

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL STUDENT SECTION
COMMITTEE ON LONG RANGE PLANNING

Report: A (A-03)

Subject: Regional Delegates The First Year
Presented by: Divy Ravindranath, Chair

Referred to: Reference Committee A (Cynthia Johnson, Chair)

Introduction

With a full year of with Regional Medical Student Delegates and Regional Medical Student Alternate Delegates (hereafter referred to as "Regional Delegate" or "Regional Delegates" unless the phrase "Regional Delegate" is used in contrast with "Alternate Delegate") representing student interests in the AMA-House of Delegates (hereafter referred to as "HOD") now completed, your Governing Council felt that a full review of the first year of Regional Delegates was in order. The MSS Committee on Long Range Planning was instructed to perform that review and determine ways to improve the experience of being a Regional Delegate and the effectiveness of the Regional Delegates in advocating for MSS issues.

Background

At the interim meeting in 2000, the HOD adopted Board of Trustees Report 19 (I-00): "Medical Student Representation In the House of Delegates." That action enlarged the size of the HOD to allow increased representation of our AMA's medical student members. Prior to this historic vote, the medical students were represented as a group by the AMA-MSS Delegate and Alternate Delegate to the HOD and as members of their state medical society by the State delegations in the HOD. Per Board of Trustees Report 19 (I-00), the AMA-MSS was reorganized into 7 geographic Regions, each with a roughly equal number of medical student members, and the AMA-HOD was reorganized to allow an additional delegate seat for every 2,000 student members in each of these Regions. Each Regional Delegate would be seated with the State delegation representing the state of the Regional Delegate's medical school. The HOD determined that this new arrangement would begin at the 2002 Annual meeting and would be re-evaluated after five full years, after the 2006 Interim meeting.

In accordance with Board of Trustees Report 19 (I-00) and the AMA-MSS Internal Operating Procedures ("IOP"), each Region, at the 2001 Annual meeting, determined its own means of selecting the first class of Regional Delegates. Even though the election procedures were independent of the sections of the IOP relevant to elections, Section IV.C of the IOP was to govern the eligibility of the candidates for Regional Delegate. In addition, each state was to only have one Regional Delegate, unless there were too few candidates from different states to satisfy this stipulation. Each state is

allowed to have more than one Alternate Delegate. Each candidate for Regional Delegate was to receive a written endorsement from the State delegation with which that Regional Delegate was to be seated. In order to declare candidacy, each candidate was asked to submit an application and a CV to the AMA Department on Medical Student Services in time for the candidate to be included in the Agenda Book for the 2001 Interim meeting. The first class of Regional Delegates was elected at the 2001 Interim meeting.

The new Regional Delegates were prepared for their roles in a number of ways. Your Governing Council mailed a packet including a welcome letter from the AMA-MSS Delegate and Alternate Delegate to the HOD, the Procedures of the House of Delegates, and the Guide to the AMA House of Delegates meeting. Each State delegation to the HOD was asked to include its new student members in all pre-meeting orientation activities and as full members of the delegation at the HOD. Finally, each Regional Delegate was invited to attend the Speaker's orientation meeting, held at the opening of the 2002 Annual House of Delegates meeting, and the meetings of the MSS House Coordinating Committee ("HCC"), held during the 2002 Annual MSS Assembly and HOD meetings.

Issues discussed at the 2002 Annual meeting of the AMA-HOD included a number of core MSS issues. The first AMA policy on the Clinical Skills Assessment Examination was established. The HOD decided that students should be explicitly included in all discussions regarding the transformation of the AMA into an Organization of Organizations. Finally, the AMA took a very strong stand on Residents Working Conditions. With all of these issues, the 2002 Annual meeting served as quite a furnace to steel the new class of Regional Delegates. To evaluate their experiences, your MSS Committee on Long Range Planning developed and distributed a survey to the Regional Delegates and members of the HCC. This survey is reproduced in Appendix A. The survey was distributed and collected by e-mail. There were 17 respondents of approximately 50 individuals surveyed. The results from this survey are reported below. A companion survey was generated after the 2002 Interim meeting. This survey is reproduced in Appendix B. Where relevant, these results are reported in conjunction with the results from the 2002 Annual meeting survey; unless otherwise indicated, all results reported are from the 2002 Annual meeting survey. These results reflect the opinions on 5 respondents. Please keep this small sample size in mind when interpreting the results of the 2002 Interim meeting survey.

Survey Results

Respondents' participation in previous HOD meetings ranged from one to four meetings, with a mean of 2.1 HOD meetings and a standard deviation of 0.79. The number of AMA-MSS meetings attended ranged from two to nine meetings, with a mean of 4.2 AMA-MSS meetings and a standard deviation of 0.98.

Respondents' feelings about their involvement at A-02, on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being most involved, ranged from 2 to 5. The mean was 4.3, with a standard deviation of 0.80. One of the respondents gave the MSS level a score of 2 and the state level a score of 5. They additionally commented, "The state is very supportive, the MSS-GC does not

feel inclusive." Of the three individuals who responded with a score of 3, two reported that it was their 1st HOD meeting; this lack of experience could possibly contribute to their perceived lack of involvement.

