

# Re-envisioning the APA Council as a Diverse Governing Body Designed for Policy Development: Executive Summary (August 2020)

In February 2015, the APA Council of Representatives took a bold step by voting to develop a plan to substantially change its own configuration. That vote followed several years of discussions during which Council initiated the *Good Governance Project* to develop recommendations to bring change to APA governance. Shortly after the 2015 vote, however, an organizational crisis absorbed the Association's attention and other priorities emerged resulting in this change-initiative falling by the wayside.

Given its responsibility under APA's Bylaws to annually report to membership on topics relevant to APA policies and functions, in 2019 the Policy & Planning Board [P&P] developed the report that follows (in the form of Powerpoint briefing slides). The report brings this matter back to Council for deliberation and resolution in the wake of the significant change initiatives stimulated by the APA's new Strategic Plan. Since the report was finalized in March 2020, the world around APA has changed dramatically. There have also been developments within APA and in Council since the attached report was created. While these changes will impact the P&P Board's messaging going forward and may even suggest adjustments to some of the specifics in the proposed new Council structure, the need for change to fit the needs of a new day is as powerful as ever.

The P&P Board believes the time is right for re-engineering APA's policy-making body to improve its capacity to advance the Association's strategic goals while also addressing long-standing concerns about the current configuration of Council. We are advancing a recommendation to move to an Assembly of members elected by the full membership to represent psychology rather than individuals elected to represent APA Divisions or affiliated groups (e.g., State, Provincial, and Territorial Associations; SPTAs).

Assembly members would be elected to represent four foundational elements of psychology; (a) basic and applied science, (b) health services and applied practice, (c) education and training, and (d) public interest/human well-being. Slates within each of these areas would be used to ensure constituent members bring a sufficiently broad perspective to the Assembly's work. A variation on the current "diversity matrix" approach approved by APA Council would be used to populate election slates to ensure diversity in its many forms will be reflected in the new governing body. Attention would be paid within each foundational area to ensure elected members bring skills in communicating and disseminating psychology, in its broadest sense, to the public.

While primarily designed to be representational of all of psychology and focus on the strategic goals of the Association, this plan would reduce the size of APA's policy-making body by roughly 60%. The plan offers recommendations for engaging individual members, Divisions, SPTAs, EMPAs, and other psychology-focused organizations and entities in nominating members to stand for election to the Assembly.

In 2020, the P&P Board is communicating and discussing this proposal with stakeholders throughout the Association. Our goal is to formulate a motion to bring before Council for a vote no later than August 2021. Multiple opportunities for information sharing and collecting feedback to inform refinements to the proposal will be offered prior to that time.

# ***Re-envisioning the APA Council as a Diverse Governing Body Designed for Policy Development***

2019 Annual Report of the Policy & Planning Board

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March 2, 2020

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# Overview

- After an extensive evaluation process, Council voted to overhaul its structure in order to improve its effectiveness (Feb 2015)
- Soon afterwards, progress toward this goal was derailed by an organizational crisis occasioned by the “Independent Review”
- The planned change process was never implemented
- Subsequent annual and five-year reports by the Policy & Planning Board (P&P) highlighted that the problems motivating changes to the structure of Council continue
- P&P has concluded that the stalled process should be restarted and the problems, long-identified, finally addressed

# Overview (continued)

- This report highlights a variety of issues related to the current Council structure including (but not limited to):
  - Size
  - Composition/representation
  - Alignment with the strategic initiatives
  - Structural obstacles to ensuring diversity
- A new structure is proposed that:
  - Aligns with foundational areas of the discipline and profession (including the Association's Board and Committee Structure)
  - Is substantially smaller
  - Provides greater opportunity to address diversity and ensure representation of expertise to promote successful execution of the Strategic Plan

# The 2019 Policy and Planning Board

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# What is the Policy and Planning (P&P) Board?

