

Governing Council Position Guide

As a member of the AMA Medical Student Section (MSS) Governing Council, there are a handful of expectations of everyone. In order to facilitate the business of the section, it is vital that Governing Council (GC) members participate in prompt and regular communications with each other. This includes using the GC listserv, participating in conference calls, etc. GC members will participate in the selection of Convention Committees, Standing Committees, Councilors, Liaisons, and any other positions appointed by the MSS. GC members are expected to participate in GC Subcommittees as needed. Each GC member will serve as a liaison to an MSS Committee. As needed, GC members may be asked to act in lieu of the Chair as the official representative of the MSS to outside organizations.

[Chair, Chair-Elect, Immediate Past Chair](#)

[Vice Chair](#)

[Delegate, Alternate Delegate](#)

[Speaker and Vice Speaker](#)

[At-Large Officer](#)

Chair

The Chair oversees the council, provides direction for the section's initiatives, and represents the section. As such, the chair is held accountable for the section's progress and is responsible for fostering accountability in the MSS. The Chair is responsible for being the spokesperson for the section. The Chair represents the Section to other segments of the AMA structure and to outside organizations.

1) Spokesperson

- a) Member communications: The goal of these specific expectations is that the Chair provides the general membership with a strong understanding of the activities of the GC and the MSS
 - i) Monitor changes to the MSS website
 - ii) Provide official information via listservs
 - iii) Provide content for the eVoice Newsletter
 - iv) Provide a column in AMA-MSS Voice Newsletter
- b) External Communications
 - i) Maintain relationships with other organizations (e.g. – medical student, resident, other health professionals, etc.) and develop coalitions for advocacy initiatives according to the Strategic Plan
 - ii) Develop and maintain contacts in news and health media to promote AMA and MSS advocacy priorities
 - iii) Promote AMA-MSS activities and projects to local and national media outlets
- c) AMA Communications
 - i) Maintain weekly communications with MSS Staff
 - ii) Read Committee and Task Force listservs
 - iii) Deliver keynote addresses at national meetings
 - iv) Attend all regional meetings to represent the GC
 - v) Represent the MSS in appropriate forums
 - vi) Communicate and plan with RFS, SMS, BOT, and Councils as appropriate
 - vii) Represent the MSS to all relevant AMA staff
 - viii) Work with AMA Staff to improve the MSS budget
 - ix) Serve on the joint-sections Membership Task Force
 - x) Be in regular communication with other section chairs in order to promote joint programming at both the national and local levels, and to develop joint approaches to recruitment initiatives

2) AMA Governance

- a) Action Plan and Agenda
 - i) Refine and implement a 1-year action plan for the MSS as developed during the Chair-Elect period with input from new GC members
 - ii) Work with MSS Staff to develop agendas for all GC meetings and conference calls
 - iii) Ensure that MSS and GC remain focused on prioritized goals
 - iv) Ensure that GC Action Items submitted by members on the MSS website are followed up on and acted upon in a timely manner
 - v) Update the GC Action Item grid regularly
 - vi) Coordinate the activities of GC Subcommittees and ensure that appropriate work is being conducted by the GC between meetings
 - vii) Ensure that discussions over the GC listserv are focused, and provide regular e-mail summaries to the MSS concerning the GC's stand on current discussions

- 3) Liaison to Region Chairs
 - a) Maintain regular contact with region chairs
 - b) Ensure that region chairs are adhering to IOP expectations
 - c) Work with region chairs to identify chapters in need of excess support and resources
 - d) Be a liaison between region chairs and AMA Staff (particularly membership staff) so that together they can identify and work with emerging chapters
 - e) Work with region chairs to ensure that listservs are well-populated and up-to-date

[Return to the Top](#)

Vice Chair

The MSS Vice Chair assists the Chair with the management of the MSS and acts as the liaison to the AMA-MSS Committees and MSS-appointed leaders. In this role, the Vice Chair oversees the major mechanisms for the implementation of the MSS agenda.

