The Nominations and Elections Operating Handbook includes administrative regulations and rules established by the ACA Nominations and Elections Committee and approved by the Governing Council. It shall be considered an operation handbook of the American Counseling Association and any electing Division or Organizational Affiliate. All Divisions, Regions, and Organizational Affiliates will be required to return to the ACA Nominations and Elections Administrator a signed statement verifying their willingness to abide by election administrative regulations and rules established by ACA.
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## NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS MODEL SCHEDULE

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The Nominations and Elections Operating Handbook shall be distributed by the Nominations and Elections Administrator to ACA and electing organizations’ Nominations and Elections Chairs no later than May 31st of each year. It is the responsibility of the Nominations and Elections Chairs of any electing organization to communicate and distribute these administrative regulations and rules to their respective leaders, committee, and/or editors.

I. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A. Ballot: The Nominations and Election Committee shall conduct the election of officers by ballot provided to the voting members of the Association via mail and Internet.

B. Submission Nominations: Each Division and Region shall have the right to submit to the Nominations and Election Committee the name of no more than one candidate to be placed on the ballot for President-elect. Only Region and Division entities may nominate candidates for ACA President.

C. The Nominations and Elections Committee will submit a list of all nominated candidates to the Governing Council. The Governing Council will vet and approve all candidates before they are placed on the ballot. A simple majority vote of the Governing Council will be required for approval.

D. The Timetable for ACA Elections Will Be As Follows: Candidates for elected office in ACA shall have submitted all required paperwork to the chair of the Nominations and Elections committee by March 1.

1. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall prepare a list of candidates for President Elect and present the list to the Governing Council at their spring meeting.

2. At their spring meeting, the Governing Council shall vet the submitted candidates for President Elect to insure that they meet the criteria contained in these By-Laws and approve the slate of candidates to be presented to the membership.

3. The election of President Elect and other such officers as shall need to be elected will commence on or about December 1 of each year and continue through midnight, the last day of January each year.

4. The winner of the election will be announced to the membership no later than midnight on the final day of February of each year.

5. Unsuccessful candidates can run again the next year without a new nomination if they continue to meet existing requirements and receive the endorsement of the original entity by notifying the nominations and elections committee chair by the March 1 deadline.

II. QUALIFICATIONS FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT CANDIDATES

A. Requirements Of President-elect: Candidates for President-elect must meet the following criteria:
1. Be a member in good standing of the Association for a minimum of ten (10) consecutive years immediately prior to nomination.

2. Have had no ethical violations for the past ten (10) consecutive years immediately prior to nomination.

3. Have served at least two of the following three roles: a) a president of a national division, b) region chair, or c) Governing Council representative.

4. Must be a member of the branch located in the jurisdiction in which they reside or work, if such exists.

5. During the period in which the individual is a candidate for ACA President-elect, they may not be a candidate for president, president-elect, chair, or chair-elect for any division, organizational affiliate, region, or chartered branch of ACA.

### III. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS AND RULES

#### A. Division/Organizational Affiliate Participation in the Election:

Any Division/Organizational Affiliate electing to participate via the Management Services Agreement will be bound by the nominations and elections policies of the American Counseling Association. It is assumed any Division/Organizational Affiliate forwarding candidate information will be participating in ACA’s election process. Divisions withdrawing from this process must submit written notification to the ACA Nominations and Elections Chair, Division Nomination and Elections Chair and the ACA Executive Director. Withdrawing divisions will be liable for their pro rata share of cost at the time of withdrawal.

#### B. Procedures Used to Nominate Candidates:

Divisions, Organizational Affiliates, and Regions shall establish and forward to ACA written procedures used to nominate candidates for ACA President-elect or any other candidate forwarded by an electing organization to ACA. Regions also shall establish written procedures used to nominate candidates for Region Governing Council Representative. These procedures must be available to potential candidates in order to ensure that the process is an open one. These written procedures statements should be forwarded ACA’s Elections Administrator at least 30 days prior to submission of any candidate for President, Division, Organizational Affiliate or Region office.

