



Proposed 2015 Bylaws Amendments FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

7 October 2015

Amendment #1a-e: Terminology Updates

Q: I do not see any reference to grade point average (GPA) in amendment #1a, has this been struck from the bylaws?

A: No, grade point average (GPA), or any equivalent thereof, does not appear in the International or the Chapter Bylaws. This criteria is covered under "Academic Achievement" and references our approved standards which are outlined in a separate document. Due to the number of different grading systems used by our chapters worldwide, each individual standard is not listed here. Instead, our academic achievement standards policy document clearly outlines the requirements that undergraduate and graduate students must meet in order to be invited to join.

Q: If we are changing the term "school" to "institution of higher education" under amendment one, why is this term not used in later amendments?

A: Upon passage of amendment 1, this terminology would be adopted throughout the rest of the bylaws document. The remaining amendments are written using current bylaws wording since it cannot be assumed that amendment 1 will pass.

Q: In reference to amendment #1e, I thought that counselors had to be faculty members at the institutions of higher education where the chapter is located?

*A: Counselors do need to be a faculty member at the institution where the chapter is located. This is outlined in other areas of the **Chapter** Bylaws. So, while proposal #1e removes the word "faculty" from this officer title in the International Bylaws (so that they match the Chapter Bylaws where the position is already simply referred to as "counselor" and not "faculty counselor"), the fact that this person must be a faculty member at the institution of higher education remains and is detailed in other portions of the Chapter Bylaws. Counselors at alumni chapters (where the school of nursing has closed), are not required to be faculty members as these chapters only induct Nurse Leader members. This is also outlined in the Chapter Bylaws.*

Amendment #2a-c: Chapter Charters (granting chapter charters)

Q: If this amendment passes and the Electronic House of Delegates is no longer required to vote on chapter charters, would chapters still need to appoint Electronic Delegates?

A: Yes, chapters would still need to appoint Electronic Delegates. In the event that changes were proposed to the organization's Articles of Incorporations, the Electronic House of Delegates would still be convened.

Q: By removing chapter delegates from the chartering process, are we allowing the International Board of Directors to make decisions in a non-transparent way?

A: Although the International Board of Directors would grant the final approval in this process (as it already does for chapter charter amendments), there are still a number of STTI members and elected volunteer leaders involved in the formal review and approval process. Once an application is submitted:

- *STTI staff thoroughly reviews the application for completeness. Once STTI staff deems that the application is complete and that STTI guidelines have been followed, it is turned over to the Charter Review Task Force.*
- *The appointed 15-20 member Charter Review Task Force, which reports to the elected STTI Governance Committee, is comprised of member-volunteers who have served as governance committee members at the chapter level, and/or have been instrumental in the development of an STTI chapter, and have received extensive training on the requirements groups must meet in order to apply to become a chapter.*
 - *Two members of the Charter Review Task Force conduct a comprehensive review of the application and make a recommendation to the full 15 to 20-member Charter Review Task Force.*
 - *Next, the entire task force reviews and votes on the application and forwards a recommendation to the Governance Committee.*
- *After the task force votes, the elected seven-member STTI Governance Committee reviews and votes on the applications and forwards a recommendation to the STTI Board of Directors.*
- *Next, the elected 11-member STTI Board of Directors then also reviews the application and votes accordingly.*

All throughout the review process, reviewing groups can request additional information from the applicant, if needed. The review process is extensive and takes a number of months to complete. If an applicant is deemed not ready to proceed, then feedback is provided to the petitioning group, and if appropriate, a plan is formulated for re-application.

Q: If chapter delegates are no longer involved in the review of chapter charter applications, how will existing chapters learn about new chapters joining the organization?

A: All petitioning groups must submit a history of the honor society within the charter application. This history would still be shared with chapters as a form of introduction and welcome of the new chapters.

Q: Isn't there another way that the process could be shortened so that delegates could still review and vote on these applications?

A: The entire process was carefully reviewed to see where adjustments could be made. The lengthiest and least flexible portion of the process is that of the Electronic House of Delegates voting. In order to assist chapters with ensuring that they fulfill their responsibilities and are not penalized for not voting, ample notification must be given to chapters. This gives them time to ensure that electronic delegates have been identified. Delegates need to receive notice that a vote is upcoming and histories of each applicant must be posted so that delegates have time to review them prior to voting. At the same time, STTI staff must work with our voting vendor to set up the voting mechanism and ensure that all delegates are loaded into the system to ensure that secure links are generated for each delegate. As delegate changes occur at the chapter level, these changes must also be made with the vendor. The staff works diligently throughout the voting process to ensure that chapters are aware that voting is occurring and notifying them if their delegates have not yet voted for the chapter. The Electronic House of Delegates currently votes twice a year. This is already a strain for many of our chapters and adding additional voting times is simply not feasible giving holidays, semester breaks, and vacations – especially when taking into consideration our multi-cultural, global membership. On average, more than 30 chapters do not vote as required. If the length of time that each vote was open were reduced, and chapter delegates had less time to record their vote, an even greater number of chapters would not fulfill this responsibility making them bylaws noncompliant.

