



## Annual Report 2006 ARLIS/NA Nominations Task Force

April 20, 2007

The Task Force was charged to examine the call for nominations process, and revise the Bylaws as necessary to more clearly explain the process; develop written working procedures for the Nominating Committee for inclusion in the ARLIS/NA Policy Manual; examine the role of the ARLIS/NA Board in the acceptance of the proposed slate; and look at the advisability of holding a balloted election if two candidates for office agree to stand.

Expected outcomes:

- recommendations regarding the continuation or dissolution of the current nomination process
- recommendations regarding possible changes to the Bylaws for consistent and meaningful language
- written procedures for the ARLIS/NA Policy Manual that the Nominating Committee follows to accomplish its work

Methodology: Co-chairs reviewed existing ARLIS/NA Bylaws and Policy Manual sections related to nominations and elections as well as the discussions and conclusions from the 2001-2002 task force charged to examine the nomination process. We compared the ARLIS/NA nominations and elections process with those of similar organizations (Special Libraries Association, Music Library Association). Finally, co-chairs conducted interviews with other past Nominating Committee chairs constituting the present task force to identify problem areas and devise solutions.

Identification of problem areas: The main problems centered on a lack of clearly written guidelines for the nominations process, particularly with regard to the timing and sequence of steps for nomination, communication between the committee and the Executive Board during the process, and the disposition of documents collected by the committee in the course of its work. This has created inconsistencies from year to year and brought into question the committee's objectivity in identifying, recruiting, and evaluating candidates.

Conclusions and recommendations: We conclude that the current nominations and elections process is basically sound and recommend that it be retained. It is consistent with provisions established by Roberts' Rules of Order and is comparable to the process followed by other professional organizations of similar size and administrative resources.

We feel, however, that several changes should be made to address the problem areas identified:

1. Call for nominations: We recommend that the membership be more actively involved in the identification of potential candidates at an earlier stage in the process, and that the requirements for nomination be made less restrictive.

In the process established in 2002, Nominating Committee formulates and announces a slate of candidates (one candidate per office to be elected) and then issues a call for nominations by petition (Article IX, Sect. 4). This, in our opinion, casts nomination by petition in a negative light -- as a protest against the recommended slate -- and serves as a disincentive to participate.

Instead, we propose that the committee chair announce to the membership the list of officers to be elected in the coming year and issue a general call for nominations at the same time. This announcement should be issued no later than February 1, with a deadline for response of 60 (rather than 30) days, which would give the committee enough time to determine prospects for the next election in time for its business meeting at the annual conference. The committee would be simultaneously identifying candidates of known experience and interest (based on personal knowledge and information acquired from the previous year's committee) to create a diverse pool of potential candidates.

We also propose eliminating the provision to nominate by petition, which requires signatures of at least 10 members eligible to vote, in favor of a process more closely resembling that prescribed by Robert's Rules of Order for "nominations from the floor." This requires only a motion by one member eligible to vote and a second from another to place a name in nomination.

2. Determination of candidate slate: We recommend that the Nominating Committee's charge to identify the single best-qualified candidate for each office be retained. A more open nominations process, as described above, will encourage volunteers and possibly enlarge the pool of qualified candidates. Each candidate would be evaluated using a published list of criteria for each position, based on descriptions in the Policy Manual. We recommend that the committee internally identify an alternate candidate for each office to be filled in case the Executive Board does not approve the slate.

We also recommend that Executive Board approval of the slate or ballot be retained as a provision of the bylaws. We feel that this is an important check and balance on the judgment of the committee.

3. Election: We recommend continuation of the process by which a slate is presented to the membership for consideration and considered elected by acclamation after a period of 30 days without comment from the membership. The fact that the Society does not conduct nominations and elections at its membership meeting leads us into territory not explicitly covered by Robert's Rules of Order. In the interest of finding a straightforward procedure to provide a corresponding opportunity for member participation, we considered several ways to deal with potential negative response to a slate (e.g. setting a threshold for number of negative responses, or requiring a motion and second to accept the slate by acclamation). With the checks and balances in place, however, we felt that the likelihood of a negative response to a slate was low, and that the procedures should be written to describe the expected outcome of the process as much as possible. Therefore, we recommend that Article IX Sect. 7 be amended to state that if a slate is contested, the matter be referred by the committee chair to the Executive Board (via the EB liaison) for resolution. The Executive Board may, after reviewing the comment(s), direct that another slate be proposed, respond to the negative comment and allow the election to stand, or direct a call for another round of nominations.

4. Communications with the Executive Board: We recommend that during the nomination process, all communication between the committee and the Executive Board be conducted through its liaison (currently the President). This is consistent with guidelines for all other committees and groups. The committee chair should keep the liaison apprised of progress, and the liaison should keep the committee informed about Executive Board concerns or questions.

The committee's Executive Board liaison should submit the proposed slate to the Executive Board for approval and report acceptance or rejection to the chair.

5. Documentation: We recommend that the chair keep working documents confidential until the results of the election, whether by acclamation of an uncontested slate or by ballot, are determined. Because the Nominating Committee's work requires continuity from year to year and considerable advance planning, the outgoing chair is encouraged to submit a summary report for his or her successor. This report should include a list of individuals nominated or considered for office as well as any recommendations for recruitment.

Upon announcement of the election results, the chair should offer to return supporting documentation to each candidate and destroy any copies; if the candidate declines, the documents should be destroyed.

6. Guidelines: We recommend that the Nominating Committee guidelines set forth in Policy Manual section G14 be augmented by clarifications reflecting the above points in sections c ("Structure and appointment process"), d ("Liaison"), and e ("Documentation and communications") and by addition of section f, "Procedural Guidelines," to provide more details about the nominations and elections procedure. With the overall process described in the bylaws Article IX, adding details to the Policy Manual would make the process more transparent to the membership; any necessary modifications to the guidelines can be approved by the Executive Board.

The Society's management calendar should also be carefully revised each year to reflect the sequence and timing of the nomination and election process. A committee timetable extrapolated from the current management calendar should be included in Policy Manual section G14.

Proposed changes to Article IX of the bylaws and Policy Manual G14 are attached.

Respectfully submitted by

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Attachments:

ARLIS/NA Bylaws, Article IX: Nominations and Elections (revised)  
Policy Manual, Sect. G14 "Nominating Committee"