*The Policy and Planning Board's function shall be the consideration of current and long-range policy. As a continuing body, it shall recommend to the members, Board of Directors and Council such changes in existing policy and such extensions or restrictions of the functions of the Association, its Divisions or State/Provincial Territorial Psychological Associations as are consonant with the purposes of the Association. **The Policy and Planning Board shall report annually by the publication of a report to the membership.** It shall review the structure and function of the Association as a whole in every fifth year and shall make recommendations by written report to Council and by publication to the Association.*

- <https://www.apa.org/about/governance/bdcmte/policy-board>

# Why Address Council Structure Now?

- Optimal implementation of APA's Strategic Plan (<https://www.apa.org/about/apa/strategic-plan/>) will be facilitated by a governing body that represents the diversity of the discipline, profession, and its members.
- Current structure of Council does not ensure that its members (Representatives) provide broad representation of the discipline and the Association's Membership.
  - Most represented units have a single seat, restricting their ability to create slates addressing diversity issues on their own
  - Divisions and SPTAs were not created to reflect a comprehensive and balanced representation of the interests and activities of the Association

# Why Address Council Structure Now?

## (continued)

- While a number of recommendations of the Good Governance Project (<https://www.apa.org/about/governance/good-governance/>) were implemented, the issue of restructuring Council was postponed.
- Given restructuring of the Association and its companion organization, APA Services, Inc (APASI; <https://www.apaservices.org/about>) and adoption of a new strategic plan (<https://www.apa.org/about/apa/strategic-plan/>), the P&P Board felt that the time was ripe to bring forward a proposal to restructure Council.



# Why Address Council Structure Now?

## (continued)

- Recent P&P reports have highlighted ongoing concerns with Council structure. For example, the 2016 Annual Report, “Organizational Challenges, Resilience, and Healing” (<https://www.apa.org/about/governance/bdcmte/2016-policy-report.pdf>)

noted:

- *... those psychologists who believe that the (c)(3) mission of the APA must be focal have had serious concerns about the fact that the major governing body of the APA, the Council of Representatives, has long included individuals representing 501(c)(6) organizations...whose primary interests may not be aligned with what is in the best interests of the APA. (p. 16)*

# Why Address Council Structure Now? (continued)

- Similarly, the most recent P&P Five-Year Report (2016), “Responding to Change in a Challenging Climate” (<https://www.apa.org/about/governance/bdcmte/2016-policy-report.pdf>):
  - *P&P recommends that APA Governance resolve the longstanding gridlock regarding the size, structure, and function of Council. Any new Governance structure that is adopted should be as inclusive as possible and care should be taken to insure full participation of diverse constituencies. If Council continues to be unable to make meaningful changes to the structure, function, and size of governance, the overall health of the organization will suffer. (p. 424)*
- Additionally, prudent financial principles dictate that the Association’s governance groups operate efficiently and not place undue financial burden on the Association’s resources

# Why Address Council Structure Now?

## (continued)

Thus, the P&P Board determined that the Association should tackle the long-recognized problems with the structure of Council by:

- Identifying those features of Council structure that are most problematic
- Proposing the outline of a new structure that addresses the identified shortcomings

# But first...

## What is Council and what does it do?

- Council has been the primary governance body of the Association from its inception.
  - APA's first meeting was in December 1892 at the University of Pennsylvania
  - Governance consisted of a council with an executive committee
- Today, the Council of Representatives is the legislative body of APA and has full power and authority over the affairs and funds of the association within the limitations set by the certificate of incorporation and the Bylaws, including the power to review, upon its own initiative, the actions of any Board, Committee, Division or affiliated organization.