Respondents' experiences as Regional Delegates/Alternate Delegates, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being a very positive rating, ranged from 3 to 5. The mean was 4.3, with a standard deviation of 0.71. Of the three individuals who responded with a score of 3 for their Regional Delegate experience, two reported a score of 5 for involvement at A-02. This raises the question, why did some people feel involved, but not have a good experience?

6 individuals either did not attend the HCC sessions held before the opening of the HOD or just did not answer the questions for various reasons. Of those who attended and answered the questions, most felt they were good to gain info and discuss the issues. A few mentioned it was good to meet people. While many said there was nothing they disliked about the session, some felt the discussion was too unregulated, and one felt the timing was right while another person felt it should have been held later to better accommodate 3rd year students who are doing their clerkships.

3 people did not answer the questions regarding the HCC sessions held during the HOD. Most felt it was a great information session and opportunity to bring stuff together, especially planning a game plan for the issues. Some also seemed to feel it was a good opportunity to meet and learn ideas from this group. 5 individuals had no complaints, while many respondents felt that it was disorganized and unclear at points causing it to be longer than necessary. A few respondents felt they made it difficult to caucus with their State and Regional delegation. A couple of respondents also felt that it seemed more like the student leadership was unresponsive to their ideas. Two of the five respondents for the 2002 Interim meeting survey stated that these meetings went rather smoothly, but there was still some room for improvement. One respondent suggested that these meetings should be more of a "back and forth" between the MSS leadership and the Regional Delegates.

8 respondents either did not attend or did not answer the questions regarding the Speaker's Orientation session. Of those that answered the questions, most felt it was a good orientation for those unfamiliar with the HOD, as well as a good welcome and introduction. Most had no complaints except a few who felt that it was redundant, as they were already familiar with parliamentary procedures.

The survey revealed that the State delegations to which Regional Delegates were added provided varying levels of orientation for their new members. Answers to the question "Did your state medical association provide you with any orientation to the HOD?" ranged from "no" to "somewhat" to "yes." However, even though there was no formal orientation provided by the State delegations for the majority of respondents, nearly every respondent who elaborated on his or her answer to the question reported that members in their State delegations were very willing to informally orient them to the House.

In regards to the Delegates Handbook, which contains all of the resolutions, reports, etc., to be considered by the HOD, the survey revealed that Regional Delegates found it helpful in orientation to the issues, but it was not overly helpful in getting them oriented to the process of the HOD. Students from states that assign delegates to separate reference committees so that delegates can educate each other on the issues as discussed in the reference committees felt especially prepared. Other delegates felt that the handbook was too copious to study thoroughly before the meeting and that it was too bulky to transport to the meeting.

Regarding their opportunities to discuss resolutions and issues with fellow delegates and the Governing Council, respondents fell into two camps the relative newcomers, and the more experienced delegates. Those who had not attended many Assembly or HOD meetings were discouraged by the established social networks, and felt "left-out" of some circles. Some expressed the desire to have more feedback on the strategies and reasons behind MSS positions. Sentiments of poor Regional delegation communication were also expressed. The more experienced delegates described a good exchange of ideas and institutional knowledge among the Regional Delegates.

The GC received high reviews on communication of goals to the new delegates. All but two respondents felt prepared by the GC to start the meeting, though some recommendations for improvement were mentioned. Some thought that a separate Regional Delegate schedule delineating required/highly suggested meetings would be helpful in advance. Others requested that Delegates be assigned to Reference Committees and Caucuses to survey the maximum breadth of opinions. Also, a few noted that Regional Delegate attendance was limited until the HOD Opening Session due to the schedule constraints of Delegates with clinical/classroom responsibilities. Two criticisms were that there exist too many layers of "authority" for effective communications, and that the GC seemed "too busy with their own state delegations". These particular comments were from relative newcomers.

A few specific communication mechanisms were tested by this survey. The first of which was the efficacy of having a "point person" assigned to each Region to coordinate those delegations an overwhelming majority favored this course of action. Given the overwhelming majority in favor of having a point person, we instructed the delegates from each Region to appoint a point person at the 2002 Interim meeting. The survey results for that meeting show that this instruction was not uniformly followed, making that experiment uninformative. Having an HCC member assigned to each Region produced only five responses, but the feedback was favorable. A similar finding was noted for the prospect of having HCC members posted on the HOD floor during voting periods. Both of these courses of action were enacted at the 2002 Interim meeting and met with favorable survey responses. A call for any additional suggestions for improvement moved one Regional Delegates to comment on the overall flow of communication and structure of the MSS organization. This respondent thought that most decisions and policy positions flowed from the GC down to the Delegates, rather

than individual and state opinions finding receptive ears among the MSS leadership. This comment reflects the disenfranchisement reported earlier.

Additional Issues Noted

The members of your Committee on Long Range Planning and other concerned members of the Assembly noted a number of issues regarding our Regional Delegates that were not addressed by the surveys. This part of the report elaborates on the four most significant of these issues.