Amendment #3a-d: Chapter Charters (revoking chapter charters)

Q: If chapter delegates are removed from voting, what would the process be for revoking a chapter's charter?

A: Before a chapter's charter would be revoked, the chapter would first go through a period of probation. During probation, STTI staff and the chapter's Regional Coordinator work with the chapter leadership to devise a plan to bring the chapter back into bylaws compliance. Only if the chapter continues to not fulfill its responsibilities over the course of a two-year period would the chapter face possible revocation. Any recommendations to revoke a charter would be reviewed by the Governance Committee and International Board of Directors. To date, STTI has never needed to revoke the charter of a chapter. Chapters have chosen to dissolve on their own, but Board action to place a chapter on probation, or to revoke a charter, has not been needed.

Amendment #4a-b: Chapter Models

Q: Will a practice setting interested in seeking the at-large affiliation need to go through the whole honor society development sequence?

A: If an institution of higher education (where there currently is no STTI chapter) was interested in starting a new at-large chapter with a practice setting, they would go through the full six-step process that applies to all developing honor societies. All of the same requirements would need to be met. The entire process would take about one year to 18 months before the groups could apply for chapter charter.

If an existing STTI chapter (at an institution of higher education) is interested in amending their charter in order to join with a practice setting to form an at-large chapter, they would need to follow the same amendment procedure that an existing STTI chapter would need to follow to add another institution of higher education. The process would be the same – the practice setting would not be required to form an independent stand-alone honor society first. They would need to show collaboration between the two groups, they would need to show how the at-large chapter would benefit both groups, they would need to meet accreditation requirements, receive support from appropriate administration officials, and the membership of the existing chapter would need to approve the change to the chapter structure.

Q: Will academic-practice setting at-large chapters be vetted and voted upon as others have been?

A: Yes. Regardless of if it is a new at-large chapter or an existing STTI chapter amending its charter to create an at-large chapter with a practice setting, the vetting and voting process would remain the same as it is now. After extensive training and guidance from STTI staff throughout the application process, the application is reviewed by staff. Applications for new chapter charters are forwarded on to the Charter Review Task Force (which is overseen by the International Governance Committee) and amendment applications are forwarded on to the International Governance Committee. Those sent to the Charter Review Task Force receive an in-depth review conducted by two task force members, recommendations are made, and the application is sent to the full task force. The application is then reviewed and voted on by the full Charter Review Task Force. The application and the task force's recommendation is then forwarded on to the International Governance Committee where it is also reviewed and voted on. Next, the applications and recommendations are sent to the International Board of Directors for review and consideration. The International Board of Directors vote is the final step for the charter amendment applications. The current practice for new chapter charter applications is that once the International Board of Directors approves an application it is voted on by the Electronic House of Delegates. (This is under consideration with proposal #2.) Requests for clarifications or additional information can be made along the way if needed.

Q: Would practice settings be able to form a stand-alone chapter?

A: No, the proposed amendment would only allow a practice setting to become an at-large chapter with an institution of higher education. The proposal would not allow stand-alone practice setting chapters. Practice settings could therefore not be independent chapters. The proposal only allows for at-large chapters where there is an academic-practice setting partnership.

Q: My chapter already collaborates with a practice setting, why would we want to create an at-large chapter?

A: You may not – chapters will have the choice to determine if this option would be right for them and their members. Members often state that they would like to see a greater STTI presence in the workplace. Existing STTI chapters handle collaborations with practice settings in a variety of ways – in some cases there is already a great existing collaboration, while in others, a connection between the two is lacking. This proposal allows those groups that are interested in creating stronger academic-practice setting connections to formalize the relationship by creating an official at-large chapter. It is recognized that this new option to create a formal STTI at-large chapter would not be an option that all academic or practice settings may wish to pursue. However, for those groups where this type of formalized partnership would be beneficial, this proposal now gives them the opportunity to do so. STTI loses almost half of its first-year members post induction. Most of these members enter the workforce (mainly in practice settings) and lose touch with their inducting chapter. The result is non-renewal and non-participation with STTI or the chapter. This academic-practice setting model will help foster greater collaborations between these two settings, increase the visibility of STTI in the workplace, and hopefully increase member satisfaction and retention. This proposed amendment would allow interested groups to formalize existing collaborations by forming an official at-large chapter. Formalizing the relationship in this way ensures that each entity is represented on the chapter board per STTI bylaws and signifies a greater commitment to STTI and its mission and vision than the casual collaborative relationship that these groups may currently have.