# What is Council and what does it do?

## (continued)

- Council is composed of representatives of Divisions, representatives of State, Provincial, and Territorial Psychological Associations (SPTAs) and the members of the Board of Directors.
- In its current incarnation, it is distinct from the Board of Directors
  - While Council is responsible for policy regarding the discipline and affairs external to the Association, the Board of Directors is responsible for policy internal to the organization; Council currently delegates control of APA's budget to the Board

For more information see:

<https://www.apa.org/about/governance/council/> and  
<https://www.apa.org/about/governance/board/>

# Current (2019) Council Composition

- Council of Representatives Voting Members
  - 102 Representatives from 54 Divisions (1 - 6 representatives per Division)
  - 60 Representatives from 60 SPTAs
  - 1 Representative from APA Graduate Students (APAGS)
  - Three-year terms
- Board of Directors (BOD)
  - 15 of 16 Members (all except CEO) also vote on Council

# How Seats Council Seats are Currently Apportioned

<https://www.apa.org/about/division/officers/balloting>

- Allocation of seats is determined, in part, by an apportionment ballot distributed to all voting members of the Association annually
  - › Members apportion 10 votes in any way they choose regardless of whether they belong to one or more Divisions or SPTAs
    - See <https://www.apa.org/about/governance/council/2018-apportionment.pdf> for recent apportionment results
- Those units with the most votes get the most seats on Council according to a [specified formula](#)
- However, because of a recent by-laws change, every unit gets a seat ***even if there are not enough votes allocated to meet the threshold of the formula***
  - › Some Divisions get as little as .12% of the apportionment vote
  - › Some SPTAs get as little as .01% of the apportionment
- Consequently, Members' intentions for structure of Council as expressed in the apportionment ballot is undermined

# Issues with the Current Composition of Council

- All voting Members can vote on apportionment, but Divisions and SPTAs determine *who* sits on Council. Consequently:
  - Approximately half of all Members do not belong to a Division or SPTA and are, thus, disenfranchised from voting
  - A number of Members belong to multiple units and, thus, are hyper-enfranchised (can vote for multiple candidates)
  - The system is not easily conducive to ensuring diversity (broadly considered)
    - › Because the overwhelming majority of represented units have only a single seat on Council which is open every three years, *it is difficult to slate the position based on needs of the larger body*



# Issues with the Composition of Council (continued)

- An arguable mismatch exists between the centrality of various subdisciplines to the broad discipline of psychology versus representation on Council
  - Division membership size does not necessarily represent percentage of all members in the subdiscipline
  - This problem is exacerbated by political maneuvering to secure apportionment votes
  - With their mix of subdiscipline and special interest areas of focus, divisions taken as a group do not provide an inherently cohesive depiction of the discipline
  - SPTAs are agnostic to subdiscipline, though representatives are typically healthcare practitioners

# Issues with the Composition of Council (continued)

- Multiple divisions represent setting of practice but not, necessarily, schools of practice, schools of thought, or empirical research
- The large size itself presents problems of its own
  - [Costs](#)
  - [Group process](#)
  - [Diffusion of responsibility](#)

# Issues with the Composition of Council (continued)

- Much of the expertise for developing and implementing policy in the areas of practice, science, education, and public interest lies in the Association's various Boards and the Committees under them
- Policy, however, is ultimately determined by Council and often receives proposals to approve in near-final form without prior Council input
- Yet there are no explicit structural connections between Council and these Boards and Committees
- Absence of a natural interface between Council and the Board and Committee structure...
  - reduces opportunities for effective communication in the policy development process
  - can lead to gridlock when proposals arrive at Council for approval

# Issues with the Composition of Council (continued)

- Like APA, Divisions are generally incorporated as 501(c)(3) organizations chartered for charitable, educational, religious, literary, or scientific purposes
- SPTAs are generally incorporated as 501(c)(6) organizations meaning their chartered mission is to promote a common business interest
  - Creates an intrinsic misalignment between the goals and aspirations of a large number of units represented on Council and the Association
- SPTAs via their representatives are affiliated with the Association but are not organizationally part of it
  - SPTAs get to vote on policies that apply to all APA Members and Divisions
  - However, they do not have to adhere to those policies because they are separate organizations
    - › Thus, the current system creates a form of structural “unfairness”