A number of Regional Delegates and Alternate Delegates were absent entirely, absent for part of the HOD, or absent from the Assembly at both the Annual and the Interim meetings. There are no clear guidelines for the replacement of Regional Delegates by Alternate Delegates or for ad-hoc appointment of other individuals to replace absent Alternate Delegates in the MSS IOP. Additionally, it was often difficult for Alternate Delegates to know if and when all three of their Region's Regional Delegates were seated. There are also issues to be considered centering on the willingness of State delegations to accept an Alternate Delegate without a corresponding Regional Delegate from that state. These issues are resolved in some Regions by slating candidates from the same state and in others by teaming up Regional Delegates and Alternate Delegates. Even though the survey results show that most State delegations are very welcoming, questions still remain regarding these issues. Will the State delegations fund an un-teamed Alternate Delegate? Will the state be willing to seat an Alternate Delegate who has not been working with the State delegation from the beginning? The experience varies widely from state to state.

Funding for Regional Delegates varies from being fully funded, just like any other member of the State delegation, to not funded at all. Funding, of course, is critical to the full discharge of the responsibilities of being a Regional Delegate.

There have been a number of questions regarding eligibility for candidacy for Council and GC position, and whether it is appropriate to serve both as a Regional Delegate or Alternate and serve on the GC or a Council concurrently. Is there a conflict of interest between serving the MSS and serving your state?

At the 2002 Interim meeting of the MSS Assembly, only 2 Regions had enough candidates to fill all of their RD positions by the stated deadline. The empty spots were filled in the other Regions by nominations from the floor. However, the MSS IOP has no guidelines regarding the accommodation of candidates nominated from the floor. The question remains: should these candidates be treated like the candidates who declared their candidacy by the deadline?

Discussion

Experience and Orientation

Most of our Regional Delegates are very experienced. They have attended a number of MSS Assembly meetings and a reasonable number of HOD meetings. This is also

proven by the fact that the Speaker's orientation session felt redundant to a number of respondents. In all, there need be no improvement in the materials and means used by the GC to orient our Regional Delegates to the HOD. Regional Delegates, like all new Delegates to the HOD, receive a copy of the "Procedures of the House of Delegates" and the "Guide to the House of Delegates Meeting." They should continue to receive these pamphlets. Additionally, a welcome letter, like the one reproduced in Appendix C, should be provided to the newly elected Regional Delegates as soon as they are elected to provide them with some philosophical guidance.

As has been requested by one of the survey respondents, a Regional Delegate Schedule of mandatory and suggested meetings could more clearly define their expectations and allow for better individual planning. This schedule can be easily generated by editing the master list of events at the HOD. Providing this schedule along with the HCC report and process/procedural orientation materials is a small change, but it could go a long way to improving the learning curve and promoting greater attendance.

Level of Involvement

Though the great majority of survey respondents have a high opinion of the job the GC does for our Section, it was clear that several Delegates considered our "top-down" structure to be obtrusive. Many attempts have been made to involve younger members in the inner-workings of our MSS through open discussion sessions and other mechanisms. Still, those who are not accustomed to the social networks and the highly experienced/outspoken nature of the established leaders are intimidated and find it difficult to be included. A better job needs to be done to actively involve all who have been elected to represent their Regions, and to foster their skills and interest in continued involvement. Tightly moderated and genuine policy discussion sessions would be one way to improve this. GC and HCC members perhaps need to shift the discussion focus away from redundant opinions and overly dominating voices to actively seek out our quieter Delegates' points of view. Moreover, MSS leadership needs to be open to the opinions of the so-called quieter Delegates' points of view. Another possibility is for newly elected Regional Delegates to be assigned mentors within the Delegate corps or the GC/HCC, similar to the "big sib." programs run at many medical schools.

House Coordinating Committee

In addition to the discussion regarding the participation of Regional Delegates in the MSS Caucuses, Regional Delegates can be assisted in maximizing their experiences and impact on the HOD if their time at AMA meetings is concentrated to eliminate redundancy and downtime. Incumbents need not attend introductory meetings unless they are mentoring new Delegates or new information is being disseminated. Limiting HCC sessions to Friday condenses Regional Delegates' time away from medical school obligations by a full day. In order to not conflict with the Regional Meetings, HCC meetings would either have to conflict with the MSS Reference Committee and/or would have to happen late in the day. This would mean that Regional Delegates and Alternates and HCC members would have to make decisions regarding their level of involvement in the MSS Assembly meeting, as they cannot be at two places at once. However, with good communication between individual members of these groups, we believe these

tradeoffs can be made without compromising the meeting. Participants should be allowed to miss meetings as long as they have other members to "cover" for them. HCC meetings before the opening of the HOD can be made more efficient by sending electronic copies of the HCC reports to the Regional Delegates before the opening of the MSS Assembly. Doing so would allow Regional Delegates to familiarize themselves with the MSS positions on the HOD resolutions, sparing them from having to do so during the HCC meetings. This should allow the HCC meetings to focus on second order processes, like subtle questions of strategy, rather than on primary information exchange. This would not increase the burden on the HCC members since their reports are already due before the opening of the MSS Assembly.