- 1) Communication
 - a) Maintain frequent communication with the MSS Chair
 - b) Organize MSS Committees, Task Forces, and other leadership listservs
 - i) Encourage information sharing and collaboration on listservs
 - ii) Promote and maintain 2-way communication between the GC and MSS leaders
 - iii) Participate on all MSS listservs
 - c) Coordinate responses to GC Action Items submitted and ensure that the GC responds to and acts on each item as fast and as transparently as possible
 - d) Have regular communication with the MSS Councilors and appointed national leaders (including but not limited to the GRAF and student representatives to the AMA Councils, WPC, MAC, NRMP, NBME, LCME, AMPAC, and AMAF)
 - i) Provide introductions and guides to these leaders
 - ii) Request updates following meetings using the report template
 - iii) Ask for feedback regarding the MSS agenda, strategy and implementation
 - iv) Bring these leaders up to speed regarding GC decisions and discussions on topics relating to their positions
 - v) Encourage these leaders to present their work and receive feedback from the section at regional and national meetings
 - vi) Encourage these leaders to compose pieces for eVoice and other publications
 - vii) Whenever possible, encourage the GC to seek the advice of these leaders
 - viii) When appropriate, ensure that these leaders are in regular contact and discussion with the appropriate MSS Committees that mirror their positions
 - e) MSS Committees
 - i) Help each committee chair develop an agenda for the year that helps to accomplish the goals of the MSS as outlined in the 3-year Strategic Plan and the 1-year Action Plan
 - ii) Encourage committees to develop their own projects in addition to MSS agenda items
 - iii) Facilitate participation, activism, member communications and leadership development
 - iv) Report back to the GC regularly about the progress and success of the committees
 - v) Work closely with writers to ensure that reports are being written and submitted in a timely manner
 - vi) Keep committees aware of the need to have certain materials approved by relevant AMA bodies before they can be disseminated widely
 - vii) Coordinate large projects between different committees
 - viii) Get feedback from GC committee liaisons and ensure that GC members assigned to each committee are staying up-to-date in committee activities

[Return to the Top](#)

Delegate

The Delegate and Alternate Delegate are the official representatives of the MSS to the AMA House of Delegates (HOD). They are responsible for promoting or defending MSS positions on issues discussed in the HOD. Between meetings, they are responsible for orienting the Regional Delegates (RDs) and soliciting their help in conducting MSS business in the AMA HOD. The **Delegate** has the following specific responsibilities.

1) Meeting Duties

- a) Represent the Section in discussions with various state and specialty society delegations and when testifying on the floor of the House of Delegates and at Reference Committee hearings
- b) Represent policies of the AMA Medical Student Section as cited in the Digest of Actions when preparing positions and providing testimony where such policy exists. In the event that no such policy exists, the Delegate is encouraged to vote his/her conscience but not to testify on the floor
- c) Act as the final arbiter of AMA MSS policy on a given HOD issue during national meetings
- d) When appropriate and feasible, the Delegate and Alternate Delegate will coordinate strategy with the Governing Council. If controversial positions are to be taken prior to an HOD meeting that require interpretation of existing policy, they will be discussed with the entire GC and voted on if time permits.
- e) Will represent the AMA MSS on the Resolutions Committee of the AMA HOD

2) Meeting Preparation

- a) Plan MSS strategies for the HOD prior to each meeting
 - i) Work with RDs to evaluate potential state alliances on particular issues
 - ii) Discuss with councilors as allowed by the Vice Chair
 - iii) Interact with various branches of AMA Staff as needed on an issue-by-issue basis
- b) Lead the information gathering effort and direct testimony-writing both on MSS resolutions being forwarded to the AMA HOD and on all other AMA resolutions on which the MSS has policy and wishes to testify. The Alternate Delegate, Regional Delegates and the House Coordinating Committee will assist the Delegate in this role

3) Non-Meeting Duties

- a) Prepare a pre-meeting email to be included in the eVoice and/or sent to all available MSS listservs regarding the anticipated items of interest in the HOD and how students can become more involved in the HOD process at the upcoming meeting
- b) Report back to the AMA MSS Governing Council and the AMA MSS about important issues that have been voted on (or will be voted on) by the AMA House of Delegates, especially those concerning medical students
- c) Follow up on both resolutions adopted by the AMA MSS and on resolutions affecting medical students that have been adopted by the AMA HOD, ensuring that they are acted upon in a timely manner. This includes sending a post-meeting email to all available MSS listservs in order to brief those members who were not able to attend the HOD meeting on items relevant to the Section's interests
- d) Share in the tasks of encouraging, training, supporting and coordinating both Regional Delegates and House Coordinating Committee members

[Return to the Top](#)

Alternate Delegate

The Delegate and Alternate Delegate are the official representatives of the MSS to the AMA House of Delegates (HOD). They are responsible for promoting or defending MSS positions on issues discussed in the HOD. Between meetings, they are responsible for orienting the Regional Delegates (RDs) and soliciting their help in conducting MSS business in the AMA HOD. The **Delegate** has the following specific responsibilities.

