new sections, boards, or standing committees of the Association. This body is also responsible for recognizing new Affiliate Associations and electing the nominating committee and honorary members. In contrast, the Executive Board of APHA has the fiduciary and legal responsibilities of a non-profit governing Board and other functions defined in the bylaws.

Recommendations

The Ad Hoc Task Force makes eleven overarching recommendations for improving the Governing Council experience, engagement, and activities. The Task Force also makes two recommendations specific to Affiliate Representatives to the Governing Council and two recommendations specific to non-voting members of the Governing Council. These recommendations also inform the development and identification of best practices for encouraging Governing Council engagement. Final interpretation and implementation are left to the responsibility of the Speaker of the Governing Council, or their designee, and APHA Staff.

Below we provide each recommendation with a brief description.

Recommendation 1: Communicate the Governing Council Responsibility

Confusion exists related to the role of the Governing Council versus that of the Executive Board. The distinct decision-making roles of these APHA Governance boards are clarified and delineated above. We will continue to provide clarification and delineation of responsibilities through training and leadership handbooks.

Recommendation 2: Develop a Primer on the Key Responsibilities of a Governing Councilor

There remains confusion among member units regarding the role of a Governing Councilor. This one-to-two-page primer will outline the key responsibilities of a Governing Councilor and identify how they should be engaged with Section leadership.

Recommendation 3: Develop a Handbook of Governing Council Responsibilities

As part of the APHA Your Way Initiative, leadership handbooks are being developed for each member unit. We recommend a Governing Councilor-specific handbook be designed and provided to leadership and those elected to the role of Governing Councilor. The manual should be shared with Section Leadership for possible inclusion in the Sections' handbook. We provide an outline for such a handbook in the appendix.

Recommendation 4: Break Governing Council Orientation into Three Shorter Sessions

Governing Council orientation has traditionally occurred during one (1) one-hour online webinar. The content covered included APHA Governance, the role of the Governing Council, and Parliamentary Procedure. In the past two years Governing Council Orientation has occurred in two sessions: one focused on APHA Governance and the role of the Governing Council, and one focused on the parliamentary procedure. We recommend Governing Council orientation be broken down further to include sessions on 1) APHA Governance Structure, 2) the role of the Governing Council and APHA Proposed Policy Statement Process, and 3) the Parliamentary Procedure. This breakdown will allow an opportunity for review and not overload incoming Governing Councilors.

Recommendation 5: Re-instate Governing Council Orientation at the Annual Meeting

Previously, an orientation for Governing Councilors took place during the Annual Meeting before the Tuesday session of the Governing Council. We recommend a version of this orientation be reinstated both for proxies attending and as a refresher for Councilors.

Recommendation 6: Continue *Speaking with the Speaker Series*

The Speaking with the Speaker Series was initiated in the Spring of 2021. We recommend the series continue with at least three events per year. The events should focus on informing Councilors about emerging topics and processes and provide a venue for discussion.

Recommendation 7: Deliver Governing Councilor content in multiple formats, including short-form videos, PowerPoints, and flyers.

We recognize that not everyone can attend webinars, and some issues may not necessitate an hour-long webinar. We recommend the Speaker and APHA Staff work to deliver content in a variety of forms, including short-form videos, infographics, flyers, and PowerPoints. These materials could be stored in an APHA LEADS Governing Council Community.

Recommendation 8: Engage Governing Councilors in the Proposed Policy Statement Review Process

The proposed policy statement review process is essential to developing APHA Policy Statements. The engagement of the Governing Council in these discussions is a critical component. Governing Councilors should be engaged in the various stages of review to ensure proposed policy statements are representative of the best available science and useable by the Association. Their votes should take into consideration the thoughts of their member units. To encourage participation, we recommend that Councilors consider adopting one of the following for reviewing APHA Proposed Policy Statements.

- Councilors should work to promote proposed policy statements in their member units and identify experts in the relevant area and ask them to provide feedback for the proposed policy statement review process.
- Councilors should divide the proposed policy statements amongst their member units' councilors and provide feedback for each proposed policy statement.
- Councilors should seek out feedback from their member units on proposed policy statements.

