

# **Renaissance Society Board of Directors**

## **Election Procedures**

### **Background**

Elections for Board Officers and Members at Large (MAL) are not well-understood by many Renaissance members and the process has changed over time.

Past elections took place at a hotel which attracted fewer than 150 attendees and required payment for the lunch. For these reasons some members considered the process to be un-democratic. The 2020 transition to online voting attracted considerably more members as voters.

Past announcements about MAL positions did not clearly specify desirable qualifications. There were no announcements about officer positions and no qualifications were specified. Recent messages to members have been more informative about both officer and MAL positions and need to be standardized.

This document clarifies the procedures without necessitating amendments to the By Laws and Standing Rules. A list of the major points and a recommendation for a future By Law amendment are presented at the end.

### **Current By-Laws**

#### Article VI: Officers and Members-At-Large

- A. The elected officers shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary and Controller.
- B. There shall be six Members-at-Large elected by the membership to serve on the Board of Directors.
- C. The officers and members-at-large shall be elected by ballot at the May general meeting of the membership. If a single slate is presented, and there are no nominations from the floor, voting may be by a show of hands. All elected officers shall assume their positions on the succeeding July 1st. The term of office for President, Vice President, Secretary and Controller shall be for one year and/or until successors are elected. The term of office for the Members at-Large shall be for two years and/or until successors are elected.
- D. If deemed appropriate by the Board of Directors, voting on measures or candidates may be conducted by mail. Ballots must be returned by at least one-third of the membership to be considered a valid election. Procedures for a mail ballot shall conform to those set forth in the Society's parliamentary authority.
- E. Vacancies in the positions of the elected offices shall be filled by appointment of the President, with the approval, by majority vote, of the Board of Directors. In the case of simultaneous vacancies in the offices of President and Vice President, the Board shall elect, by majority vote, a President Pro-Tem to serve until the end of the current term.

## Revised Election Procedures

**Officers:** President, Vice President, Controller, Secretary

**Term:** one year with an unlimited option to seek the office again.

**General Candidate Qualifications for Officers:** service as a MAL or Committee Chair or Co-Chair. Significant service on community boards of directors or experience in higher education may be considered. A past reprimand by the Board of Directors is unqualifying

**Qualifications for President and Vice President:** Demonstrated leadership abilities; active listening and communication skills; strong work ethic; ability to work with other Board members; understanding of RS Bylaws and Standing Rules.

**Qualifications for Secretary:** Service as a seminar leader for two or more semesters or one or one year of service to Renaissance.

**Qualifications for Controller:** Knowledge and experience in handling financial records. Service as a seminar leader for two or more semesters or one year of service to Renaissance.

**Members at Large:** Six members

**Term:** Two years. Members at Large may re-apply and interview for a subsequent term.

**Candidate Qualifications:** Service to Renaissance and aptitude as determined by the Nominating Committee. A past reprimand by the Board of Directors is unqualifying.

**Desirable Qualifications/Activities:** Some examples of desirable, but not mandatory qualifications include having participated in or chaired any of the standing committees; having helped with Orientation and Open House; having organized social functions; having solicited new ideas to improve the organization; having suggested seminar topics and speakers for Forum presentations; having participated in professional or community organizations outside Renaissance; and being a relatively new Renaissance member.

### Application Process:

(a) Vacant Officer and MAL Positions: full written application and interview by the Nominating Committee (this also applies to an officer seeking a different office)

(b) Renewing Officers: no application or interview unless a competing application is submitted.

The Nominating Committee reviews applications, conducts interviews, and recommends a slate.

### Announcements:

At least three announcements shall be made in the Weekly Update and at least one announcement in the monthly *Recorder* prior to the application deadline. An announcement should also be made on the website home page for a limited time and should be repeated in seminar classes. Announcements shall include but not be limited to:

- Number of vacant officer positions

- Number of MAL positions to be filled
- Terms and Qualifications for officers and MALs
- Deadline for application (self-nominations accepted)
- Election timeline and announcement of results
- Contact for further information

Prior to ratification by the membership, the slate of officers and MALs, with photos and descriptions, shall be published in the *Recorder* newsletter.

### **Nominating Committee Process:**

**By Laws, Article IX ( C ):** “The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least three members, appointed by the President no later than the month of March, and approved by majority vote of the Board of Directors.”

**Standing Rules:** The Nominating Committee shall: “Recruit, screen and interview candidates for the purpose of recommending a slate of eligible candidates to stand for election as officers or as Members-at-Large of the Renaissance Society Board of Directors. The committee’s proposed slate shall be presented to the Board for its review, assessment, and approval prior to submittal to the general membership for a vote.”

**In Practice:** The Nominating Committee:

- seeks out promising members to fill positions and informs them of the position, qualifications, and timeline for application
- develops questions and conducts interviews for contested or vacant officer and MAL positions
- recommends a slate of officers and MAL candidates to the Executive Committee and full Board

### **Timeline for elections:**

- Late February: Nominations from membership received and candidates submit applications
- Late February and early March: Review of applications by Nominating Committee
- March: Interviews by Nominating Committee
- Early April: Nominating Committee sends slate to the Executive Committee for its approval; Executive Committee presents slate to Board for approval
- Early April: Board appoints tellers from Technology Committee and Office staff
- Early April: Tellers prepare online ballots and paper ballots for members who are not online
- Mid-April to Early May: Members vote online and mail in paper ballots, if applicable
- Late May: Tellers compile/ announce results to Board
- June 1<sup>st</sup>: Board announces results of the election
- July 1<sup>st</sup>: Board officers and MALs assume duties

### **Vacancies:**

Filled by the President for the remainder of the term, per current By Laws: “Vacancies in the positions of the elected offices shall be filled by appointment of the President, with the approval, by majority vote, of the Board of Directors. In the case of simultaneous vacancies in the offices of President and Vice President, the Board shall elect, by majority vote, a President Pro-Tem to serve until the end of the current term.”

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**Significant changes:**

- clarifies that officer positions have one-year terms and if the incumbent seeks re-election, the position can be contested
- specifies qualifications for officers and MALs, including a provision for disqualification
- clearly allows anyone qualified to run for an officer position
- specifies required announcements
- includes a timeline, including preparation of ballots and announcement of results

**Future Action:**

- As part of a technical clean-up package, amend By Laws to change “election” to “ratification” to better describe the process

Presented by President Deborah Seiler and approved unanimously by the Renaissance Society Board of Directors on March 6, 2023.