



# Re-Envisioning Governance: Concerns and Next Steps

2022 Annual Report of the APA Policy & Planning Board

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## Executive Summary

### Change Efforts

In 2019, P&P proposed a change to Council structure to address several concerns. For two years, P&P was delayed in bringing the proposal to Council for discussion. A review of other attempts at governance change suggests that complex change efforts within APA are often delayed or dropped rather than being fully discussed and worked through.

### Listening Sessions

Listening sessions with Council and other stakeholders in February and March of 2022 raised concerns that warrant discussion. P&P stepped back from the change proposal to acknowledge concerns and adjust the process. Some listening session participants argued for the status quo rather than any changes; representatives particularly argued for continued seats on Council for their individual division or SPTA. Some participants approved of ideas for restructuring, including reducing the size of Council, adding members-at-large, having equal representation of foundational areas, and moving toward a more inclusive governance structure.

Concerns that arose included:

- Fear of a loss of influence or power within APA for individual groups or areas of interest (e.g., for individual divisions and SPTAs but also more generally for practice or science)
- Sense of disempowerment within APA, including a distrust of upper leadership and Central Office staff
- Support of EDI and improvement efforts but little agreement on strategies for change

As with previous governance change efforts, significant concerns were raised that are difficult to resolve. Lack of trust in leadership and governance processes as well as zero-sum thinking about power are two elements that were prominent in listening sessions. How can we honor these concerns while moving forward to a positive vision of a modern governance system? How can we think about creating transformational change that might build collaboration and trust rather than leave winners and losers?

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## Next Steps

P&P recommends the following collaborative actions:

- Continued efforts to attend to the connections between APA and its divisions and SPTAs
- Continued efforts to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in APA governance, particularly helping APA leaders embrace a transformational approach to inclusion
- New efforts to build trust and enhance connection between APA staff and elected and appointed leaders

APA leaders should be able to hold difficult discussions about ideas that some may consider potential threats to power (personally or to the groups with which they identify) in a spirit of trust with their colleagues who hold different perspectives. For now, P&P will continue to work collaboratively with Council and boards and committees to enhance the functioning of APA. Given our mission, P&P will likely prompt Council and boards and committees to discuss potential structural changes at various times in the future. With enhanced trust and collaboration, APA governance should be able to openly and thoughtfully consider transformational change in the interest of APA's strategic priorities.

## Introduction

The Policy and Planning Board (P&P) is charged with recommending changes to improve the structure and function of APA governance. As part of our work this year, we led discussions and received input about how best to re-envision the Council of Representatives. Beginning the discussions with a vision for a new structure, including a possible model, P&P Board members facilitated listening sessions and received comments that provide a rich understanding of some of the tensions and concerns within APA governance at this time. We had planned to use input from the listening sessions to revise the model and bring a revised model to Council for a vote this year. However, on the basis of what we learned, we decided instead to step back and first address some of the concerns that surfaced through this process. We have faith that APA can change its governance structure in positive ways, and we hope to work collaboratively to develop a process which would be broadly acceptable to consider real structural change in the future as needed.