Survey results show a favorable opinion for teaming up individual HCC members with specific Regional Delegates. The intention for teaming up HCC members and Regional Delegates is to provide the Regional Delegates with a point person close to the GC and provide the Regional Delegates with consultation when GC members are otherwise occupied. Doing so would also force the Regional Delegates to interact with the HCC members. However, placing the HCC members between the Regional Delegates and the GC could be perceived as increasing the distance to the decision makers, and would thereby disenfranchise more Regional Delegates. HCC members are currently assigned to the different HOD reference committees. Rather than assigning these HCC members to the Regional Delegations (defined as the Regional Delegates and Alternate Delegates from a single Region), Regional Delegates should also be assigned to reference committees, as is done in a number of State delegations already. This would preserve the goal of increasing HCC-Regional Delegate interactions while avoiding the disenfranchising effect of adding another layer between the Regional Delegates and the GC. Encouraging this practice throughout the MSS would improve our inclusiveness and help to better educate our future student leaders. Every effort should be made to coordinate this assignment with the Regional Delegate's State delegation assignment, if applicable. Those assignments would be best made within each Region and by taking into consideration requests for specific assignment by the Regional Delegates.

Survey results also show a favorable opinion for having HCC members at the HOD to assist with coordination. Doing so at the 2002 Interim meeting greatly increased MSS effectiveness and should be recommended to HCC members in the future. However, given that it would greatly increase the time commitment of the HCC members, such a course of action should not be considered a requirement. There are enough students on the HOD floor without the HCC members, but there can always be more.

Given the larger task of the HCC, an organizational change may be in order to increase the efficiency of the HCC and its coordination with the Regional Delegates. We believe that further study on this point is needed before specific changes can be suggested.

Attendance

Regional Delegates should understand beyond any doubt that when they are elected to their positions, their constituents expect them to represent their Region's views for the entirety of their term. If the candidate cannot satisfy this expectation, the Regional

Delegate candidate should make that clear before they are elected to the position. However, given that it is very difficult to tell what will happen six months or a year from the election date, it is unreasonable to ask for an unambiguous time commitment from a Regional Delegate candidate. Such a commitment is asked from the candidate's school on the candidacy declaration form, but exceptions need to be made for unforeseen circumstances. This is why Alternate Delegates are elected along with the Regional Delegates. In the event of a Regional Delegate's unforeseen absence for part or all of a meeting of the HOD, an elected Alternate Delegate should be seated as the Regional Delegate. If such an absence is known in advance of the opening of the House, this situation should be communicated without reservation to the appropriate individual(s).

The situation in which more than half of a Regional Delegation (i.e. 4 of the 6 members of the delegation) will be absent from a part of the HOD meeting may arise. In such a situation, the affected Region should have the opportunity to select emergency replacement using a mechanism of its own determination. Example mechanisms include a full election, an election by the remaining members of the Regional delegation, and selection by the Regional Chair or other Regional official. Each Region should have such a contingency plan in its by-laws. The necessity of replacing temporarily vacant Alternate Delegate seats is not as clear. Holding a special election to add one Alternate Delegate when there are already two Alternate Delegates present seems unnecessary. However, it is certainly not to the Region's detriment to have a mechanism to perform such a replacement. Therefore, the Regions should be encouraged to have a mechanism for temporarily vacant Alternate Delegate positions.

The GC and the HCC should not be involved in this process since it would be a conflict of interest. The GC and HCC members represent the MSS as a whole; the Regional Delegates represent their Regions. Keeping these two interests separate is the best way to protect against the misrepresentation of the Regions, e.g. by the selection of someone from Region A to be seated for a Delegate from Region B. As detailed below, these two interests should also be kept separate in the candidacy for the two positions; Regional Delegates should not be allowed to run for MSS Delegate or Alternate Delegate.

Candidates for this replacement position should be held to the same candidacy standards as candidates for Regional Delegate. These standards include being a member of the AMA, a medical student at a school in the affected Region, and having permission to serve from the student's school and State delegation. Since these stipulations will only be invoked in an emergency situation, all deadlines applicable to Regional Delegate candidates should be waived. In order for this replacement format to work, all absences should be known as far in advance of the HOD as possible. Here we reiterate that all absences should be communicated to the appropriate individual(s) without shame or criticism as soon as they are learned.