Recommendation 9: Engage Governing Councilors in Member Units

A lack of engagement by Councilors in their member unit is an area of concern. There appears, in some cases, to be confusion or lack of ownership of Governing Council procedures and operations and/or confusion about the role of Governing Councilors. Therefore, we recommend the following:

- Councilors should be considered part of the leadership team of their member unit.
- The Speaker and APHA Staff should communicate with member unit leadership regarding the role and purpose of Governing Councilors. This information should be included in leader training.
- Council contact information will be posted within the APHA Governing Council LEAD Community.
- Where multiple Councilors exist for a member unit, they should:
 - Identify a Governing Council 'Whip' or 'Senior' Councilor to ensure other Councilors' communication, feedback, and engagement.
 - Define points of contact and roles within the member unit for all Councilors (i.e., do all councilors need to attend leadership meetings or only senior/whip, do councilors meet before the Governing Council to

discuss votes, how should communication be managed throughout the year and during Governing Council meetings).

Recommendation 10: Provide Governing Council Meeting Content Earlier

The Speaker and APHA staff should work to provide all Governing Council meeting content at least one week before the Governing Council meetings to provide Councilors sufficient time to review the material and formulate questions.

Recommendation 11: Provide alternative means of asking questions about APHA reports.

The Governing Council receives many reports during each session. The amount and type of discussion will vary, given the nature of the report and the reporting body. Given time limits for discussion and the complexity of some reports, we recommend the Speaker provides a means for Councilors to ask additional questions about reports before or after the Governing Council Meeting in which the report is received. The Speaker and APHA Staff will use APHA LEAD to facilitate these Conversations. In doing so, we also request that Governing Councilors review the reports before the Governing Council meetings, so their questions are not redundant nor easily found in the report. The Ad Hoc Committee also recommends the Speaker consider designating 3 to 4 Councilors to review specific reports in detail and formulate appropriate questions based on those reports.

In addition, the task force noted four recommendations relevant to specific components of the Governing Council.

Affiliate Representatives to the Governing Council

Affiliate Recommendation 1: Standardize elections/appointments of ARGC Members in Affiliates

1. The Governing Council year runs from Annual Meeting to Annual Meeting. While many affiliates start and end the terms of their ARGCs following their own internal AEC timeframes, this is a disadvantage to ARGCs who join part-way or most of the way through the APHA Governing Council year. Especially noted are ARGC terms that start between the GC Mid-year and Annual Meetings. The time and experience in office may not be sufficient for the newly elected ARGC to be comfortable within their role by the time of the APHA Meeting
2. Recommend aligning ARGC terms to the APHA GC year where possible.

Affiliate Recommendation 2: Standardize terms (more than one year) of ARGC Members in Affiliates

1. The role of ARGC is critical to the governance of APHA and may be a learning process for each new ARGC. Working through the Proposed Policy Statement process, nominations, and elections, voting responsibility may need more than one cycle to maximize comfort level and active participation.
2. Recommend a three-year term with local affiliate options for continued service

Non-Voting Member Representation

Caucus Recommendation 1: Encourage 100% participation in the identification of Governing Council Representatives and GC Meeting participation

The Speaker and APHA Staff should work to highlight the role of the Caucuses in the APHA Governing Council, including how they can be engaged and most valuable to the Governing Council Process.

Past President Recommendation 1: Encourage the engagement of Past-Presidents in Governing Council discussions.

The Speaker and APHA Staff should work to highlight the role of the Past Presidents in the APHA Governing Council, including how they can be engaged and most valuable to the Governing Council Process.

Future Considerations

During the Ad Hoc Committee Discussion, several items arose that are outside the scope of this Task Force but are recommended for future consideration and action by the Governing Council and applicable bodies.

Consideration 1: Review the appropriateness of the name of the Governing Council as it aligns with their role in the Association.

The title Governing Council may not be representative of the role the Council now has in the operations of the Association.

Consideration 2: Develop means of examining the potential role of adopted policy statements on the state and local level

The state affiliates' applicability and support of APHA policy statements are crucial. In many cases, it is on the local level that APHA policy statements can have the most significant influence.

Consideration 3: Discuss the potential of shrinking the overall size of the Governing Council through the reduction of duplicate representation (i.e., ISC Chair)

Consider if the Governing Council has grown too large to accomplish its roles within the Association and if some of its duties are now managed by other governance structures.

Consideration 4: Discuss potential opportunities to incentivize participation among member units.

The engagement of elected and oriented Councilors is critical for Governing Council's success. While available, proxy Councilors should be the exception, not the norm. Individuals who are proxies often do not have the background, training, or complete information to make informed decisions during the Governing Councilor.

Examples of Incentivizing: Sessions at the Annual Meeting, Budget Allocation, Governing Seat Allocation, etc.