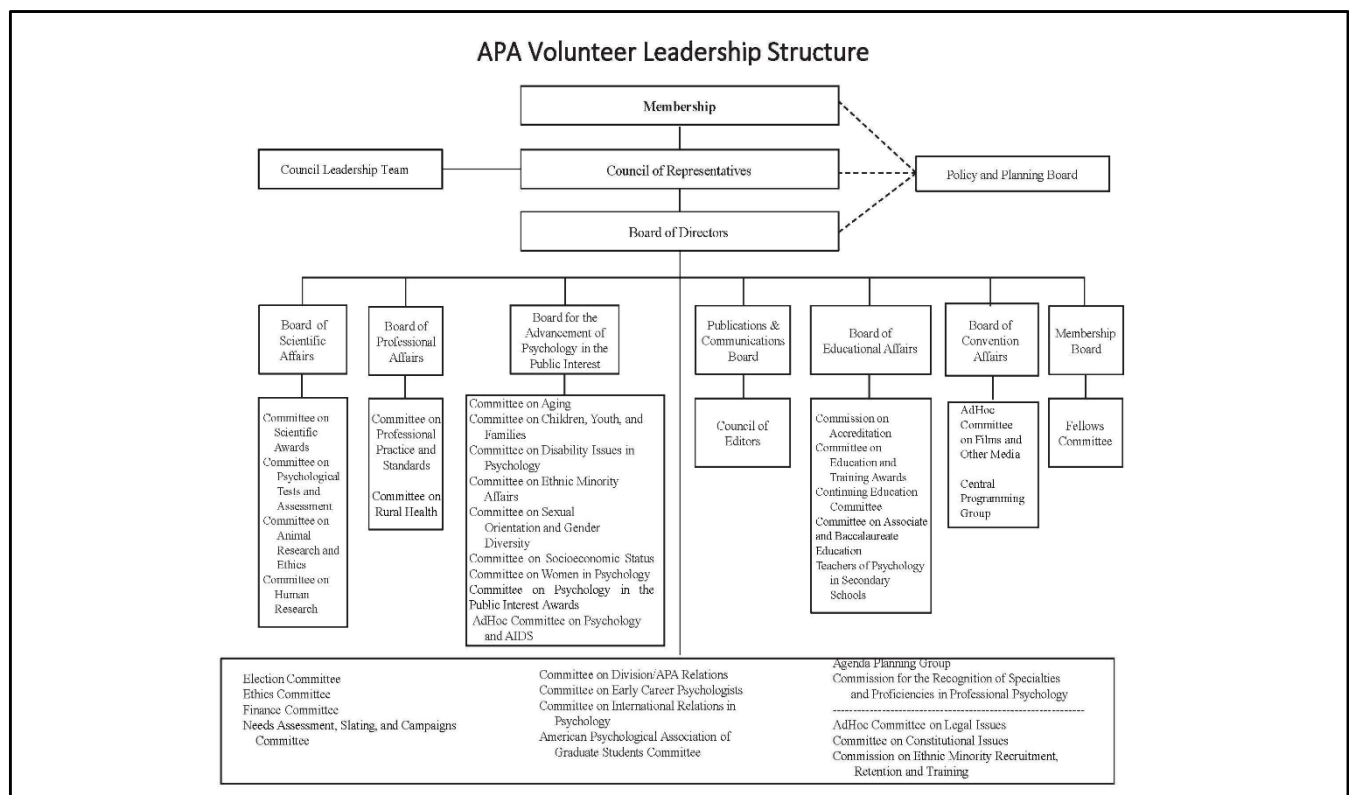
In this report, we describe the recent history that led to our discussions this year, related efforts in APA to update the structure and function of governance, the model for Council we brought forward for discussion, and what we heard in the listening sessions and comments. At the end of the report, we provide some reflection on this year's responses and on what might be needed to optimize APA governance's move toward the future.

APA's Policy and Planning Board is uniquely positioned within the Association as the only board that reports directly to the Board of Directors, Council of Representatives, *and* Association membership. As stated in APA's bylaws:

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 [SPTAs] as are

consonant with the purposes of the Association. The Policy and Planning Board shall report annually by publication 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.

This is a very broad charge, which purposively provides for redundancy in responsibility for thinking about the structure and function of the Association, charges that are also of concern to Council and its associated Council Leadership Team (CLT) and the Board of Directors. It is P&P's responsibility to identify issues of concern with regard to APA's function and structure and generate recommendations. Recommendations may also come from the APA President, Board of Directors, or Council of Representatives.



Work groups have been established in the past to consider the issue of addressing Council structure and function. One such work group was the Good Governance Project (GGP) Team established by the Board of Directors in 2011. This group was given the broad charge to “maximize organizational effectiveness by assuring APA’s governance practices, processes and structures are optimized and aligned with what is needed to thrive in a rapidly changing and increasingly complex environment.”