#### C. Nominations and Elections Schedule:

The Nominations and Elections Committee shall approve the nominations and election schedule for the current election and forward this schedule to the Executive Director. This schedule will then be forwarded to the Nominations and Elections Administrator by the Executive Director. The schedule will be distributed to the Nominations and Elections Chairs of the Divisions, Organizational Affiliates, and Regions by May 31st.
D. Divisions/Organizational Affiliates and Region Nominations and Election Responsibilities:

1. Division/Organizational Affiliate member voting privileges: Any Division, Organizational Affiliate, or Region electing to participate in ACA’s election process is responsible for any and all communication(s) associated with their respective elections. In addition, it will be the responsibility of any electing Division, Organizational Affiliate, or Region to ensure all candidates comply with all policies, procedures and deadlines outlined in this handbook.

2. Division/Organizational Affiliate member voting privileges and restrictions: It is the responsibility of each participating Division, Organizational Affiliate and Region Nominations and Elections Chair to provide the ACA Nominations and Elections Administrator the voting privileges and any applicable restrictions, in writing, associate with their organization’s election.

3. Election results will be posted on the ACA website for all entities following notification of said entity.

E. Withdrawal Process:

1. Any candidate may withdraw from an election by submitting written notification of his/her intent to withdraw to the ACA Nominations and Election Chair, the ACA Executive Director and the withdrawing candidate’s Nominations and Election Chair.

2. Notification of a candidate’s intent to withdraw for an election will be effective upon written receipt of the candidate’s written notification by the Nominations and Elections Chair or the ACA Executive Director.

3. If notification is received prior to submitting any information for publication, whether electronic or paper, ACA will make every effort to ensure all candidate information is excluded from all election materials.

4. If notification is received after submitting any information for publications, whether electronic or paper, ACA cannot exclude any candidate information from any election materials.

5. Unless otherwise stipulated within a participating organization’s bylaws or these policies and procedures, replacement candidates will only be permitted with the written authorization of ACA’s Nominations and Elections Chair, its Executive Director and the requesting organization’s Nomination and Elections Chair. Replacement candidates will be required to comply with the approved timeline and will not be permitted any extensions to those deadlines.

F. Nominations Process

1. Candidates for ACA President-elect: The following rules shall be used in making these nominations.
a. Submission of Nominations: Each Division, Organizational Affiliate, and Region shall have the right to submit to the Nominations and Election Committee the name of no more than one candidate to be placed on the ballot for President-elect.

b. The Nominations and Elections Committee will submit a list of all nominated candidates to the Governing Council. The Governing Council will vet and approve all candidates before they are placed on the ballot. A simple majority vote of the Governing Council will be required for approval.

c. Questions for Candidates for ACA President-elect: The Nominations and Elections Committee shall draft no more than four questions to which the ACA candidate for the office of the President-elect will be requested to respond in Counseling Today. Candidates will respond with up to a maximum of 200 words per question or a total of 800 words asked by the Nominations and Elections Committee. This will not preclude the candidates from addressing additional issues; however, the total number of words must not exceed 800.

d. Biographical Information, Goals Statements and Photograph: In addition to their answers to the questions from the Nominations and Elections Committee, candidates for ACA President-elect are asked to submit biographical information, optional category information (mention of division or region nominators is not permitted), a goals statement, and a black and white photograph which are printed in Counseling Today. Other than photographs, providing candidate information via e-mail is an acceptable method of forwarding information. However, a signed candidate form is still required to be forwarded to the Nominations and Elections Chair.

i. Word Limits: There is a word limit on biographical information, optional category information, and goals statement, which is strictly enforced. General rules for the number of works in biographical information, optional category information and goal statements include the following:

   (i) Goal statements will be limited to a maximum of 300 words, straight text. Any and all other categories will be limited to a maximum of 200 words, straight text. Lead-in questions and punctuation marks will be excluded from any count. Should any candidate exceed the maximum word limits, the submitted text will be ended at the sentence previous to the state word limit.