Reorganization and Coordination

This report contains within it a number of recommendations that are best coordinated at the Regional level. These recommendations include the assigning of Regional Delegates to different reference committees, the coordination of replacing seated Regional

Delegates with present Alternate Delegates, the act of taking attendance for the HOD meetings, the coordination of the selection of a replacement delegate, and the mentorship and orientation of inexperienced Regional Delegates. Unless a specific person in each Region is assigned this task, the MSS will surely have less than our maximum voting power on the HOD floor. Theoretically, existing Regional leadership, e.g. Regional Chairs, could serve in this coordinating capacity. However, a number of these responsibilities will need to be discharged during the HOD and it would be unreasonable to ask the Regional Chairs to be present for the entire HOD. That responsibility can only be required of the Regional Delegates. Therefore, through a mechanism of its own choosing, each Region should appoint a member of its Regional delegation to the HOD, either a Regional Delegate or an Alternate Delegate, to serve in the capacity of Regional Delegation Chair. The responsibilities of the Regional Delegation Chair should include 1) assigning of Regional Delegates to different reference committees, 2) the coordination of replacing seated Regional Delegates with present Alternate Delegates, 3) taking attendance for the HOD meetings, 4) the coordination of the selection of a replacement delegate, 5) the mentorship and orientation of inexperienced Regional Delegates, and 6) any other responsibilities assigned by the Region. The Regional Delegation Chair should not serve as a liaison to the GC or the HCC, since that would add another level between the GC and the Regional delegations, but the GC should see the Regional Delegation Chairs as key collaborators in the execution of MSS strategy.

Eligibility for GC or Council positions.

As part of integrating the Regional Delegates and Alternate Delegates into greater levels of leadership within the MSS, there have been a number of questions regarding eligibility for Council positions and GC positions. It is quite common in the HOD to have Regional Delegates serving dual roles on councils or other leadership positions while serving their term as Regional Delegate. As such, Regional Delegates should be encouraged to run or apply for these MSS leadership positions as their interest allows. One issue, however is should a Regional Delegate be allowed to run for the position of MSS Delegate or Alternate Delegate while serving a term as a Regional Delegate or Alternate. Because it is the job of the MSS Delegate and Alternate Delegate to represent the MSS and not the individual Region, there is an inherent conflict of interest. In addition, because of the involvement of the MSS Delegate and Alternate Delegate in HCC meetings and other Governing Council responsibilities during the HOD meetings there is no guarantee that a Regional Delegate serving in both capacities would be able to meet all obligations to their state as well as the MSS. Finally, while there has been widespread support for the newly appointed Regional Delegates from the states, the policy on student representation will be reviewed in 3 years time. In trying to maintain that good will, it is questionable as to whether allowing a Regional Delegate to run for the position of MSS Delegate or Alternate Delegate and then resign if elected sends the appropriate message of commitment and good will back to the State delegation funding and mentoring that individual.

State Delegations

As shown by the survey results, members of the State delegations were welcoming of the Regional Delegates. This is especially true regarding orientation of the Regional

Delegates to the issues being discussed in the HOD, especially those issues that would be more familiar to physicians in practice than to medical students. The mentorship they provide the Regional Delegates is essential to their full participation in the HOD; continued participation in the State delegation activities should be encouraged. Yet, the support the State delegations provided the Regional Delegates is not always on par with the support provided to their physician delegates. Furthermore, Alternate Delegates are to sit in the seat of the Regional Delegates for whom they are substituting, regardless of their states of origin. In some instances, State delegations were not welcoming of Alternate Delegates from other states. Solutions to these two problems include working for mandatory funding for the Regional Delegates and independent funding and seating for the Regional Delegates. These alternatives are not acceptable because they would distance the Regional Delegates from the mentorship provided by the physician members of the State delegations. However, Regional Delegates should be recognized as full delegates to the HOD. We believe that these two problems can be resolved with increased enforcement of existing policy. Board of Trustees Report 19 (I-00) includes language strongly encouraging, but not requiring, funding of the Regional Delegates by their respective State delegations. It also states that only Alternate Delegates from the given Region can sit for a Delegate from that Region. By extension, the Alternate Delegate and the Delegate need not be from the same state, only from the same Region. State delegations leaders should be fully aware of these two conditions.

Even though existing policy is adequate, we should continue to work for improvement of the circumstances surrounding the Regional Delegates. First, Regional Delegates should know in advance if they will receive at least some modicum of financial assistance in the discharge of their duties and State delegations should be willing to make a firm commitment to that end. Second, in addition to recognizing that Alternate Delegates may come from different states than the Regional Delegates, State delegations should be willing to extend an invitation to the Alternate Delegates to caucus with them. Conversely, Alternate Delegates should make every effort to get to know the members of the State delegations with whom they may be seated. This type of networking may happen casually at receptions, rather than formally at caucuses. While some Regions have already chosen to resolve this particular problem by teaming up their Regional Delegates and Alternates, this need not be a model followed by all Regions. While guaranteeing a predictable method of substitution, doing so limits the flexibility provided by having three alternate delegates. It also compromises the idea that the Regional Delegates speak for the Region, rather than for specific states within that Region. That is the flexibility and representation we are trying to preserve by suggesting the reorganization of the Regional Delegates into Regional Delegations with Delegation Chairs at their heads. We believe that, with a little more effort by all of the parties involved, the issues that arise because of the Regional Delegates and Alternates being from different states will be minimized.

Regional Leadership

It is quite clear that we can only have good Regional Delegates if we have strong Regions with strong Regional leadership. It is incumbent on all of our Regions to develop that leadership as soon as possible. We continue to encourage the Regions and each member

of the AMA-MSS to take full advantage of the support provided by the AMA and cultivate the leaders that will be needed to keep filling the HOD with strong Regional Delegates.