The Council of Representatives approved several recommendations generated by GGP. These changes spanned process, function, and structural elements of APA governance. One recommendation was to restructure Council. At the time, a straw poll indicated that 59% of Council members wanted a

substantive change to Council structure. Three alternative models were discussed in August 2013--two suggested by GGP and a third proposed on Council floor. Another straw poll showed that none of the three was clearly preferred, so the GGP Implementation Work Group (IWG) was tasked with developing motions built around the two models receiving the greatest support. IWG subsequently offered three alternative Council restructure possibilities, which were discussed by Council in February 2014, returning in August 2014 with a specific motion for change. Four straw polls related to various aspects of the proposed model were conducted. The Council Leadership Team (CLT), newly formed from GGP recommendations, was tasked with developing a revised proposed model, or a process to bring forward a revised model.

CLT was just beginning as a new governance body in 2015 when the entire Association's attention needed to be focused on issues related to the Independent Review known as the "Hoffman Report." Momentum for structural change to Council was lost at that time. In its communications with CLT, the P&P Board revived the need to address the issues from the 2014 Council vote to facilitate advancement of Council restructuring. However, this topic did not appear on the CLT agenda. The P&P Board subsequently determined that it would itself address the topic of Council structure in its 2019 annual report to honor what had been the will of the 2014 Council.

#### Underlying Issues to be Addressed

As detailed in P&P's 2019 report, P&P identified a number of issues related to the composition of Council which shaped the proposal for a new structure.<sup>1</sup> These issues include (a) lack of representation of all APA members, (b) structural barriers to demographic and cultural diversity, (c) imbalance of representation of the broad areas of psychology, (d) complications (economic, logistical, etc.) with Council size, (e) misalignment with the mission of Council to enhance psychology and the public good, and (f) disconnect between Council and the boards and committees. These concerns are briefly reviewed below.

A large group of APA members are not fully enfranchised or represented on Council. All voting members can vote on apportionment of seats, but only members of divisions and State, Provincial, or Territorial Associations (SPTAs) determine who sits on Council. The best estimate from the Membership Office is that about half of all members do not belong to either a division or SPTA. In contrast to this disenfranchisement, an appreciable number of members belong to multiple divisions and/or SPTAs and are thus hyper-enfranchised.

With representatives elected by SPTAs and divisions, the current Council structure is unable to ensure intentional diversity. The overwhelming majority of divisions and SPTAs have only a single seat which rotates every three years. While Boards and Committees are able to slate for different demographic and cultural diversity and different experience or skills needed, Council has no mechanism for building in diversity or adding representatives based on the needs of the larger body of Council. Divisions with multiple seats on Council may slate for diversity in their additional seats (in fact, a number of divisions with a social justice mission do so), and the Ethnic Psychological Associations now each have a seat on

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<sup>1</sup> The [2019 P&P annual report](#), produced as a Powerpoint presentation, was finalized in March 2020. The 2020 P&P Board updated the [document](#) in 2021.



Council. Thus, Council has become somewhat more diverse through these specific voluntary efforts rather than through a unified structure.

An arguable mismatch exists between the centrality of various subdisciplines to the broad discipline of psychology versus representation on Council. Divisions have developed organically, and taken as a group, do not provide an inherently cohesive depiction of the discipline. Moreover, division membership size does not necessarily represent percentage of members in the subdiscipline, an issue that is perceived to be exacerbated by political maneuvering to secure apportionment votes. With regard to SPTAs, most are agnostic to subdiscipline but their Council representatives are overwhelmingly mental health care practitioners.

The large size of Council (currently 183 voting members) presents its own problems, including issues with group process, diffusion of responsibility, and costs (travel, staff time, etc.), all of which would be mitigated with a smaller body. In response to representational interests, historically Council has simply gotten bigger, adding seats to add diversity or enhance inclusion.