   (ii) Goal statements will be limited to the President, Governing Council, and Regional Governing Council elections.

   (iii) Prior to making any changes to a candidate’s statement(s) the Nominations and Elections Administrator will attempt to contact that Candidate. However, if the candidate cannot be reached after three (3) attempts, the statement will be
ended at the last word. Candidates will be notified about any changes in their statements.

ii. Deadlines:

(i) Candidates are responsible for submitting their answers to the questions, biographical data, optional categories, goal statements, and photographs to the Nominations and Elections Administrator by the established and published deadline(s). ACA’s Nominations and Elections Administrator will notify the Nominations and Elections Chair of Divisions, Organizational Affiliates, and Regions, in writing, of any candidate not meeting the published deadlines.

(ii) In the event any candidate information is not received by the stated deadline, it shall be replaced with “Candidate Information Unavailable.”

(iii) Information shall be postmarked by the published deadline. No time extensions will be granted, unless properly approved (See 3). In the event that the deadlines for receipts of candidate information are not met, no biographical information, goal statements, or photos will be published or distributed.

iii. Exceptions: Any exception to this process must be forwarded in writing to the ACA’s current Nominations and Elections Chair and approved in writing by the ACA’s Nominations and Elections Committee, the ACA President and the ACA Executive Director.

2. Candidates for Region Governing Council Representatives: Candidates for Region Governing Council Representative will be nominated at the ACA Annual Conference.

3. Candidates for Electing Division or Organizational Affiliate Offices or Region Governing Council Representative: Candidates for electing Division or Organizational Affiliate offices (i.e. President, Governing Council Representative, Trustee, etc.) or Region Governing Council Representative must be forwarded to the Nominations and Elections Administrator, no later than one week following ACA’s Annual Conference.

a. Roster of Candidates: A roster of all candidates must be forwarded to the ACA Nominations and Elections Chair. Upon receipt of rosters of candidates of Divisions, Organizational Affiliates, and Regions, the ACA Nominations and Elections Chair will forward the roster of Division, Organizational Affiliate, and Region candidates to the ACA Nominations and Elections Administrator.

b. Notification of Nominees: All nominees will be notified of receipt of their nominations, in writing, immediately after the conference. This notification is the responsibility of Division, Organizational Affiliates, and Regions Nominations and Elections Chair. Chairs of the Nominations and Elections Committee of any participating organizations must
forward copies of the written notification and a candidate slate(s) to ACA’s Nominations and Elections Administrator.

c. Distribution of Candidates’ Packets: Upon receipt of Divisions’ Organizational Affiliates’ and Regions’ rosters, the Nominations and Elections Administrator will forward to each Division, Organizational Affiliate, and Region Nominations and Elections Chair sufficient candidate packets to distribute to the candidates for their entity’s offices. It is the responsibility of the Division, Organizational Affiliate, and Region Nominations and Elections Chair to ensure distribution of all candidate packs to each nominee. The packets will include deadline dates and instructions for submission of biographical data, and goal statements.

G. Ballot

1. Verification of Candidates: Before the ballot is printed and mailed, verification in writing of the content will be obtained from each Division and Organizational Affiliate president and Region chair.

2. Order of Names on Ballots: The order of candidate names for all positions on the ballot will be determined by lot.

3. Final Ballot: The final election shall be by printed ballot, mailed to members of the Association, in an economical yet dependable manner, at least six weeks prior to the deadline for ballot return. Only those eligible members in good standing as of November 1st will be eligible to vote. Biographical information, answers to questions, and goals statements of candidates will be published in Counseling Today. Election results shall be verified by a Certified Public Accountant under contract with ACA specifically for this purpose.

4. All ballots for the current elections, postmarked on the last business day of January in the US or received by February 7th by foreign members will be considered valid and included in the current year’s election results.

