

APSA Organized Section Officer Elections Best Practices Guide



From the APSA Organized Section Handbook:

III. A. Nominating New Officers: APSA guidelines call for elected leadership, although some positions such as treasurer may be appointed.

III. B. Planning Elections: Procedures for holding elections are set forth by individual section by-laws. APSA encourages sections to regularly rotate the leadership and committee membership of the section.

III. C. Diversity and Inclusion in Leadership: APSA is committed to promoting and enhancing diversity and inclusion throughout the discipline. APSA encourages sections to ensure leadership nominations that reflect and are inclusive of a variety of different characteristics and backgrounds of our members, including race, ethnicity, actual or perceived, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, region of the country, country of origin, employment status (tenure track, tenured, or non-tenured faculty), type of institution, and—as applicable— professional interest and methodological orientation.

Organized sections are urged to review the pattern of appointments over past years to assure that they have and continue to contribute to this diversity. Section leaders are encouraged to contact the organized section APSA staff liaison if they would like assistance on conducting a review or developing a diversity and inclusion strategy. Assistance may include development of a diversity and inclusion recruitment and retention strategy for members, developing a review of section or division chair leadership, leadership recruitment, and/or aggregate data on the demographics of section membership. Information on APSA's diversity and inclusion programs and resources is located online at: www.apsanet.org/diversityresources.

If you would like a copy of your section's by-laws or have recently updated your section's by-laws, please email membership@apsanet.org.

APSA Assistance with Election Ballots

Section Officers may send annual requests to APSA research staff to use Qualtrics for their ballots or referenda for section officer positions and for any other bylaws changes or referenda their section membership may be voting on.

Please allow 1 to 3 weeks for turnaround depending on the time of year and the length/ complexity of the election ballots. If we are seeking approval of the ballot or the biographies from candidates or officers, then response time from those members must also be factored in.

For ballots, in general we need:

- The number and list of open positions
- The list of candidates for each position
- A short biography for each candidate
- Any limitations on timing of voting (e.g. to be completed before the Annual Meeting)

For referenda, in general we require:

- Officer-approved write-up of the alternatives to be voted on.
- Language with which to present the alternatives (e.g. "Choose one of the following" or "Choose at least one but up to four of the following representatives for this position") that corresponds to the bylaws rules for voting for the section, in language acceptable to the officers
- Any limitations on timing of voting (e.g. to be completed before the Annual Meeting)

Best Practices from Organized Sections for Running an Election

- Consider creating a Nominating Committee. The Committee can be tasked with collecting nominations for the various positions and reaching out to members to encourage their participation.
- Use APSA Connect to reach current section members when soliciting nominations and volunteers.
- Utilize your Section's social media accounts when placing calls for nominations.
- If APSA is not disbursing your section's ballot directly, ensure that only current members are voting. An up to date roster can be downloaded [here](#).
- The deadline to send new officer information to APSA is typically in October of each year (specific date varies). Please keep this in mind when setting election times.
- Add a Graduate Student Representative to your Section leadership to increase student participation.
- Consider adding a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer to your leadership.
- For Award Committees: ask previous winners to serve as committee chairs/members.
- Some sections have implemented a tri-Chair model (Chair-Elect, Current Chair, Immediate Past-Chair) to allow for continuity of leadership.

Best Practices from Organized Sections for Leadership Transitions

- Prior to the election, determine the transition timeline between officers as well as any other guidelines to ensure continuity in section administration.
- Create an onboarding manual for incoming officers. Documents to consider including are: current section bylaws, previous newsletters, a list of past committee members and officers, relevant financial documents.
 - Many sections have developed a google drive to store this information and easily share with incoming officers.
- As noted above, APSA will request incoming officer information after the conclusion of the Annual Meeting. The Officer Update Form will be sent to the outgoing Chair to complete. Determine whether the incoming Chair or outgoing Chair will be responsible for submitting the completed form back to APSA.