APA and its divisions are largely incorporated as 501(c)(3) organizations chartered for charitable, educational, religious, literary, or scientific purposes. In contrast, the American Psychological Association Services, Inc. (APASI) and the SPTAs are generally incorporated as 501(c)(6) organizations, able to promote professional and business interests of psychologists (e.g., advocating for higher reimbursement or better pay, protecting psychologists' scope of practice). As associations affiliated with APA, rather than part of APA, SPTAs initially had no Council seats. Over time, however, their role on Council has greatly expanded to the point that every SPTA, regardless of the number of APA members in the SPTA, has a guaranteed seat on Council.

## Process to Date

### Development of the P&P Board 2019 Model

The 2019 P&P Board did not start its work with the explicit goal of recommending a particular model for discussion with the Association. Rather, the goal was simply to restart the conversation which had been dropped without closure in 2015. P&P began its work by identifying and discussing issues with Council structure. Information gathering at this stage involved reference to GGP-generated materials and a search for additional relevant data. Most P&P members had experience on Council which further informed discussions. A few members had limited experience in APA governance, thus providing an "outside looking in" perspective on associated discussions.

The 2019 P&P Board members considered various ideas for how Council might be restructured to address the issues outlined above and enhance achievement of the Association's strategic plan. These ideas included but were not limited to those models introduced through GGP and subsequent associated models. The group focused largely on the question of who and what Council should represent. Divisions and SPTAs? The membership? Foundational areas of the discipline? The group also considered ways in which Council composition issues could be reformed without radically changing the structure of Council. Any of those alternatives, however, left important issues unaddressed, including purposive assurance of Council diversity, disenfranchisement of a large percentage of APA members, and c3/c6 organizational misalignment.

It was only as P&P discussions coalesced around a single alternative model that the group decided to put that particular model out for broad discussion. The group discussed various ways to structure the foundational areas and various numbers of representatives in each area. P&P recognized that the radical idea of fundamentally changing how representation would be addressed in this model would no doubt make it controversial, but also that radical change would be necessary to adequately address representational and other issues that had been identified. P&P left important implementation details, including Council member slating, for consideration by a future implementation work group should the basic alternative model be adopted.

While there was clear evidence of Council's will to change its own structure in the 2013-2014 timeframe, there was also a pattern of Council rejecting possible alternatives without formal votes in the hopes that a more desirable alternative could be identified. P&P was concerned that, no matter the merits of one or more alternative structural models, Council might continue to sidestep formal deliberation of a new model. Given its ability to bring new business items directly to Council, P&P identified a "time certain" (originally August 2020) to bring a formal proposal to Council in the form of a new business item. This was intended to ensure timely consideration and closure to a proposal that would be further informed through discussions with Council, the Board of Directors, other governance groups, and APA members before being introduced as a new business item. This was an admittedly ambitious goal no matter how favorable the circumstances.

#### Delayed Opportunities for Discussion

With the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Board of Directors asked P&P to delay discussion of changes to Council structure. Priorities included responding to the pandemic, responding to heightened awareness of racial injustice after George Floyd's death, and supporting the transition in APA's Central Office to a smaller staffing model with greater integration and less siloed work. Council and all board and committee meetings as well as the APA Convention were shifted to online venues. P&P accepted the delay and focused on other tasks. In 2021, P&P began working toward broad discussion of the proposed model. A large list of groups and stakeholders was generated for P&P to begin discussions. Small meetings were held to get input from CODAPAR, the Chief of Science and Chief of EDI. Discussions were held with the representatives of Ethnic Psychological Associations. Given the priority on anti-racism and the input from the EPA representatives, P&P unanimously voted to revise the model to include seats for the EPAs. After this progress, it became clear that P&P would not have the support of leadership to hold a town hall or engage with Council about the proposed model in 2021.

In 2022, President Frank Worrell and CLT Chair Eric Butter both agreed that the P&P should be able to have a discussion with Council about Council structure, given P&P's mission and role. A collaborative process for gaining input and revising the proposed model was developed and agreed upon by P&P, the President, and CLT Chair. The planned process included P&P acting to (a) distribute materials to describe the proposed model and the history of Council structure changes, (b) hold small group listening sessions and an open comment period to gather input and ideas from all stakeholders, (c) revise the proposed model using the input received, (d) gather Council input on the revised model, (e) revise the model again based on new input, and (f) bring the final revised model to Council for formal deliberation and vote.