H. Method of Tallying Votes

1. For ACA President-elect: The President is elected by majority vote of the members. The method of tallying votes and instructions to members for voting are as follows:

   a. You may vote in either of 2 ways:

      i. Rank order the candidates (1, 2, 3, 4, 5...with “1” being your first choice.) You need not rank order every candidate. Use only numbers (not marks) if you select this option. OR

      ii. Vote for a single candidate by using a “1” or a mark.
b. Tallying votes: If one candidate receives the majority (50% + 1) first choice votes, he/she is declared the winner.

c. If there is no first choice majority, the candidate with the smallest number of first choice votes is eliminated. The second choices of the voters whose first choice was eliminated are then considered first choices and distributed among the candidates remaining. If there is now a majority (50% + 1) for one candidate, he/she is declared the winner.

d. This process is continued, eliminating at each stage the candidate with the least first choice votes and redistributing the next choice votes for eliminated candidates until a majority (50% + 1) for one candidate is obtained.

e. Note that under this system, the candidate who has the greatest number but not a majority (50% + 1) of votes on the first past count may not necessarily become the winning candidate as the second, third, etc. selections are counted.

f. This process, carried to its conclusion, will also identify the second place choice to replace the winning candidate should that ever become necessary.

2. Popular Vote for Electing Organizations: Electing organization(s) elections will be determined by popular vote. The candidate receiving the greatest number of votes will determine the winner regardless if a majority (50% + 1) is received.

I. Reporting of Results

1. The independent auditors shall forward all election results to ACA’s Nominations and Elections Chair and ACA’s Executive Director simultaneously, no later than 28 days following the ballot cutoff date.

2. The ACA President-elect candidates will each be called by the Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee as soon as the results of the final balloting are known to inform them of the results. The Chair will call the ACA President and President-elect to inform them of the result.

3. The Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee will notify the designated representative of each Division, Region, and Organizational Affiliate, who will assume responsibility for notifying each person on the ballot for that entity of the election results, as soon as possible and preferably by telephone.

4. The Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee shall send the election results to members of the Nominations and Elections Committee, all Division and Organizational Affiliate presidents, Region chairs, Branch presidents, and candidates for ACA President-elect and Region Representative to Governing Council. Election results will be posted on the ACA website for all entities following notification of said entity.
5. All results for ACA’s Division, Organizational Affiliate, and Region election shall be reported in the Counseling Today, with the number of votes cast, the number of votes received by each candidate, and the number of invalidated ballots.

J. Petition Recount

1. A request for a recount must be submitted by the candidate involved and must be in writing to the Executive Director of ACA who will notify the Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee immediately. The Chair will take action according to these Administrative Regulations and Rules.

2. The request must be received in the ACA Headquarters office by 4:30 p.m. EST no later than fifteen (15) days after the notification of results in writing is sent out.

3. Petition recounts will be permitted where the difference in votes between the winning candidate receiving the fewest number of votes and the losing candidate of candidates receiving the greater number of votes is not greater than fifty (50) votes or two and one half percent (2.5%) of all votes cast for the office, whichever is less. If several candidates are contesting for a multi-member position, then all votes received by all candidates are totaled. If the margin separating any apparent winner and any apparent loser is fifty (50) votes or less, or less than two and one half percent (2.5%) of all votes cast, as described above, the losing candidate may petition for a recount.

4. A petition for recount which changes the election result in favor of the petitioner shall be at the expenses of ACA. Petition for recount which does not change the election result in favor of the petitioner shall be at the expense of the petitioner. Said candidate may appeal to a Division, Organizational Affiliate, Region, or Branch to decide whether or not to assist in the expense.

5. Observers are permitted in case of a petition recount: such observers are to be designated by the candidate and provided at the candidate’s expense.

6. Challenge of election results may be initiated on procedural grounds and the same written procedures prescribed above are applied in cases of such petition. In such instances, the Nominations and Elections Committee shall have final authority in determining the acceptability of the reported results.

7. In case of an approved petition recount, the results of the recount shall be the final result and no further count shall be undertaken.