Strong Regions in the future will help avoid the problems experienced in the most recent Regional Delegate election cycle, where a number of Regions did not have enough candidates to elect a full complement of Regional Delegates as of the Candidate filing deadline. However, there can be no guarantee that such a situation will not arise again in the future. Therefore, we encourage each Region to develop a contingency plan in such a situation. Such a plan should include a mechanism for nominating candidates from the floor and for the fair treatment of such candidates in the ensuing elections. We strongly encourage each of these contingency plans to include language such that the floor nominated candidates must have approval from their schools and State delegations and separate elections for the floor nominees from the candidates who filed for the office by the announced deadline.

While experienced leadership is often the best leadership, stagnancy in the leadership can both discourage new ideas and new ways of thinking about the issues and disenfranchise newcomers to the process. Your Committee on Long Range Planning considered the issue of term limits for the Regional Delegates, but it could not come to a consensus. There are persuasive arguments on both sides of that issue. We encourage each Region to consider the issue of term limits for Regional Delegates and come to a conclusion for itself.

Conclusions

With a year of expanded student representation in the HOD completed, a number of goals have been accomplished and a number of issues have been raised. Your Regional Delegates were instrumental in compelling the HOD to establish strong policy on a number of issues close to the core of the MSS, including Residency Working Conditions, the Clinical Skills Assessment Examination, and Student Debt. In addition, the student voice was heard on critical AMA reorganizational issues and so-called "membership issues" for the physicians, such as Medicare reimbursement cuts and Medical Liability Reform. With a year completed, we now know how to improve the performance of the MSS in the HOD. We hope that this report has been informative and that our suggestions will be fruitful in the years to come. In light of this report, we recommend the following:

Recommendations

Your Governing Council propose that the following recommendations be adopted:

1. That our AMA-MSS continue to distribute Procedures of the House of Delegates and Guide to the House of Delegates and a welcome letter to the Regional Delegates and Alternate Delegates.

2. That our AMA-MSS develop and distribute to the Regional Delegates and Alternate Delegates a Regional Delegate Schedule of mandatory and suggested meetings before and during the Annual and Interim meetings of the House of Delegates.
3. That our AMA-MSS eliminate Regional Delegate and Alternate Delegate responsibilities during the Thursday of the opening of the MSS Assembly.
4. That our AMA-MSS leadership actively increase the inclusion of the Regional Delegates and Alternate Delegates in its discussions on policy issues.
5. That our AMA-MSS send Regional Delegates and Alternate Delegates electronic copies of the House Coordinating Committee Resolution Reports prior to the opening of the MSS Assembly.
6. That our AMA-MSS encourage House Coordinating Committee members to attend as much of the House of Delegates meetings as possible.
7. That our AMA-MSS continue to study reorganizing the AMA-MSS House Coordinating Committee to increase efficiency and coordination with the Regional Delegates and Alternate Delegates.
8. That our AMA-MSS modify the MSS Internal Operating Procedure to establish the position of Regional Delegation Chair per the following language of this report: Through a mechanism of its own choosing, each region should appoint a member of its regional delegation to the HOD, either a Regional Delegate or an Alternate Delegate, to serve in the capacity of Regional Delegation Chair. The responsibilities of the Regional Delegation Chair should include 1) assigning of Regional Delegates to different reference committees, 2) the coordination of replacing seated Regional Delegates with present Alternate Delegates, 3) taking attendance for the HOD meetings, 4) the execution of the Region's plan to select a replacement Delegate, 5) the mentorship and orientation of inexperienced Regional Delegates, and 6) any other responsibilities assigned by the Region.
9. That our AMA-MSS develop a mentorship program for newly elected Regional Delegates and Alternate Delegates and experienced Regional Delegates and Alternate Delegates, House Coordinating Committee members, and members of the Governing Council similar to the "Big Sib." programs run at many Medical Schools.
10. That our AMA-MSS encourage assigning Regional Delegates and Alternate Delegates to separate House of Delegates Reference Committees, as is currently done with House Coordinating Committee members.

