

Agenda Review Subcommittee (ARS) Process

Purpose

The purpose of the Agenda Review Subcommittee (ARS) is to facilitate the development of well-crafted Motions and Items for Discussion (Motions/IFDs) for inclusion on the Annual Business Meeting (ABM) Agenda and to facilitate the efficient functioning of the ABM. This process was approved by the CCC July 3, 2016 for the Conference Year 2016-17 (see Appendix B for a detailed description of this standing subcommittee of the CCC).

Submission of Agenda Motions/IFDs

Motions/IFDs can be submitted any time of the year. However, there are deadlines for inclusion on any one given year's ABM Agenda.

Motions/IFDs can be submitted to the F.W.S. Office or directly to the ABM Agenda Editor between ABMs.

For a Motions/IFDs to receive ARS consideration, it must be submitted on such submission form developed for this purpose or provide all the pertinent information identified on such submission form.

The Submitter of a Motion/IFD must be clearly identified, along with valid contact information as deemed appropriate for this purpose. Each Motions/IFD must be submitted by an S.L.A.A. member, or if not a member of the Fellowship, then a member of the Conference, Intergroups, Conference Committees or the Board of Trustees. Members of the Conference who are not members of the Fellowship might include F.W.S. Office staff, members of the BOT, and/or others as may be determined by future Conferences.

Incomplete submissions will be returned to the Submitter, with a note that it does not meet the criteria for consideration. A Motion/IFD can be modified to satisfy the requirement for ARS consideration and can be resubmitted.

Liaison between ARS and the Submitter

The ARS will designate a member to serve as ARS Liaison to the Submitter of each Motion/IFD. The ARS Liaison will facilitate communication between the ARS and the respective Submitter throughout the process and will, as applicable, help the Submitter correct incomplete submissions, eliminate reasons that caused the ARS to not further review the Motion/IFD, make revisions to the Motion/IFD and otherwise facilitate the development of well-crafted Motions/IFDs for inclusion on the ABM Agenda.

Submitters' Key

The ABM Agenda does not identify any Submitter, instead assigning a number to each Submitter of a Motion/IFD on the ABM Agenda. The ARS prepares a key that identifies each numbered Submitter (using first name and last initial for any individual). This Submitters' Key is not circulated to the Conference until after all Motion/IFDs on the ABM Agenda have been addressed at the ABM, in keeping with the Tradition to "place principles before personalities."

Literature

To ensure the integrity of literature being submitted for Conference approval, all submissions of literature must come from the CLC. IFDs and Motions may be co-submitted by the writing group or author, but the actual submission form and the literature attachment must come from the CLC, preferably directly from the CLC Chair. It is up to the CLC to submit the most recent CLC approved copy of the literature. The ARS reserves the right to request that submitted literature be in a preferred format, (i.e. Word document, Adobe PDF, etc.). It is also the CLC responsibility to submit literature that has been approved by the Conference to the appropriate Board Committee to start the "Process for Literature After Conference Approval" (Appendix I).

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Preliminary Review

Though the emphasis of the ARS Process is designed to facilitate the placement of Motions/IFDs onto the ABM Agenda, the ARS will first consider whether a Motion/IFD is one or more of the following:

1. Motion or IFD to create, produce, or approve literature where the literature in question has not gone through the Conference Literature Committee (CLC) review and approval process;
2. Motion or IFD to take an action that is already being taken, including repackaging existing Conference-approved Literature;
3. Motion or IFD containing date-specific information, where the date has passed and was an essential portion of the Motion/IFD;
4. Motion or IFD which cannot be enforced;
5. Motion or IFD:
 - a. Motion the goal of which is identical to a Motion or portion of a Motion that was defeated or withdrawn after being brought to the floor at the immediately preceding ABM (Exception: literature approved and submitted by the CLC may be brought to the next ABM);
 - b. IFD the subject of which is identical to an IFD or portion of an IFD that was brought to the floor at the two immediately previous ABMs (Exception: draft literature submitted as an IFD may be brought back to subsequent ABMs);
6. Motion or IFD submitted to the Conference that would be more appropriately addressed by another body such as the BOT, a particular Conference Committee, or F.W.S. (not including circumstances relating to [Article V, Section 4](#), of the By-laws where the BOT is seeking input regarding a Motion/IFD that is otherwise within its sole purview).

