

Proposal on Participation in President's Report to the 2010 RA

Overall Ad Hoc Committee Proposal

The proposal does not recommend changes to the current non-representative governance structure of the Board consisting of officers and directors. The Board composition was recently changed as a part of another organization change process. Under the Ad Hoc proposal, the groups of ASAP, AOTF, WFOT, AOTPAC, and ASD would continue their role as organizational advisors to the Board; and ACOTE would continue its role as an associated body of the Board. The Board for Advanced and Specialty Certification (BASC) would become a part of AOTA's programmatic and operational groups in order to better support the Board and Specialty Certification program.

The main change to the Board has to do with the recognition by the Ad Hoc Participation Review Committee that a key priority is to invest more in volunteer leadership identification, training, and recognition. The current experience of the Nominations Committee indicates increasingly greater difficulty in finding members to run for office and take on extensive responsibilities over a three-year time frame. They therefore proposed a new *Volunteer and Leadership Development Committee (VLDC)*, which reports to the Board and would combine the responsibilities of the current Nominations Committee and the Recognitions Committee. The new committee, however, would go beyond preparing annual slates for AOTA elected positions and recognizing achievements of members; it would assist in populating ad hoc committees, identifying potential volunteers via a new centralized database, recruiting potential leaders, and overseeing new Association initiatives to cultivate and train leaders.

To support the new emphasis on leadership development, the Ad Hoc Committee recommended that AOTA develop the *Coordinated Online Opportunities for Leadership (C.O.O.L) Database*. The system functions as a tool to market and match volunteer opportunities within the Association with interested members. COOL will list experience and length of service requirements for specific volunteer roles and committees and will also serve as the receptacle for members interested in volunteering. Members will be able to place themselves in the database along with their experience and participation preferences. The system will let members know what is needed, and will support leadership development by giving the VLDC a way to build a more robust emerging leadership community.

Council on Professional Policy and Standards

The Participation Review Ad Hoc Committee also proposed that the Representative Assembly be transformed into a smaller, 15-member *Council on Professional Policy and Standards*, retaining responsibility for setting policy and standards for the profession. The smaller structure was recommended to improve the profession's ability to respond quickly to critical professional issues and ease access of members to the policy and decision making process. Instead of members working only through their representative and leaders of the Association, they will be able to directly interact with the Council through annual forums at AOTA annual conference, e-mail, discussions through OT

Connections, member surveys, etc. Over the years, the RA has reported significant decline in AOTA members using their representatives to propose motions, give feedback, and receive information about Association activities.

Two-thirds of the Council would be elected by the AOTA membership, with the remaining third nominated by the VLDC and appointed by the AOTA Board of Directors. The VLDC would use the appointments to consider diversity of practice settings, experience, and cultural backgrounds in the composition of the Council. Having appointed members on the Council addresses the concerns of the membership that it is difficult to get elected to leadership unless one has established name recognition, often because of one's publication record. Name recognition as a basis for election is a factor in a perceived biasing of elections to the academic community and limiting leadership to long-term members. The VLDC recommends appointments for the Council to the Board as it would be in the best position to bring forth a wide variety of persons who have been recruited and/or self-nominated for leadership through the COOL system and who have participated in leadership development programs.

To foster congruence of effort and communication between the Board of Directors and the Council, the Council Chair would also be a voting member of the AOTA Board, which is similar to the current RA Speaker being a voting member of the Board. The Council members, once selected, would undergo a formal orientation and training process administered by the VLDC.

The Council's agenda would be created on an ongoing basis through continuous input from AOTA members, Council members, the AOTA Board of Directors and its organizational advisors, Program Directors, and the Communities of Practice/SIS. Each Council member would be assigned liaison responsibilities with state association presidents, thereby assuring each state association direct access to the Council. By virtue of their participation in ASAP, state association presidents are AOTA members. Because state associations have the responsibility of staying alert to grass-roots issues, their interaction with the Council keeps AOTA abreast of emerging trends, scope of practice challenges, and reimbursement changes.

The proposed responsibilities of the Council on Professional Policy and Standards:

- Create and revise policies and standards of the profession as needed.
- Solicit member feedback on an ongoing basis concerning issues related to the profession.
- Provide direct, on-line, year-round dialogue with members.
- Continually monitor trends within the profession.
- Maintain the Code of Ethics for the profession and supervise the other ethics functions necessary for a professional association.
- Carry out liaison responsibilities with state associations.
- Meet face-to-face, at least annually, and electronically when necessary.

The Council would convene an annual forum at AOTA's Annual Conference & Expo to provide a regularly scheduled opportunity for direct, face-to-face member participation for the purpose of giving feedback with regard to prioritizing issues for the profession.