Q: How will the addition of a practice setting change the structure of the chapter board?

A: Just like existing at-large chapters, chapters formed under this new model would be required to have a counselor at each location and it is recommended that each also have a vice president to adequately represent each entity/location on the chapter board.

Q: If a practice setting would join an institution of higher education to form an at-large chapter, how would the counselor role be defined or filled?

A: Each institution of higher education would be required to have a counselor for that location and that counselor would need to be a faculty member at that institution. The practice setting would also be required to have a counselor. This position would be handled as it currently is for

our alumni chapters (where the school of nursing has closed, but the chapter remains). In this scenario, the counselor is responsible only for assisting with the identification and recruitment of potential nurse leader candidates. The practice setting counselor would serve in this same capacity. In terms of how the position would be filled, all officer positions at the chapter level must be elected by the chapter membership.

Q: Will those seeking membership from a practice setting be considered based on the current criteria for a nurse leader (baccalaureate degree, registered nurse, and demonstrated leadership in nursing)?

A: Yes, any potential nurse leader candidates from any practice setting would be considered using the existing nurse leader criteria.

Q: My area has two major medical systems and four to five area STTI chapters. There is a great deal of overlap in graduation, induction, and practice experiences for the same nurse! This is probably true for many large cities. The same medical centers also host students from all of these chapter universities in a large city so who the practice setting "asks" for at-large consideration could create mixed feelings among the others.

A: It is recognized that in some areas there are multiple chapters and only one or two practice settings that would be viable candidates for collaboration to form an official STTI at-large chapter. The potential politics and pros and cons of any union to create an official STTI at-large chapter would need to be weighed by all parties involved (this is true for not only the institution of higher education, but the practice setting as well). This new proposed academic-practice setting at-large model would never be forced upon chapters or practice settings, the proposed change would only make this an option for those entities where such a union would make sense and is wanted by all involved. Yes, there will be areas where practice settings may have collaborative relationships with too many institutions of higher education to choose just one to form an at-large chapter with and therefore they may choose to remain just a collaborative partner. This is perfectly acceptable. In some cases, it could be the impetus for several smaller STTI chapters to come together collectively and invite a practice setting to form one comprehensive at-large chapter (multiple institutions of higher education plus one practice setting). It really is up to each chapter to decide what is best for it and its membership.

Q: Can two practice settings join to become an at-large chapter?

A: No, two practice settings could not join together to become an at-large chapter by themselves. Two practice settings could, however, join with an institution of higher education to form an at-large chapter.

Q: Is there a limit to the number of practice settings that can be affiliated with an academic institution to be considered an at-large chapter?

A: No, there is no limit to the number of practice settings that could affiliate with an institution of higher education to form an at-large chapter. There also is no limit on how many institutions of higher education could come together to form an at-large chapter under our current models. Each application varies and the applicants would need to determine what is right for them and explain their decision within the application.

Q: If there are separate CNOs at associated practice settings, could they combine as one application?

A: Yes, they could partner with each other and an institution of higher education to complete one at-large application. If each setting has its own CNO, then they would each be listed as separate entities on the application. In a case where a practice setting has multiple sites, and each site has their own CNO, each site would be able to determine which institution of higher education they would want to partner with or if they would want to seek at-large chapter status at all. Each site would be able to make their own determination. If, however, the multiple sites share the same CNO, then they would be considered as one entity. This is similar to how the dean position is used to make this same determination with institutions of higher education under our current models.

Q: What eligibility criteria would a practice setting have to meet to affiliate with an academic institution to become an at-large chapter?

A: A practice setting (which is defined as any entity where professional (registered) nursing is practiced) must receive support from its chief nursing executive (officer, director, deputy, or equivalent), and chief administrator (chief executive officer or equivalent), and must demonstrate proof of appropriate accreditation. Together, with its institution of higher education partner, the application must show joint programming and collaboration. The applicants must show that the at-large chapter will adhere to all STTI bylaws requirements, guidelines, and policies. As with all applications, there must be sufficient proof of past and future programming and member engagement; annual inductions and officer elections must be held; the current chapter membership must vote to approve the amendment application; and support must be given by the appropriate leaders and administrators.