- 1) Assist the Delegate in preparing testimony for the HOD as well as speak for the section in the HOD with the permission of the Delegate
- 2) Work with the House Coordinating Committee both before and during the HOD meeting to ensure that all MSS resolutions being forwarded are well-researched and that testimony is prepared in advance by the HCC. The Alternate Delegate shall be in charge of the HCC and should work to orient it to its role and ensure that members of the HCC have the resources to fully research the testimony for each resolution
- 3) Work closely with region chairs and individual chapters to educate members about the various mechanisms within the AMA, including resolution writing, eliciting change in the AMA and ensuring that members' concerns and desires for new or updated AMA policies are addressed
- 4) Work with individual prospective resolution authors to ensure that they complete the resolution checklist, and make certain that the most effective mechanism to achieve the author's desired effect is through their resolution
- 5) Help coordinate resolution writing workshops at local chapters

[Return to the Top](#)

Speaker and Vice Speaker

The Speaker and Vice Speaker assist in programming and preside over two national meetings of the MSS Assembly. They will oversee and enforce campaign rules, as well as organize and lead orientation for new participants at the Assembly Meeting. Except where specifically mentioned, the following duties should be divided between the Speaker and Vice Speaker at their discretion.

1) Meeting Duties

- a) Conduct the Assembly Meetings of the AMA-MSS
 - i) Presiding Officer
 - (1) Act as THE parliamentary authority
 - (2) Keep track of speaking times
 - (3) Maintain the flow of the meeting
 - ii) Non-Presiding Officer
 - (1) Assist the Presiding Officer
 - (2) Keep a record of the Assembly proceedings for the Logistics Committee and MSS Staff
- b) Responsible for Knowing
 - i) Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure by Sturgis
 - ii) MSS Internal Operating Procedures (IOPs)
 - iii) AMA Bylaws as they pertain to the AMA-MSS
- c) Plan and Coordinate the national meetings of the MSS Assembly
 - i) Convention Committees
 - (1) Provide orientation for the committees
 - (2) Set up listservs for each Committee and maintain communication
 - (3) Provide guidance for each Committee Chair
 - ii) Orient new MSS members to parliamentary procedure (with the assistance of the Rules and Parliamentary Procedures committees)
 - iii) Develop and present initial plans for the subsequent national meeting at the first GC meeting after the prior national meeting
 - (1) Solicit programming ideas from the membership
 - (2) Assess meeting space needs to communicate to MSS Staff
 - (3) Develop a list of potential keynote speakers as needed
 - (4) Provide programming of interest to non-voting participants
 - (5) Provide recognized groups with the time, space and opportunity to hold forums and caucuses
 - (6) Allow for a mechanism for the section to learn from national leaders, such as councilors, via roundtable discussions
 - (7) Provide for a forum to orient newly elected leaders to their positions
 - (8) Provide forums for MSS members to interact with RFS members in both a social and professional environment
 - iv) Campaign Rules
 - (1) Provide rules to candidates and members well in advance of every meeting
 - (2) Within 2 weeks after the deadline for applications, communicate with all candidates and advise them of campaign rules and speech guidelines
 - (3) Meet with all candidates before every national meeting to orient them to campaign rules
 - (4) Investigate reported violations of IOPs with the assistance of the Rules Committee
 - (5) Adapt meeting plans as needed to accommodate candidates running from the floor
 - (6) Develop a regional meeting visitation schedule for candidates to announce themselves

- (7) If a debate is to be held, craft the rules of the debate, with input from the GC, before the deadline for applications and distribute them to the membership and candidates
- (8) Maintain strict confidence for questions to be asked
- v) Communication
 - (1) Maintain regular communication with membership about important meeting information, including deadlines
 - (2) Educate membership about rules of parliamentary procedure
 - (3) Communicate regularly with each other

2) Non-meeting duties

- a) Assist the Chair with parliamentary advice based on the standing rules of the GC, the MSS IOPs, and parliamentary procedure
- b) Facilitate the selection of MSS-appointed positions by collecting the input of all GC members and collating the data into a form easily used by all GC members (i.e. – spreadsheet)

Vice Speaker should additionally:

- 1) Serve on the joint sections Membership Task Force
- 2) Work with the At-Large Officer and chapter leadership to facilitate recruitment events at emerging chapters
- 3) Plan events at the Annual Meeting to orient new recruiters to MSSOP resources as well as work with MSSOP Staff to orient recruiters to the recruitment process
- 4) Work with the MSSOP Staff to identify chapters appropriate for the MSSOP Guerilla Recruitment initiative and work to orient these selected recruiters to the guerilla initiative at the annual meeting.

[Return to the Top](#)

At-Large Officer

The At-Large Officer's major duty is to promote MSS advocacy issues. As such, the Officer serves as the coordinator of the National Service project. The Officer is also charged with promoting membership recruitment activities and other important goals of the Section.