If the Motion/IFD is one or more of the foregoing, the Motion/IFD will not be placed onto the ABM Agenda and there will be no further review of the Motion/IFD under this ARS Process, subject to the Appeal procedure as described below. This decision is not to be based on ARS members' personal opinions or preferences.

The decision that the Motion/IFD will not be placed onto the ABM Agenda and there will be no further review of the Motion/IFD under this ARS Process must have a majority vote of the members of the ARS voting or abstaining on that Motion/IFD. One member may never constitute a majority. A majority vote is unanimity, or 2 out of 3 (whether the third member votes no or abstains), or 3 out of 5 (whether either or both of the others vote no or abstain) or 4 out of 5 (whether the fifth member votes no or abstains). To assure that there is an odd number of possible votes on a Motion/IFD, the ARS may designate one member to sit out a particular vote.

Motions and IFDs from the Board of Trustees

Motions and IFDs submitted by the Board of Trustees must be placed onto the ABM Agenda by the ARS. However, the ARS may offer the BOT its opinion and make a request for possible revision or withdrawal of a BOT Motion/IFD guided by the ARS Process.

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Further Review for Acceptance or Requests for Revision of Received Motion or IFDs

Questions for the ARS to ask regarding each Motion or IFD receiving further review before deciding whether to include the Motion or IFD as is or send it back to the Submitter with a request for revision:

1. Is the Motion or IFD's goal already effectively accomplished by a Motion previously adopted by the Conference;
2. Is the Motion or IFD's goal identical to a Motion or portion of a Motion already included in the ABM Agenda for the current year;
3. Is the Motion or IFD best combined with another Motion or IFD, at which time the ARS can suggest teamwork between multiple Submitters of Motions or IFDs;
4. Has the window of time in which a Motion or IFD's goal already passed as of the time of the submission, or will it pass before the Motion or IFD can be voted upon by the Conference;
5. Does the Motion or IFD's goal exceed the scope of authority of the service entity expected to exercise such authority;
6. Does the Motion or IFD contain names of people, places or things; dates; times; or other specifics that are not integral to the effectiveness of the IFD or execution of the Motion (Integral to means central to and necessary for);
7. Does the Motion or IFD contain date-specific information, where the date is not an essential portion of the Motion or IFD;
8. Does the Motion or IFD assume previous agreement, action or processes that may not be the case;
9. Is the Motion or IFD unclear, confusing, vague, ambiguous, or in some other way not comprehensible to the ARS as a whole;
10. Does the Motion or IFD fail to clearly identify implementation of the decision, at least at a conceptual level that can be developed by the Conference, the Board of Trustees, and/or the F.W.S. Office as delegated by the Board of Trustees;
11. Does the Motion fail to respect the right of the Board of Trustees to determine the method of execution of Fellowship-wide priorities (nonetheless, priorities can be set by the Fellowship as a whole through the Conference per Traditions Two and Nine.);
12. Is there an insufficient body of supporting or background information included for the Conference to make an adequately informed decision or comment on the Motion or IFD (per Tradition Two.);
13. Is the Motion or IFD longer than necessary and can be trimmed considerably without losing effectiveness, scope, or understandability;
14. Would the Motion or IFD more effectively be combined with other Motions or IFDs?

These are subjective elements, which will invariably be interpreted differently by individuals. The ARS members are trusted servants and should be accorded that trust in accordance with the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts. ARS members may consider other elements in lieu of, or in addition to, these suggested elements, so long as such elements are chosen by group conscience of the entire ARS. The ARS will objectively evaluate Motions/IFDs in the form submitted. The ARS shall not research the history and merits of a Motion/IFD.

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Acceptance of a Motion/IFD without Change

Answers of “No” to those 14 Questions will point toward accepting the Motion/IFD without change onto the ABM Agenda while answers of “Yes” will point toward making a request for revision. Nevertheless, there is no formula for this decision and a Motion/IFD may be accepted without change despite the ARS having answered one or more Questions with a “Yes,” just as the ARS may request a revision based on elements not addressed in the 14 Questions.