Timeline and Next Steps

REC	Action Item	Timeline	Responsible Party
1a	Distinguish the role of the Governing Council from that of the Executive Board during training	To Be Implemented in 2023 Training	Speaker, APHA Staff
1b	Incorporate the distinct roles of the Governing Council and Executive Board into leadership training handbooks	To Be Implemented as part of APHA Your Way Training	Speaker, APHA Staff
2	Develop a One Page Primer of Governing Councilor Responsibilities	December 2022	Speaker, APHA Staff
3	Develop A Handbook of Governing Council Responsibilities	June 2023	Speaker, APHA Staff
4	Break Governing Council Orientation into Three Shorter Sessions	March-May 2023	Speaker, Parliamentarian, APHA Staff
5	Reinstate Governing Council Orientation at the Annual Meeting	November 2023	Speaker, APHA Staff
6	Continue to <i>Speak with the Speaker Series</i>	Ongoing	Speaker, APHA Staff
7	Deliver Governing Councilor content in multiple formats, including short-form videos, PowerPoints, and flyers	Ongoing	Speaker, APHA Staff, GC Reporting Bodies
8a	Engage Governing Councilors with information about the Proposed Policy Statement Review Process	Ongoing; To Be Included in January Speaking with the Speaker Series	Speaker, JPC, Policy Committee Chairs, APHA Staff
8b	Engage Governing Councilors Member Units in the Policy Review Process and Provide feedback	To Be Implemented During the 2023 Policy Statement Development and Review Cycle	Governing Councilors
9a	Increase Member Unit Engagement Among Governing Councilors	To be Encouraged During the 2022-2023 Leadership Year	Speaker, APHA Staff, ISC, Section Chairs

Timeline and Next Steps

REC	Action Item	Timeline	Responsible Party
	Councilors are part of Section Leadership		
9b	Speaker and APHA Staff will communicate with Section Leadership Regarding the Role of the Governing Councilors	Starting in January 2023, with emphasis during Leader Training in Summer 2023	Speaker, ISC, Section Chairs, APHA Staff
9c	Post Council contact information will be posted within the APHA Governing Council LEAD Community	Ongoing	Speaker, APHA Staff
9d	Develop Governing Councilor Member-Unit Specific Communication Strategies	To be worked on in March Speaking with the Speaker Series	Governing Councilors
10	Provide Governing Council Meeting Content Earlier	Ongoing	Speaker, APHA Staff
11	Provide alternative means of asking questions about APHA reports. After Meeting Reports	Implemented June 2022; Ongoing	Speaker, APHA Staff
11	Provide alternative means of asking questions about APHA reports. Governing Councilor Review	To Be Tested in MYM 2023	Speaker, APHA Staff
Member Unit/Councilor Type Specific Recommendations			
Affiliate 1	Standardize elections/appointments of ARGC Members in Affiliates		CoA; Affiliates
Affiliate 2	Standardize terms (more than one year) of ARGC Members in Affiliates		CoA; Affiliates

Timeline and Next Steps

REC	Action Item	Timeline	Responsible Party
Caucus 1a	The Speaker and APHA Staff should work to highlight the role of the Caucuses in the APHA Governing Council, including how they can be engaged and most valuable to the Governing Council Process.	November 2022; Ongoing	Speaker, Caucuses, Caucus Collaborative, APHA Staff
Caucus 1b	Caucuses will designate Governing Council Representative.	November 2022; Ongoing	Caucuses
Past President 1	The Speaker and APHA Staff should work to highlight the role of the Past-Presidents in the APHA Governing Council, including how they can be engaged and most valuable to the Governing Council Process.	November 2022; Ongoing	Speaker, APHA Staff

Appendix: Proposed Outline of Governing Council Manual

Governing Council Handbook

- One Page Primer for Governing Council Meeting Procedures
- Functions of the Governing Council
- Policy Statements- why do we need them, and how can we use them
 - Why do we need policy statements?
 - Which policy statements are needed to be developed (archived policy statements)?
 - How are policy statements used?
 - How to be involved with the use of the policy statements?
 - Webinar on policy statement use?
- Proposed Policy Statement Review
 - Identify Critical Points for Proposed Policy Statement Review
 - Best Practice: Identify Specialty/Experts in Policy and Ask Them to Review.
 - Best Practice: Divide Reviews Up
- Electing National Officers
- Electing Nominations Committee
- Approving Bylaws Changes
- Other Duties (Mention)
 - Approving Dues Increases
 - Approving New Units and Boards
 - Approving International Vice-Presidents
 - Accepting Reports
- Structure of the Governing Council
- Member Unit Activities
 - Best Practice: Identity Governing Council Whip/Senior Governing Councilor for Each Section
 - Best Practice: Define Points of Contact and Roles
 - Best Practice: Develop Flowcharts of Processes.