- 1) Communication: Primary Liaison Responsibilities
 - a) Community Service Standing Committee and the Community Service Convention Committees, which will develop service projects for students at schools and at the national meetings
 - b) AMA Foundation and AMA Foundation Student Board member to promote co-programming with the Foundation
 - c) AMA Alliance to promote co-programming the Alliance
- 2) Community Service
 - a) Coordinate the selection of a new national service project (NSP) if in the appropriate year
 - b) Ensure that the selected NSP is implemented on campuses throughout the country
 - c) Provide chapters with resources and instruction regarding the implementation of the NSP and other service projects on their campuses
 - d) Coordinate the service project event at the national meeting
 - e) Attempt to promote our service project at both local chapters and our national meetings to the media
- 3) Advocacy: The Officer will develop and promote MSS advocacy goals. Collaboration with the Delegate, COLA and the AMPAC SAB is important to this process. Attendance at the AMA Student, Resident and Fellow Lobby Day is mandatory. The Officer should be in regular contact with the GRAF in order to coordinate MSS lobbying efforts for Lobby Day and, if possible, to provide input to the Lobby Day agenda
- 4) Section Development
 - a) Help assist struggling chapters with projects, link them to stronger chapters and promote mentoring
 - b) Promote the use of service projects for individual chapters
- 5) Membership
 - a) Serve on the joint sections Membership Task Force
 - b) Work with region chairs and the Membership Staff to identify emerging chapters in need of excess support and resources for recruitment efforts
 - c) Work with individual chapters to help coordinate and plan recruitment events on campus
 - d) Work to coordinate the MSSOP Guerilla initiative between staff and local chapter leadership. The officer should be in regular contact with chapter recruiters from the orientation of new recruiters to the initiative in June and continue through the beginning of the academic year when recruitment events are held
- 6) Chapter Development
 - a) Ensure that chapters are aware of the many resources available to them including Chapter Involvement Grants, chapter guidebooks, past successful programming, etc...
 - b) Work with chapters to develop innovative programs at their schools
 - c) Help coordinate joint events by multiple chapters in the same locale, particularly concerning large service projects

[Return to the Top](#)

Chair-Elect

The Chair-Elect has the unique experience of joining a Governing Council after it has worked together for six months. The two primary goals of the Chair-Elect should be to learn about roles of GC members as they perform their duties (especially the Chair) and to develop a draft Action Plan for the new Governing Council for implementation after s/he is elected. The Chair-Elect is encouraged to take on some GC tasks and projects during his/her term.

- 1) Communication
 - a) Meet all relevant AMA Staff (MSS and otherwise) as soon as possible
 - i) Discuss responsibilities of Staff and their relationships to the GC
 - ii) Become aware of priorities of key AMA divisions with which the MSS communicates (e.g. – Government Affairs, Governance, Membership, Marketing, etc.)
 - iii) Become familiar with the MSS budget
 - b) Establish communication with the Chair-Elect of the RFS
 - c) Have at least two phone or in-person discussions with each GC member
 - i) Discuss the success of current GC policies and strategies
 - ii) Discuss current responsibilities of each GC position and how they could be improved
 - iii) Discuss each member's relationship to Staff and his or her suggestions for improvement
 - d) Discuss with current region chairs and Councilors to get feedback regarding how they could see their relationship with the GC improved
- 2) Planning
 - a) Develop a 1-year Action Plan
 - i) Goals and Objectives for the year
 - ii) Expectations for new Governing Council
- 3) Transition
 - a) Take on at least one GC project with the consent of the GC and Chair
 - b) Assist Chair with his/her duties as deemed appropriate by the Chair
 - c) Communicate weekly with the Chair
- 4) Membership
 - a) Serve on the joint sections Membership Task Force
 - b) Work with MSS Membership Staff and region chairs to identify emerging chapters in need of increased assistance or resources
 - c) Work to familiarize incoming chapter leadership with resources available to them including Chapter Involvement Grants, chapter handbooks and chapter project guides
 - d) Work with students at new chapters to establish their chapter and familiarize themselves with the guides for starting a chapter
 - e) Work to orient new recruitment chairs to the MSSOP resources and Guerilla initiative

[Return to the Top](#)

Immediate Past Chair

The Immediate Past Chair serves as a consultant to the Governing Council during his/her six-month term. When possible, and desired by the Chair, the Immediate Past Chair should continue to bring closure to projects started under his/her tenure as Chair.

- 1) Communication
 - a) Provide input and feedback for GC when consulted
 - b) Sit around and grumble about how things were “in his/her day”
- 2) Advocacy
 - a) Complete any unfinished projects as deemed appropriate by the Chair

[Return to the Top](#)