Volunteer Work Groups

The Participation Ad Hoc Committee recommends shifting the responsibilities of the current AOTA commissions to the newly created Council on Professional Policy and Standards, with the intent that the Council would use ad hoc committees to carry out this work under their supervision. Ad hoc committees would be constituted with members based on recommendations from the VLDC. Using ad hoc committees in this manner allows more members to be involved in the work of the Association that has clear goals and timelines. This proposal would eliminate the current Commission on Education, Commission on Practice, Commission on Continuing Competence and Professional Development, and the Ethics Commission. To help transition the current work as well as to determine what work should be continued, be streamlined, or be discontinued, the Chairs of the former Commissions and the SISSC and the RA Speaker would become the inaugural members of the Council. The Participation Ad Hoc proposal recommends maintaining the Assembly of Student Delegates, Affiliated State Association Presidents, and the Program Director Councils as they are currently constituted, and recommends these groups have direct access to the Council.

Of particular importance is for the Council through the use of ad hoc committees to continue AOTA's ethics function involving education of members about ethics, developing advisory opinions, formulating ethics CE, etc. The current ethics adjudication process would be limited to only those members holding AOTA Board or Specialty certification who have an ethics violation, since these are the only members over whom AOTA controls a professional certification. However, the Council would oversee the process where membership would be automatically removed when a member loses their state license or their NBCOT certification. The Council would appoint an ad hoc committee to review any appeals in loss of membership.

Special Interest Sections—Communities of Practice

Providing opportunities for practitioners to discuss and improve practice is both a highly valued member benefit and a key to better serving societal needs. Of critical importance is to develop practice based on theory, science, and evidence and to develop methods of translating current research into practice through education and training methods found to be most effective in helping practitioners change. The current structure of the AOTA Special Interest Sections (SISs) provides for 11 SISs, each with a committee of at least four members and an overarching Steering Committee made up of each elected SIS Chairperson (SISSC).

The Participation Ad Hoc Committee recommends that the current formal SISs be transformed into Communities of Practice (CoPs), known contemporarily as "a network of people who share a common interest in a specific area of knowledge or competence

and are willing to work and learn together over a period of time to develop and share that knowledge” (Chandler & Fry, 2009). The purpose of these communities is to bring together practitioners, educators, students, scientists, and other interested stakeholders for the purpose of advancing and changing practice. Rather than the current structure of Standing Committees and an SISSC, these CoPs would be more fluid and less bound by governance rules.

The current SISs and SISSC chairperson are seen as vital in the creation of these transformational, influential, and action-oriented communities, which would work directly with the Council, the Board, and the VLDC. The transition should be completed during 2012 and would involve the current SIS leadership to create a structure that supports *Communities of Practice* starting within the six broad areas of practice defined in the Centennial Vision. These *Practice Sections* would include: Mental Health; Health & Wellness; Children and Youth; Productive Aging; Work & Industry; and Rehabilitation, Disability and Participation. After the transition period to the new governance structure, each of these 6 *Practice Sections* would have a coordinator, recruited and trained by the VLDC and elected by the entire membership. The new structure should embrace and leverage new opportunities for developing additional specialized areas of practice, such as Autism, Veteran’s Care, etc. Some of these new CoPs could emanate from the 6 *Practice Sections* (e.g., an autism CoP may emerge from the Children & Youth Practice Section, while a stroke CoP may emerge simultaneously from the Rehabilitation, Disability and Participation Practice Section) and others could develop outside of these 6 areas, especially to accommodate the needs of the profession as we move forward toward the Centennial Vision. For instance, a CoP in Primary Care addressing the occupational needs of persons of all ages and with multiple diagnoses might develop to help position occupational therapy in community health centers (see Appendix for separate paper on Communities of Practice). The VLDC would assist these emerging CoPs in identifying leaders.

Transition

The Ad Hoc Committee put forward a proposed implementation timeline, which includes transitioning over the next 2 years, with final bylaws changes brought forward to the AOTA membership in 2012.

The transition from our current structure to the proposed structure is a critical time period. It is a time where the leadership, experience and wisdom of existing leaders will be needed more than ever to give further shape to our future and insure a smooth transition

An integral piece of this process would be current and newly elected Commission Chairpersons, the SSISC Chair, and the RA Speaker transitioning their roles as inaugural members of the newly created *Council* and assisting in the transition of the current work of their individual Commissions and groups to ad hoc committees.