K. Campaigning Prohibited

1. No campaigning for election is permitted. Use of personal funds for any kind of informal campaigning, such as dissemination of letters, is not allowed.
2. The Association, Divisions, Organizational Affiliates, Regions, and Branches shall not engage in the practice of budgeting or appropriating organizational funds derived from organizational revenues for support of any ACA President-elect candidate. This also includes funds from conference or any other revenue-producing source.

3. The Association, Divisions, Organizational Affiliates, Regions, and Branches shall not engage in practice of accepting funds or other support for any ACA President-elect candidate from commercial firms, corporations, foundations, institutions, agencies, or colleagues, acquaintances, or friends of the candidate.

4. Use of association, corporation, foundation, institution, or agency postal permit, telephone tie lines, or “800” numbers has constitute a contribution.

5. Acceptance of contributions from any source by a candidate will be considered a violation of the election regulations or rules for which an individual can be subject to removal from candidacy.

6. Association funds must not be used except as allowed by nominations and elections regulations and rules.

7. No ACA Division, Organizational Affiliate, Region, Branch, or Branch Division may publish articles on the candidacy of nominees or candidates.

8. Candidate’s ads may not appear in the Counseling Today or in Division, Organizational Affiliate, Region, Branch or Branch Division, Committee, or Task Force publications.

9. Oral information about individual candidates is to be confined to personal communications among members, not involving organized campaign speakers, telephone trees, e-mail messages, web sites, and other activities which may be construed as campaigning.

10. Candidates, friends of candidates, and colleagues of candidates may not distribute or mail campaign literature of any kind.

11. At Division, Organizational Affiliate, Region, Branch or Branch Division or other ACA meeting, the names of all candidates for an office may be announced, and if one or more of the candidates are present, they may be asked to stand and be recognized. They may not speak about their candidacy or as a candidate in front of the group.

L. Violations

1. VIOLATIONS CHARGES: The Nominations and Elections Committee shall consider any charges of administrative regulation or rule violation by the Association, its entities, or candidates.
a. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall consider any charges made over the signature of five members of ACA or candidate and said charges must be received one month prior to publish dates for primary and final elections.

b. The nominee or candidate charged with a violation will be given the opportunity to present written evidence to counter any charge(s). This evidence must be received within two weeks of notification of charges.

c. The President or Chair of the nominating Division, Organizational Affiliate, or Region of such a nominee or candidate will be notified by the Nominations and Elections Chair within two weeks of receiving notification that a violation has occurred. A Divisional President or Regional Chair may also present written evidence to counter charges within two weeks of notification of charges.

d. The President or Chair of the nominating Division, Organizational Affiliate, or Region of such a nominee or candidate will be notified of charges by the Nominations and Elections Chair within two weeks of receiving notification that a violation has occurred. A Divisional President or Regional Chair may also present written evidence to counter charges within two weeks of notification of charges.

e. All of the correspondence, (1) the letter, signed by five members of ACA or submitted by a candidate, (2) the statement (if submitted) by the nominee or candidate relative to the alleged violation, and (3) the statement (if submitted) by the President or Chair of the nominating unit will then be forwarded for evaluation by the Nominations and Elections Committee to determine (1) whether to disqualify the nominee or candidate, and (2) whether to sanction the nominating Division, Organizational Affiliate, or Region.

(Sanctioning means that the nominating Division, Organizational Affiliate, or Region will lose nominating privileges after the subsequent national conference. Any sanction against a participating organization/entity will be for a period not to exceed one year. The sanction period will be July 1 – June 30 of the year following the sanction.) Any individual found in violation of an administrative regulation and/or rule before, during, or after the election process will be removed from the election process and will be declared ineligible for the elected position. Once an elected position is declared ineligible, and the candidate receiving the next highest number of votes will be determined assume the elected position. In the event a second candidate is not available or can no longer fulfill the responsibilities of the elected position, it will be the responsibility of the participating organization affected to appoint an individual to the position deemed ineligible.