11. That our AMA-MSS communicate to the State delegation chairs gratitude for the mentorship provided by members of the State delegations to the Regional Delegates and Alternate Delegates and a reminder that funding of Regional Delegates is encouraged and that Alternate Delegates from a given Region may not be from the same state as the Regional Delegates.
12. That our AMA-MSS communicate support for increased contact between the State delegations of the Regional Delegates and all of the Alternate Delegates from the given Region.
13. That Regional Delegates and Regional Alternate Delegates be prohibited from declaring candidacy for MSS Delegate or MSS Alternate Delegate until they have completed their Regional Delegate or Alternate Delegate term. Regional Delegates and Regional Alternate Delegates shall not be prohibited from seeking other MSS Governing Council positions or AMA or AMA-MSS Council or Committee positions while serving their terms as Regional Delegate or Alternate Delegate and that the MSS Internal Operating Procedure be changed accordingly.
14. That the AMA-MSS, pursuant to the AMA-MSS IOP VII.C.1, require each region to submit a detailed plan on filling positions of Regional Delegate in the event that for any reason whatever these positions become temporarily or permanently (i.e. until the end of the term) vacant and that the AMA-MSS not certify any of the Regional Delegates from a Region that has not submitted this plan.
15. That in the event of a Regional Delegate not being able to fulfill his or her duties, the Alternate Delegate shall assume the position of Regional Delegate and be seated with the state which had provided support for the individual when he or she was Alternate Delegate and that the AMA-MSS work with the AMA-HOD Office of the Speaker to that end.
16. That our AMA-MSS encourage its Regions to develop a contingency plan for nominating candidates for Regional Delegate from the floor in the situation that there are not enough candidates to properly fill all of the Regional Delegate and Alternate Delegate seats and that our AMA-MSS develop model Regional Bylaws to that effect. Candidates for this emergency replacement position should be held to the same candidacy standards as candidates for Regional Delegate excepting that all deadlines applicable to the Regional Delegate candidates shall be waived and that our AMA-MSS develop model Regional Bylaws to that effect. Upon election, the candidate must submit the required paperwork, since the position cannot be certified until such paperwork is submitted.
17. That our AMA-MSS encourage its Regions to consider term limits for its

Regional Delegates and Alternate Delegates and adopt additional Regional Bylaws after due consideration.

Appendix A 2002 Annual Meeting Survey

Students in the House Coordination/Orientation Survey for A-02

Select the one title that best describes your role at AMA-HOD A-02: Regional Delegate HCC Member

- 1a. How many House of Delegates meetings (Annual or Interim) have you attended including A-02?
- 1b. How many AMA-MSS Assembly meetings (Annual or Interim) have you attended including A-02?
2. On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the most, how involved did you feel you were during A-02?
3. On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being a very positive rating, please rate your overall experience as a Regional Delegate/Alternate Delegate? (N/A for HCC members)
 - 4a. What did you like about the HCC orientation sessions? These sessions were held on Thursday before the opening of the AMA-MSS Assembly.
 - 4b. What did you dislike about the HCC orientation sessions?
 - 4c. What did you like about the HCC Caucuses held during the HOD?
 - 4d. What did you dislike about the HCC Caucuses held during the HOD?
- 5a. What did you like about the Speaker's orientation session? This meeting was held by the Speaker and the Vice-Speaker of the HOD on Saturday, after the opening of the House. (N/A for HCC members)
- 5b. What did you dislike about the Speaker's orientation session? (N/A for HCC members)
6. Did your state medical association provide you with any orientation to the HOD? If so, in what way and was it helpful?
7. Did you look over the Delegates Handbook prior to arriving at the meeting? If so, was it useful in getting yourself oriented to the HOD? This handbook was sent to all Regional Delegates/Alternate Delegates in a mailing from our MSS Delegate/Alternate Delegate prior to the HOD.
8. In what way were your interactions with other Regional Delegates/Alternate Delegates useful in helping you understand your role as a Regional Delegate/Alternate Delegate or HCC member?
- 9a. Did you feel that you had sufficient opportunity to discuss student related resolutions with fellow Delegates/Alternate Delegates and members of the Governing Council before the opening of the HOD?
- 9b. Did you feel that you had sufficient opportunity to discuss student related resolutions with fellow Delegates/Alternate Delegates and members of the Governing Council during the HOD?
- 10a. Do you think it would be useful for the GC to communicate clearly defined goals rather than specific resolution language regarding the student related resolutions to the Regional Delegates/Alternates prior to and during the HOD?
- 10b. Do you think it would be useful for the GC to appoint a "point person" for each Region who would be responsible for coordinating the Delegates/Alternate Delegates within that Region?
- 10c. Do you think it would be useful to hold the HCC orientation on Friday during the AMA-MSS Assembly rather than on Thursday before the opening of the Assembly?
- 10d. Do you think it would be useful to have HCC members on the HOD floor during the votes on the resolutions?
- 10e. Do you think it would be useful to have mini-HCC caucuses at the start of lunch on each day of the HCC to debrief the morning's debates?
- 10f. Do you have any other specific suggestions for the GC for improving the experience of being a Regional Delegate/Alternate Delegate.