# Who and What should Council Represent?

## (Some Pros and Cons)

- Divisions and SPTAs?
  - *Pro:* Virtue of maintaining the status quo
  - *Con:* Even if all are represented with a single representative, the size of Council remains large
  - *Con:* Previously noted limitations
- All individual Members' interests and wishes equally?
  - *Pro:* Closest to a representative democracy
  - *Con:* While democratic, doesn't ensure appropriate expertise for developing policy and advancing Strategic Plans
  - *Con:* May not promote diversity

# Who and What should Council Represent?

## (Some Pros and Cons)

- Fundamental/Foundational Areas of the Discipline?
  - *Pro*: Balanced representation of core areas across all psychology disciplines
  - *Pro*: Would be well suited for championing the Strategic Plan since appropriate knowledge and expertise could be slated
  - *Pro*: Feasible to have a smaller, but more purposively diverse governing body
  - *Con*: Removes hard-wired link between 501(c)(3) Divisions and their policy-making governance body
  - *Con*: To the extent the distribution of Members' interests differs from those represented by the foundational areas, we still do not achieve a body that is fully representative of the Membership

# Who and What should Council Represent?

## (continued)

- Can the current model be reformed without radically changing the basic structure but addressing previously noted shortcomings? For example,
  - Reduce size by limiting each unit to having one Representative
  - Give all Members free membership in a Division of their choice, ensuring each Member could be enfranchised to vote
  - Let Members vote in only one Division or SPTA election for Council Representative every three years, regardless of the number of these organizations of they are members. (Eliminate the hyper-enfranchisement)
  - Weight each Representative's vote to reflect the size of the organization they are representing

# Who and What should Council Represent?

## (continued)

- These “post hoc” modifications could address some important current shortcomings, but...
  - Diversity of Council would still be constrained
  - The C3-C6 dilemma would not be addressed
  - Weighting creates intrinsic inequities in the powers of each representative
  - A large percentage of APA members would still not have the opportunity to vote for representatives
    - › A system is needed, per the APA Strategic Plan, that engages the largest number of members in the Association and its governance *and* optimally comports with the strategic plan.



# Picking up where GGP Left Off

- In 2010, the Association leadership, through the Board of Directors, sought expert outside consultation to work with a team of psychologists, The Good Governance Project Team (GGP)
- Set out to broadly assess and understand the status of APA governance.
- With data in hand, GGP moved forward to build an evidence-based agreement and recommendations for change.
- Its final report (<https://www.apa.org/about/governance/good-governance/final-report.pdf>) outlined proposals for major change in seven areas

# GGP Seven Areas for Change (2013)

<https://www.apa.org/about/governance/good-governance/final-report.pdf>

1. Enhance the Use of Technology
2. Leadership Pipeline & Development
3. Triage System
4. Repurpose Assembly/Realign Boards & Committees
5. Realign Fiduciary Roles
6. Reconfigure Board of Directors
7. *Assembly Structural Options*

# GGP'S Assembly (i.e., Council) Structure Models

**Model 7A** retains the current structure, simply adding a leadership team to help manage the work flow of the newly added functions and specifying guaranteed seats for both the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students and Early Career Psychologists.

**Model 7B** reduces the size of the council somewhat while creating space for valuable input from those who currently have no mechanism for governance engagement; reduces the size to about 135; supports a more issue focused process; and adds a leadership team to manage work flow.

**Model 7C**, the “pillar model,” moves away from organizational representation and instead is organized around the pillars of the APA mission: science, education, practice, human welfare and health. A sixth pillar, advocacy, is also proposed. Each pillar would be represented by 15 seats, balanced by diversity (demographic and career level) and expertise in strategic and emerging issues. A leadership team is added to manage work flow.