For a Motion/IFD to be accepted without change onto the ABM Agenda, the Motion/IFD must have a majority vote of the members of the ARS voting or abstaining on that Motion/IFD. One member may never constitute a majority. A majority vote is unanimity, or 2 out of 3 (whether the third member votes no or abstains) or 3 out of 5 (whether either or both of the others vote no or abstain) or 4 out of 5 (whether the fifth member votes no or abstains). To assure that there is an odd number of possible votes on a Motion/IFD, the ARS may designate one member to sit out a particular vote. A majority vote to accept a Motion/IFD without change will result in 1) adding the Motion/IFD to the ABM Agenda without change, and 2) inclusion of a note on the right side of the ABM Agenda stating: *This Motion/IFD was accepted without change onto the Agenda by a vote of x-x-x.*

When a Motion/IFD does not receive a majority vote of the ARS for inclusion onto the ABM Agenda without change, it will be considered for the revision process as follows:

Revision of Received Motions/IFDs

For a Motion/IFD to have a request for revision, the request must have a majority vote of the members of the ARS voting or abstaining on that Motion/IFD. One member may never constitute a majority. A majority vote is unanimity, or 2 out of 3 (whether the third member votes no or abstains) or 3 out of 5 (whether either or both of the others vote no or abstain) or 4 out of 5 (whether the fifth member votes no or abstains). To assure that there is an odd number of possible votes on a Motion/IFD, the ARS may designate one member to sit out a particular vote.

If the Submitter provides a revised Motion/IFD, a majority vote of the ARS (as described above) will be needed to place the revised Motion/IFD onto the ABM Agenda. If the revised Motion/IFD is placed onto the ABM Agenda, a note on the right side of the ABM Agenda will read: *This Motion/IFD was revised by the Submitter and accepted onto the ABM Agenda by a vote of x-x-x.* If there is a minority exception to the vote, that exception may be included as well.

If the Submitter chooses to not accept the ARS recommendation to revise, the ARS will continue to work with the Submitter on the requested revision, calendar permitting. If there is insufficient time for further revision or if the Submitter chooses to not accept the recommendation to revise, the ARS will either 1) reject the Motion/IFD or 2) place the Motion/IFD onto the ABM Agenda and a note on the right side of the ABM Agenda will read: *The ARS requested a revision by a vote of x-x-x; however, the Motion/IFD was not revised by the Submitter.*

Appeal of Motions/IFDs Receiving Only Preliminary Review by the ARS

The Submitter may appeal to the ARS for reconsideration of a decision based on Preliminary Review that the Motion/IFD will not be placed onto the ABM Agenda and there will be no further review of the Motion/IFD.

If the Submitter appeals, the ARS will prayerfully reconsider its decision taking into account any new information and hold another vote on whether the Motion/IFD will not be placed onto the ABM Agenda (this Appeal is not available for Motions/IFDs submitted at the ABM).

If the ARS does not change its decision, the Submitter may choose to appeal the decision to the CCC. If the Motion/IFD is appealed, then the ARS will provide the reason (s) for the decision and forward the applicable ARS meeting (s) minutes to the Conference Charter Committee (CCC) Chair, to be handled at the next CCC meeting.

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Conference Charter Committee Process for Handling Appeals

Any Appeal by a Submitter of an ARS decision based on Preliminary Review that the Motion/IFD will not be placed onto the ABM Agenda shall be handled at the next CCC meeting following the Appeal. Minutes of the ARS discussions (regarding the decision and the Appeal) will be provided to CCC members prior to the CCC meeting at which the Motion/IFD will be addressed. The Submitter may also provide materials that will be provided to CCC members prior to the CCC meeting at which the Motion/IFD will be addressed.

At the CCC meeting, the proposed Motion/IFD, and the reason(s) for the decision will be read. Because of the amount of in-depth discussion at the ARS level, the Motion/IFD will go to an immediate 1st vote, with no preliminary pro and con discussion.

The normal voting process will be used:

- a 1st vote, with an opportunity for minority opinion; then
- a 2nd vote, if necessary, with an opportunity for minority opinion; and then
- a 3rd and final vote, if necessary.

Group conscience of the CCC will be required for the inclusion of the Motion/IFD onto the ABM Agenda.

If the ARS decision is not reversed by the full CCC, then the ARS Liaison will communicate the Appeal results, the reason(s) for the Appeal results, and alternative avenues for consideration to the Submitter.

Communications Re: ARS Activities

This ARS Process is published at least once a year in relevant publications and the F.W.S. Website at the same time as the first communication of the ABM Agenda submission deadline. Further, any Motion/IFD not placed onto the ABM Agenda based on Preliminary Review shall be noted in the ARS minutes submitted to the CCC and included in the CCC report to the ABM along with the reasons for the decision.

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