Members of the Nominations and Elections Committee must return a written statement relative to disqualification and sanctioning within two weeks of receipt of such information to the Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee.

f. It is the responsibility of the Nominations and Elections Committee to determine under which circumstances any sanction will be imposed. Any decision of the Nominations and Elections Committee requires a majority vote of the voting members of the Committee.
g. Any candidate who believes the election regulations or rules have been violated to detriment of his or her candidacy shall immediately file a letter with the Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee documenting the charges for violation.

h. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall both determine and enforce sanctions for violation of any regulation or rule, including deadlines for submission of materials.

2. VIOLATIONS APPEALS

a. A disqualified nominee or candidate may appeal the decision of the Nominations and Elections Committee by writing the President of ACA and requesting that the documents evaluated by the Nominations and Elections Committee be re-evaluated by the Executive Committee of ACA. No additional documentation (of than a letter of appeal) may be submitted. Nominees or candidates may request an opportunity to appeal in person before the Executive Committee or participate in a conference call. (Expense to be borne by the person requesting such a personal appearance or conference call.)

b. A sanctioned Division, Organizational Affiliate, or Region may follow the same procedures as described in “a” above.

c. Only the voting members of the Executive Committee of ACA may cast a vote in conjunction with such appeal. The Past President of ACA, as a member and Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee, previously would have deliberated and cast a vote with respect to such matters, and therefore should not be present to deliberate and vote.

d. The decision of the Executive Committee shall be final and no additional appeal process shall be initiated by the nominee or candidate. The President of ACA shall notify involved parties and the candidate no later than one week after a decision has been made.

e. When possible, the name of a disqualified nominee or candidate will be removed from the ballot prior to mailing to the membership. When it is not possible to remove the name, the membership of ACA will be notified via Counseling Today.
The Nominations and Elections Committee will endeavor to follow the Model Schedule. There will be some variations in the schedule from year to year to the dates of the ACA Annual Conference and inherent calendar changes.

**Schedule and Deadlines for Nominations and Elections**

**February**
Those seeking to be a candidate for ACA President-elect with a term beginning July 1, 2015 must be nominated no later than Friday, February 15, 2013. Nominations must be made by a division, organizational affiliate, or region of the American Counseling Association. Nominations and required documentation must be sent to Holly Clubb, ACA Director of Leadership Services at the following address:

Ms. Holly Clubb  
ACA Director of Leadership Services  
American Counseling Association  
5999 Stevenson Avenue  
Alexandria, Virginia 22304  
Or, the information may be e-mailed to: hclubb@counseling.org

Once all verifications have been made, candidates will be required to complete an official Candidate Data and Information form provided by the ACA Nominations and Elections Committee. This form will be due no later than June 3, 2013.

**April/May/June**
Nominations and Elections Committee develops questions for ACA President-elect candidates.

Nominations and Election schedule is disseminated to Divisions, Organizational Affiliates, and Regions.

Confirmation for electing organization’s participation in ACA’s Election processed required. Questions to candidates for ACA President-elect are forwarded.

**July**
Divisions, Organizational Affiliates, and Region candidates for Division and Region offices are forward to ACA’s Elections Administrator by the Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee of any participating organization.

Confirmation of candidacy information forwarded to Division, Organizational Affiliate and Region Nominations and Elections Chair by ACA’s Elections Administrator.
August
August 1: Deadline for receipt of all candidate questions/answers to ACA President-elect candidates and photographs.

Confirmation of candidacy information to be returned to ACA's Elections Administrator and verification of Division voting matrix required by electing organization’s Nominations and Elections Chair.

September
September 13: Deadline for receipt of all Division, Organizational Affiliates, and Region candidate information.

Candidate order in Counseling Today and ballot are drawn by lot.

October
October 15 – Complete receipt of dues required to ensure eligibility to vote.

November
November 1: Database Cutoff of eligible voters. Only those active eligible members of ACA’s database at the point of cutoff will be eligible to vote.

December
Publish Nominations and Election issue of Counseling Today, containing candidate information and ballots. All ACA, Region, and those Divisions accepting ACA’s Nominations and Elections services will be published in Counseling Today and placed on ACA election website.

January
January 31: Deadline for receipt of postmark ballots.

February
Results announced.