Draft Proposal to Amend the SSS Standing Rules and Procedures

Distributed to SSS specialty delegation chairs for review and feedback ahead of an anticipated vote at the November interim meeting. This proposal has been reviewed and endorsed by the SSS Governing Council; please share with your delegation and route any feedback back to the Governing Council.

1. Purpose

This memo proposes that the Specialty and Service Society (SSS) amend its Standing Rules and Procedures to create a Speaker position — elected to preside over the discussion of house business (resolutions and board/council reports) at the SSS's Annual and Interim meetings. This duty currently sits with existing SSS leadership under Section VII.G; the rest of the leaders' roles would remain unaffected. A dedicated Speaker for this purpose is a structure already in place in several AMA Sections. This proposal has been discussed and endorsed by the SSS Governing Council, and is now being shared with specialty delegations for review before a vote anticipated at the November interim meeting.

2. Background

Under the current SSS Standing Rules and Procedures (Section V, Leaders), the SSS leaders are Chair, Chair-Elect, Immediate Past Chair, and Secretary. There is no Speaker position. With this proposal, the Chair is, and would remain, the presiding leader for all SSS meetings (Section VII.E) — that does not change under this proposal. What does change is one specific duty: presiding over discussion of House of Delegates business (resolutions, board and council reports) for AMA HOD meetings (Section VII.G).

The SSS is the largest caucus in the AMA House of Delegates. As its business meetings have grown in size and complexity, the Governing Council has observed that this presiding duty is currently bundled into the automatic Chair-Elect → Chair → Immediate Past Chair succession, rather than assigned to a role focused on parliamentary management.

3. How Other AMA Sections Handle This

A Speaker already exists in several AMA Sections. A few examples:

Section	Presiding / Parliamentary Leader(s)	Term & Relationship to Chair Track
Medical Student Section (MSS)	Speaker and Vice Speaker — preside over the Assembly, rule on parliamentary procedure, oversee campaign/election rules	Elected separately from Chair/Chair-Elect/Immediate Past Chair succession
Resident and Fellow Section (RFS)	Speaker and Vice Speaker — set the business-meeting agenda, preside impartially, oversee campaign rules	One-year terms, elected separately from Chair; Speaker may serve two terms
Young Physicians Section (YPS)	Speaker — presides over deliberations, implements the Assembly agenda, oversees campaign rules	Two-year term, elected separately from Chair/Chair-Elect
Specialty and Service Society (SSS) — current	No Speaker. The Chair presides over all SSS meetings; the Chair-Elect presides only in	Presiding duty is folded into the automatic Chair-Elect

Section	Presiding / Parliamentary Leader(s)	Term & Relationship to Chair Track
	the Chair's absence and separately leads discussion of House business.	→ Chair → Immediate Past Chair succession

The Chair track keeps its advocacy and external-representation role in all of these; the Speaker is elected separately and focuses on presiding. NB: Similar to the YPS, this uses a Speaker only, with no Vice Speaker.

4. Rationale for SSS

- Matches the skill required. Running discussion of house business — resolutions, board/council reports — is a specific parliamentary skill. Not every Chair-Elect/Chair has developed these skills and when they don't, it visibly hampers SSS's ability to function as half of the House, which frustrates members.
- Matches the scale of the SSS caucus. As the largest caucus in the House, this part of the SSS meeting would benefit from a dedicated leader whose sole function is running HOD business well.
- Builds parliamentary continuity. Because the Speaker track would run independently of the one-year Chair rotation, an individual with parliamentary skill and interest could serve (and stand for re-election) across multiple cycles — continuity the current structure does not allow.
- Consistent with AMA norms. A Speaker mirrors the presiding-leader structure of the AMA House of Delegates itself, and of multiple sections — it would not be a novel structure within the AMA, only new to SSS.

5. Design Decisions

A few structural questions were left open in earlier drafts of this proposal. Following discussion among the Governing Council, they've been recommended as follows, and the language in Section 6 reflects these decisions:

- Speaker's term length: two-year term, with eligibility for re-election once (two terms total, four years). This gives a Speaker time to grow into the role — avoiding the disorganization a purely one-year term can invite — while a one-time re-election limit prevents indefinite tenure.
- Governing Council size: grow to nine members by adding the speaker as a fifth leader, alongside the existing four at-large seats— SSS is the largest caucus in the House, and a nine-member Council also avoids tie votes.
- Succession: the speaker is a standalone position, not part of the chair-elect → chair → immediate-past-chair succession. A speaker completing a term who wants to continue serving on the GC would run for an at-large seat through the ordinary nominating process, the same as anyone else — there is no automatic path from speaker into another GC office.

6. Cost Impact

Growing the Governing Council from eight to nine members carries no meaningful cost to SSS. SSS does not subsidize GC member attendance. Adding a Speaker seat is therefore budget-neutral.

7. Proposed Amendment Language (Draft)

Struck-through text = deleted; underlined text = new. This reflects the decisions in Section 5 and is a starting draft for Rules Committee discussion, not final language.

Section V.A (Leaders)

The leaders shall be ~~chair, chair-elect, immediate-past chair, and secretary~~chair, chair-elect, immediate-past chair, secretary, and speaker. The chair-elect shall serve a one-year term and automatically succeed to the office of chair. The chair shall serve a one-year term and automatically succeed to the office of immediate-past chair. The immediate-past chair shall serve a one-year term. The secretary shall serve a one-year term and be eligible for re-election twice. The speaker shall serve a two-year term and be eligible for re-election once.

New Section V — Duties of Speaker

The speaker shall preside during discussion of house business at the annual and interim meetings, as described in Section VII.G, and shall serve as the SSS's reference on matters of procedure for that discussion, consistent with the parliamentarian appointed under Section VII.B. In the speaker's absence, the chair-elect shall preside over that discussion. The speaker shall not be considered part of the chair-elect, chair, and immediate-past-chair succession described in Section V.A.

Section VII.E (Business Meeting — Presiding Leader): no change. The chair remains the presiding leader for all SSS meetings, with the chair-elect presiding in the chair's absence, exactly as today.

Section VII.G (House Business Discussion)

...At the annual and interim meeting, the ~~chair-elect~~ speaker of the SSS will ~~serve as chair during the discussion of~~ preside during discussion of house business. In the speaker's absence, the chair-elect shall preside over this discussion.

Section IV.B (Governing Council): no change. With the leadership now numbering five (chair, chair-elect, immediate-past chair, secretary, speaker) and the four existing at-large seats untouched, the Governing Council grows from eight to nine members without any amendment to this section.

8. Procedural Path Forward

Per Section IX (Amendments) of the SSS Standing Rules and Procedures:

- SSS members must receive at least 30 days' notice of any proposed amendment prior to the SSS meeting at which it will be considered.
- The amendment requires a three-fifths majority vote of members present and voting at a regular or special SSS meeting.
- The amendment must then be approved by the AMA Board of Trustees before it takes effect.

Section VI.B charges the SSS Rules Committee with reviewing the Standing Rules and Procedures and recommending amendments. AMA staff are also confirming separately whether this change additionally requires House of Delegates or BOT approval as a bylaws matter, and what that timeline looks like.

9. Next Steps

This proposal is being distributed to SSS specialty delegation chairs for review and discussion with your respective delegations. Please route any feedback, questions, or concerns back to the SSS Governing Council. We anticipate bringing this to a vote at the November interim meeting, following the 30-day notice and Rules Committee review described in Section 7.

Thank you all for your input so far, and we look forward to your delegations' feedback.