# Guidelines for Honor Society Elections

The developing honor society's first board of directors is appointed by the steering committee that completed the initial tasks to form the honor society. The appointed board of directors shall serve their terms as presented by the steering committee. Selection of subsequent board members will be determined by election.

Electing honor society leaders is a very important function of honor society membership. Honor society leaders represent the membership as a whole and the membership has entrusted the honor society's direction and vitality to the elected individuals.

**STTI requires:**

* That no member of the Leadership Succession Committee is on the ballot
* Elections are held annually

**STTI recommends:**

* Chapter leader terms are staggered, so a chapter is not electing all chapter leaders at the same time
* Chapter leaders hold a transition meeting after elections to ensure that information is passed between outgoing and incoming leaders

**What is Leadership Succession?**
**Leadership succession is the development, education, election and successful transition of each leader role. The Leadership Succession Committee’s job begins at the time of its election, and is to assess the goals and needs of the chapter with the assistance of the Board of Directors and members.**

**Honor Society Bylaws Regarding Nominations and Elections**
 **ARTICLE VIII. ELECTIONS**
**Section 1. Elections**
**Elections shall be held annually by ballot.**

**Section 2. Positions**
**Chapter officers, directors (optional) and members of the Leadership Succession Committee shall be elected. Members of the Governance Committee may be elected by the chapter membership or appointed by the elected officers.**

**Section 3. Vote**
**a. A majority vote shall elect officers.**
**b. A plurality vote shall elect the non-officer members of the Board of Directors, Leadership Succession Committee and members of the Governance Committee, if elected.**
**c. When there are more than two (2) candidates running for the same office, the candidate with the highest number of votes wins the election.**
**d. In the event of a tie, the election shall be determined by lot.**

**Section 4. Terms**
**a. The length of the term of all officers is two (2) years.**
**b. Terms of office are staggered so that all officers, directors and the Governance and Leadership Succession Committee members do not end their terms at the same time.**
**c. A chapter may elect a president-elect for a one-year term. This term shall occur during the second year of the current president. The president-elect shall then succeed to president for two (2) years.**

**Preparing the Ballot**

* Nominees should be selected based on their expertise of the office.
* The slate of nominees should include representation from the honor society membership – stratified by faculty, student and nurse leader members.
* Two nominees should be included on the ballot for each office.
* The consent to serve should be written and candidates are required to sign the form.
	+ Sample Consent to Serve Form

**Term Limits and Staggering**

* The length of the term of all officers is two (2) years.
* Terms of office are staggered so that all officers, directors and Governance and Leadership Succession Committee members do not end their terms at the same time.
Proviso: If a two year term for president-elect is not possible, the president-elect may hold office for one year and succeed to president for two (2) years.

**Elections**

* The election is conducted by ballot with information about the nominees available with the ballot.
* The ballot should be distributed to all members by mail or electronically or at a meeting announced at least 30 days in advance (90 days in advance is suggested).
* The appointed tellers or the Leadership Succession Committee should count ballots.
* A simple majority is needed for elections.
* All nominees should be notified of the election outcome either in person, by phone, or by mail.
* In the case of a tie in a mail ballot, the Board of Directors shall decide the election. The Board may authorize a re-vote or break the tie by lot.
* Members of the Leadership Succession Committee are not eligible to be on the slate for any office or committee chair position.
* Candidates not elected for office should be considered for appointments to committees or task forces.

**Frequently Asked Questions About Elections**

 **May we conduct online/electronic elections?**
**Each state (and/or country) has specific laws regarding electronic balloting and voting. Laws vary widely and could include: requirement that board of directors be elected by paper ballot only, requirement that records of electronic voting be archived for a certain time period, requirement about contents of a paper or an electronic ballot.**

STTI recommends that the honor society contact the applicable government agency to learn about the laws governing electronic balloting and voting.

**Who receives a ballot for our elections?**
**All active members of a are to receive a ballot. If an honor society uses electronic balloting and voting, those members who are active but do not have an email address, or who have an email address but the ballot announcement returns as undeliverable, must receive a paper ballot by mail.**

**What positions are required to be elected?**
**The following positions are required to be elected by ballot: President, Vice President, Counselor, Secretary, Treasurer, and Leadership Succession Committee.**

The following positions may be elected by ballot or appointed by the board of directors: Governance Committee.

**What is a good timeline for elections?**
**The process for leadership succession (leader recruitment) never ends; however, the election process (ballot preparation, voting, results tallying and announcement of leadership) should follow a set timeline each year. Setting a timeline that is standardized creates stability for honor society/chapter leadership and membership. When setting a timeline consider activities of the honor society, institution of higher learning and surrounding health care facilities to ensure maximum return of ballots.**

**What does a proper ballot look like?**
**Proper ballots will exhibit these properties:**

* at least two candidates for each position
* a write-in option for each position
* a description and term length for each position
* introduction and candidate statement for those individuals on the ballot may also be included as a separate document