**Model 7D**, proposed on the floor of CoR, is a hybrid model containing elements of 7B and 7C.

# Implementation Work Group (IWG): Charge from the CoR

- Following the GGP report and recommendations in 2013, the CoR and the Board of Directors (BOD) authorized formation of the IWG to draft specific actions for implementing the GGP recommendations adopted by the CoR (e.g., proposing Bylaws amendments and changes to Association Rules)
- Council voted to direct the IWG to return to Council with a model for structural change that takes into consideration the discussion held at its February 2014 meeting. (p. 7)

<https://www.apa.org/about/governance/council/minutes-winter-2014.pdf>

# The IWG: Charge from the CoR

## (continued)

- In August 2014, "...Council discussed the item "IWG Proposed Change to Council's Structure"... Council didn't take action on the main and substitute motions ... but did participate in straw polls related to Council structure options... President Kaslow informed Council that a work group comprised of Board and Council members would be appointed to make recommendations on the process for moving forward with the Council Restructuring discussion. Council expressed support for the establishment of such a work group."

<https://www.apa.org/about/governance/council/minutes-summer-2014.pdf> p. 23

- Apparently, the idea of a work group was preempted by major unexpected events and the initiative died quietly without a formal decision on it.

# Picking up the ball...and running with it: Considerations for a re-envisioned Council

- Positions slated to
  - Facilitate pushing forward strategic goals
  - Ensure balanced coverage of areas of the discipline and profession so that critical policy-making expertise is present
  - Ensure diversity through purposeful slating
  - Enhance alignment between Boards and Committees and Council activities
- Reduced size to
  - Increase engagement and enable stronger working relationships among representatives
  - Reduce diffusion of responsibility
  - Decrease costs

# Proposed APA Assembly

- Configured to represent four areas foundational to psychology
  - Basic and Applied Sciences
  - Health Services and Applied Practice
  - Education and Training
  - Public Interest/Human Well Being
- These areas are meant to be inclusive and embedded with the critical skill sets (e.g., outward communication of psychological knowledge)
- Each foundational area represented with 15 representatives
  - 5 reps in each foundational area rotate off/on annually
  - Chairs of Boards aligned with foundational areas (BSA, BPA, BEA, and BAPPI) would also be Assembly members
  - Size = 64, plus BOD members

# Proposed APA Assembly (continued)

- Nominations – Open, with Divisions, SPTAs, and other interested groups actively engaged in process
- The Needs Assessment, Slating, and Campaigns Committee (NASCC) determines slate descriptions based on organizational need and ensures balanced selection of candidates
- All voting members of APA vote on all slates
  - Attention given to ensuring voters have adequate information about all candidates



# Proposed APA Assembly (continued)

- Election slates purposively constructed to ensure the Assembly includes members with needed skill sets and experience and reflects various aspects of diversity, within and across foundational areas
- A key skill set is the communication of psychology and psychological knowledge to the public and policy makers
- Identification of major subgroupings within each foundational area to ensure balance in experience and perspective
- A “diversity matrix” approach as endorsed by Council used to inform slating to help ensure demographic, career stage, geographical, and other aspects of diversity in the Assembly

# Problems Addressed with this Model

- All voting members of the Association are enfranchised to vote for representatives, and to the same degree
  - Eliminates the problem of members not belonging to Divisions and SPTAs being able to vote
  - Eliminates the problem of Members with multiple Divisional and SPTA memberships being akin to “superdelegates,” having more voting influence than others
- Minimizes parochial interests reflected in the Divisional and SPTA structure, reinforcing fiduciary responsibility to APA
- Reduces structural complexities of having C6 organizations represented on a C3 body
- Reduces Council size which is expected to increase effectiveness and reduce costs

# Problems Addressed with this Model

## (continued)

Enables a nominating process with much more power to ensure diversity across the Assembly than is possible by individual groups electing just one representative every three years.

Such diversity could include:

- Diversity of thought
- Demographic (e.g., racial, sex, age, ability) diversity
- Career stage diversity
- Geographic diversity
- Cultural diversity
- Divisional/SPTA affiliations

# Implementation

- Once approved, adopt a 3-year implementation plan which identifies a work group to recommend and manage details of the transition from the current Council to a reconfigured Assembly
- APA Bylaws and Association Rules need to be revised in accordance with the plan
- Divisions and SPTAs that include Council Representatives on their Executive Boards will need to revisit their Bylaws
- New communication structures between the Assembly and Divisions/SPTAs will need to be developed
  - › Divisions and SPTAs could appoint Assembly monitors to review agenda books, connect with Assembly representatives, and update their memberships of Assembly activities
  - › Divisions and SPTAs could become active in providing information about both perceived needs and potential candidates to the NASCC