Appendix B 2002 Interim Meeting Survey

Students in the House Survey for I-02

- 1a. How many House of Delegates meetings (Annual or Interim) have you attended including A-02?
- 1b. How many AMA-MSS Assembly meetings (Annual or Interim) have you attended including A-02?
2. On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the most, how involved did you feel you were during A-02?
3. On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being a very positive rating, please rate your overall experience as a Regional Delegate/Alternate Delegate? (N/A for HCC members)
 - 4a. What did you like about the HCC orientation sessions? These sessions were held on Thursday before the opening of the AMA-MSS Assembly.
 - 4b. What did you dislike about the HCC orientation sessions?
 - 4c. What did you like about the HCC Caucuses held during the HOD?
 - 4d. What did you dislike about the HCC Caucuses held during the HOD?
5. Did your state delegation provide you with any orientation to the HOD? If so, in what way and was it helpful?
6. Did you look over the Delegates Handbook prior to arriving at the meeting? If so, was it useful in getting yourself oriented to the HOD? This handbook was sent to all Regional Delegates/Alternate Delegates in a mailing prior to the HOD.
7. In what way were your interactions with other Regional Delegates/Alternate Delegates useful in helping you understand your role as a Regional Delegate/Alternate Delegate or HCC member?
- 8a. Did you feel that you had sufficient opportunity to discuss student related resolutions with fellow Delegates/Alternate Delegates and members of the Governing Council before the opening of the HOD?
- 8b. Did you feel that you had sufficient opportunity to discuss student related resolutions with fellow Delegates/Alternate Delegates and members of the Governing Council during the HOD?
- 9a. Do you think it the GC did an effective job communicating clearly defined goals to the Regional Delegates/Alternates prior to and during the HOD? If yes, then did this work out for you?
- 9b. Do you think the GC effectively appointed a "point person" for each Region who would be responsible for coordinating the Delegates/Alternate Delegates within that Region? If yes, then did this work out for you?
- 9c. Do you think it was effective to have one HCC member assigned to each Region?
- 9d. Do you think it was effective to have HCC members on the HOD floor during the votes on the resolutions?
- 9e. Based on your experience in New Orleans, do you have any other specific suggestions for the GC for improving the experience of being a Regional Delegate/Alternate Delegate.

Appendix C Regional Delegates Welcome Letter

Dear newly elected Regional Delegate/Alternate Delegate,

Congratulations on being elected to your new position. You are part of a select group of medical students entrusted to fully represent the views of the future of medicine in the AMA House of Delegates.

Being a Regional Delegate/Alternate Delegate to the HOD is a lot like being a Delegate/Alternate Delegate to the MSS Assembly. Your primary responsibility is to present the views of your constituents to the body to which you were elected. Whereas Assembly members were elected by the medical students at their respective institutions, your constituents are the medical students of your Region. As such, it is very important that you keep an open line of communication with your Region whether that is through personal appearances at your Regional meetings or in a more virtual fashion by phone or over the Internet. This will help you understand what they would like out see out of the HOD and help them understand the details of what happens in the HOD and how it affects them. Please make every effort to do this in person at your Regional meetings.

The format of a HOD meeting is very similar to the format of an Assembly meeting, from the use of Reference Committees to the use of Davis" Rules of Parliamentary Procedures. You will find that you are better versed in the nuts and bolts of the HOD than most other new Delegates/Alternate Delegates because of your experience with the Assembly. There will be an orientation packet sent to you before the Annual meeting. This packet will provide more details about the HOD. Please familiarize yourself with that packet when you receive it. Please note that the HOD meeting starts on a Saturday afternoon and continues until noon on the following Wednesday for the Interim meeting and noon on the following Thursday for the Annual meeting. Please make every effort to be at the meeting for its duration.

Each meeting of the HOD includes innumerable issues of importance to the AMA membership, catalogued in the HOD Handbook, affectionately nicknamed "The Brick." It is nearly impossible to be an expert in every issue that will be discussed. Therefore, although it is not required, we highly encourage you to seek out the advice of your fellow Delegates/Alternate Delegates and other interested individuals. The members of your own Regional Delegation will be very useful in that they can be places that you cannot be, e.g. at a Reference Committee when you are at a different Reference Committee. Assuming that you keep communication open with your fellow Regional Delegates/Alternate Delegates, this will almost allow you to be at two places at once, as you will be asked to do at times during the meeting. A second essential source of support before and during the meeting is your State delegation. The other delegates in your State delegation have been around the HOD for a long time, and that historical perspective will help you understand the politics of the HOD. Contact your State delegation as soon as possible to let them know that you have been elected to sit with them in the HOD and that you would like to know how best to be integrated into their activities. We have not heard of a State delegation that is not happy to have a student among their ranks. Finally, your GC and the House Coordinating Committees (HCC) selected for each meeting will provide you with an invaluable source of information. The HCC produces preliminary opinions on each of the resolutions in the HOD and organizes MSS testimony on all of the resolutions that are of specific interest to the MSS. The HCC meetings are held during the Assembly meeting prior to the HOD. Please make every effort to attend these meetings to learn about the MSS priorities in that meeting of the HOD. While we do not vote as a medical student block, your GC will ask you to support them in their efforts to establish MSS interests in the HOD. Your GC will hold MSS caucuses during the HOD to keep you informed on its top priorities. The purpose of these meetings is to keep you informed about the GC's arguments for pursuing its goals and to allow the GC to anticipate some of the objections that may come from the State delegations. While your State delegation meetings should take priority, since this is the best venue to deal with any objections, please make every effort to attend the MSS caucuses during the HOD to keep yourself up to date on the MSS priorities at that HOD meeting.

Again, congratulations on being selected to be your Region's Delegate/Alternate Delegate. We look forward to working with you to make this a great year. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.