Summary of recommendations:

1. Reconstitute the Nominations and Recognitions committees as the Volunteer Leadership Development Committee (VLDC) to invest in leadership and participation development.
 - a. Reporting to the AOTA Board of Directors, the VLDC will consist of seven members serving 3 year staggered terms and be led by a chair; each member will be appointed by the AOTA President. The group will also include the chair of the Emerging Leaders Group and a representative of ASAP.
 - b. Responsibilities include:
 - i. Preparing an annual slate of AOTA Board and Council candidates.
 - ii. Oversee AOTA's process for indentifying, training and developing volunteer leaders, including use of the COOL volunteer database.
 - iii. Assist in populating ad hoc committees of the AOTA Board and Council on Professional Policy and Standards as well as leadership positions within the CoPs..
 - iv. Oversees process for recognizing volunteer leaders and identifying AOTA award winners.
 - c. Building the Coordinated Online Opportunities for Leadership (COOL) system should be a high priority, to be completed in FY 2010. The VLDC would be responsible for educating members in its use as well as recruiting members to self-nominate themselves as interested leaders.
2. WFOT, AOTF, ASAP, AOTPAC, and ASD would remain as organizational advisors to the Board. ACOTE would remain as an associated body of the board. The BASC would be placed under the Board's purview, as a part of AOTA's programmatic operations.
3. Transform the Representative Assembly into the Council on Professional Policy and Standards (CPPS).
 - a. The council has 15 members with two-thirds elected by the AOTA membership and one-third nominated by the VLDC and appointed by the Board. Council members may serve up to 2 consecutive terms. The council Chair will be selected by the council from the 15 seated members to serve a three year term and is also a voting member of the AOTA Board of Directors. Discontinue the RACC, RALT, and BPPC, convening an ad hoc group when needed for Bylaws review.
 - b. Responsibilities include:
 - i. Create and revise policies and standards for the profession.
 - ii. Constantly monitor trends and solicit feedback on issues.
 - iii. Maintain the Code of Ethics for the profession and supervise the other ethics functions necessary for a professional association.
 - iv. .Hold liaison responsibilities to the state associations.
 - c. The Council will convene an Annual Member Forum at the AOTA Conference and Expo, which would be open to all members; the forum is

to provide opportunities for the membership to bring forward issues and give feedback regarding the work and priorities of the Council. The first meeting will be held in 2011.

4. Transform the current SIS committee and SIS Council structure (SISC) into a structure that encourages formation of new member-driven “Communities of Practice,” facilitated and coordinated by individual moderators.
 - a. Using the current leadership for the transition process, create a structure that supports Communities of Practice starting within the six broad areas of practice defined in the centennial vision: Mental Health; Health and Wellness; Children and Youth; Productive Aging; Work and Industry; and Rehabilitation, Disability, and Participation. The transition should be completed during 2012.
 - b. Each broad area of practice will have a coordinator elected from the total membership. The VLDC will assist in populating leaders for emerging CoPs.
5. Discontinue current commission structure (COE, COP, CCPD, EC) making the Council responsible for distributing work priorities, including ethics education and standards review, to ad hoc groups as the work requires.
 - a. Maintain ASD, ASAP, and Program Directors Council.
 - b. Current Commission and SISC Chairpersons, and the RA Speaker would serve as the inaugural members seated on the Council.
 - c. Commission work is to be transferred in 2011, with the BPPC continuing to finalize Bylaws changes in 2012 before it is disbanded as a standing committee.

**Addendum to President’s Report – Participation Ad Hoc Committee
Recommendations
Further Development Relative to Ethics Commission
February 26, 2010**

In late February, the Participation Ad Hoc Committee, along with President Moyers Cleveland, engaged in a phone discussion with the Ethics Commission (EC) about the recommendations that are specific to the EC and the ethics function. As a result of that discussion the committee would like to add a few more points to the description of how the EC needs to evolve in the transition process.

- Evolution from our current ethics approach towards an integrated ethics approach across the association. AOTA would explore the development of an integrated ethics program that addresses ethical issues proactively as well as reactively. Organizational as well as clinical ethics would be addressed, with participation of practitioners and educators.
- An increased focus on educating members Advisory Opinions, articles, book chapters, academic education materials and continuing education offerings.

- The Volunteer Leadership Development Committee (VLDC) would have an ethics education function as part of all leadership training in order to promote ethical leadership throughout the organization.
- The Coordinated Online Opportunities for Leadership (COOL) database would ask questions specific to ethics interests and expertise and establish a pool of ethics experts to use on a variety of ad hoc groups and in development of educational materials for members. As stated in Kitty Reed's summary of the February phone call, *"other groups within the AOTA could participate in providing information and training about ethics. For example, educators could assist in preparing an advisory opinion on emerging issues with technology in the universities or colleges that have occupational therapy educational programs."*

These next items are other considerations that could be a part of the transition process:

- We would encourage the development of a Community of Practice (CoP) related to ethical issues open to all members.
- As previously stated the seated EC chairperson would be a member of the inaugural Council to provide guidance and assistance in the transition process. Having the seated EC chairperson on the Council makes it possible for the Council to consider immediately appointing an ad hoc committee to ensure appropriate plans be made relative to development of an integrated ethics approach for AOTA.
- Issues remain related to the continued need for our current adjudication process; more information related to specific recommendations will be presented for discussion at the Task Group level.