# Next Steps

P&P communicates the Assembly proposal to stakeholders, gathers reactions, and prepares a formal proposal to bring to Council for a vote not later than August 2021

- Ancillary considerations include
  - Further refinements in the structure and function of CLT
  - A framework for ongoing evaluation of structure and function of the Assembly



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# End of Presentation



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# Hyperlinked Slides

# Apportionment Formula

- Those units with the most votes get the most seats on Council according to a specified formula
  - If allocated votes less than .5%, 0 seats awarded.
  - If allocated votes .5% to less than 1.5%, 1 seat awarded.
  - If allocated votes 1.5% to less than 2.5%, 2 seats awarded.
  - If allocated votes 2.5% to less than 3.5%, 3 seats awarded.
  - If allocated votes 3.5% to less than 4.5%, 4 seats awarded.

[Return to presentation](#)





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# Challenges Associated with Council Size

# Challenges Associated with Size: Costs

- Council currently meets in person for 2.5 days in the winter and 1.5 days in the summer
- Costs for food & beverage, A/V support, travel and hotel estimated at
  - \$2,278/person for winter meeting (total of \$369,036 for 162 representatives)
  - \$1,565/person for summer meeting (total of \$253,530 for 162 representatives)
  - Reduction from a 162 Member Council would save approximately \$390K/year in just the costs of supporting attendance at the meeting all else being equal
  - Lower cost meeting space/hotel options would become viable
- Note that these estimates do not include meeting costs for staff and others for whom APA pays expenses; it also does not include the opportunity costs associated with APA staff time requirements which would be reduced
  - [Return to main presentation](#)
    - › [Go to Group Process](#)
    - › [Go to Diffusion of Responsibility](#)

# Challenges Associated with Size: Group Process

- The literature on group size on group process is large and scattered because of the variety of types of groups studied. Although group knowledge and skills are likely to increase as a function of group size, “the difficulty inherent in coordinating the contributions of many members is likely to make it difficult for them to use their knowledge and skills effectively. Larger boards also may have difficulty building the interpersonal relationships that further cohesiveness or maintaining high board effort norms, owing to the potential for ‘social loafing’ (Forbes & Milliken, 1999, p. 499)” ...
  - Forbes, D. P., & Milliken, F. J. (1999). Cognition and corporate governance: Understanding boards of directors as strategic decision-making groups. *Academy of management review*, 24(3), 489-505.
- Doing work in small break-outs helps to foster full dialogue, but those groups may be insufficient for developing trusting relationships among individual Council members and work of subgroups loses nuance when aggregated for the full Council
- Group process (in meetings and on the Council listserv) is hindered by multiple factors, including fear of being subject to uncivil reactions or inadvertently offending others around sensitive topics
  - This is where smaller groups where trusting relationships and real time authentic feedback can be established have the advantage
  - Smaller groups can feel less “managed” compared to large groups
- [Return to main presentation](#)
  - › [Go to Size](#)
  - › [Go to Group Process](#)
  - › [Go to Diffusion of Responsibility](#)

# Challenges Associated with Size: Diffusion of Responsibility

- Heterogeneity of interests, knowledge, and experience helps ensure that the broad variety of topics addressed by Council are viewed through a wide lens
- Another result is that individual Council members are not engaged in consideration of topics that are not of particular interest to them
  - For example, limited attention to fully reviewing Agenda books and lack of participation in Council town halls and webinars
- Easy to disengage in large groups
  - Assumption that certain topics don't matter or that others will do the work to think through important issues
- Failure to participate in or express opinions in meetings, remote town halls, or on Council listserv
- [Return to main presentation](#)
  - [Go to Size](#)
  - [Go to Group Process](#)
  - [Go to Diffusion of Responsibility](#)