P&P then provided Council with a webinar describing the model, a PowerPoint slide deck, and a document detailing the history of Council structure changes. Council members were invited to attend small group listening sessions to give their input. About 20 different listening sessions were scheduled

across February and March on different days and at different times to provide ample opportunity for input. P&P members served as co-facilitators and note-takers, with no more than 15 participants at each session. Initially, listening sessions were designated by area (Science, Education, Practice, General and Applied Practice, and Public Interest). Co-facilitators led sessions based on their own experience and expertise. However, several Council members suggested that these designations were creating silos and that they wanted to attend one in each area to hear different viewpoints. All sessions were then designated as general, and Council members were invited to attend more than one session if they desired. About half of Council members signed up for a listening session. A few weeks after the listening sessions began, additional stakeholders were invited and were provided with the same background materials: additional stakeholders included APA board and committee members, division presidents, SPTA presidents, and members of the Council of Executives of State and Provincial Psychological Associations (CESPPA). Two listening sessions during the weekend of APA Council in February were added to encourage more Council members to provide input. In total, 20 listening sessions were held.

An open comment period from mid-February to mid-March was provided with the same background materials, and Council members, APA Board and Committee members, Division and SPTA leaders, CESPPA, and Division and SPTA members were invited to provide comments. At the request of the CLT Chair, the open comment period was extended through the end of March.

#### Proposed Model for Re-Envisioned Council or Assembly

To help with understanding the comments from the listening sessions and open comment period, the proposed model for Council will be briefly described. To distinguish the proposed model from current Council structure, the new body was called the Assembly. In the Assembly model, four foundational areas were equally represented: Basic and Applied Sciences, Health Service and Applied Practice, Education and Training, and Public Interest/ Well Being. Each of the foundational areas would have 15 members (for a total of 60) elected by APA membership, and the chairs of the four relevant content boards would also have voting seats on Council (Board of Scientific Affairs, Board of Professional Affairs, Board of Educational Affairs, and Board for the Advancement of Psychology in the Public Interest). In addition to the 60 Assembly members in the foundational areas and the 4 board chairs, the Board of Directors (15 members) and a member from each Ethnic Psychological Association (5) would have voting seats on the Assembly, creating an Assembly of 84 members.

The foundational area seats would be filled using a process of slating to create both a culturally diverse and broadly representational Assembly. For instance, within the area of Basic and Applied Science, in any given year, five seats would be open. These could be identified as specific slates to guarantee diversity and different subspecialties (e.g., the five slates might include an experimental psychologist, an LGBTQ scientist, an applied research psychologist, a psychologist with research related to racism, and a public health research psychologist). Divisions, SPTAs, and members would be encouraged to nominate candidates for open slates, and a slating committee would select the top three candidates for each slate. All APA members would be invited to vote for Assembly members.

Over the course of the listening sessions, we received questions about the slating process and concerns that the slating committee would have too much power. Ideas were then developed in listening sessions to explore possibilities. For instance, rather than having the slating committee determine what is needed on the Assembly, the Assembly itself could prioritize which slates were needed for the next year (taking into account which members would be rotating off), and the committee could then review



nominations and select the three candidates for each slate. These were draft ideas, as P&P continued to receive input and had not formally revised the model; however, it became clear that a slating process would need to be more thoroughly outlined for future proposals.

#### Other Initiatives related to Governance Functioning

During the two years in which discussion of the model was delayed, a number of other initiatives to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of APA governance moved forward. Initiatives we are aware of include the Bylaws Modernization Workgroup, the Council Effectiveness Workgroup, the Board and Committee Work Group of the Board of Directors, the Policy & Planning Board's 2020 report summarizing board and committee self-studies, and the Work Group to Evaluate the Future of the Work of Governance and Volunteer Leadership. Some of the concerns addressed by P&P's proposal were also considered by these work groups. To provide further context for thinking about APA's governance structure, we will briefly describe the work and results of these efforts.

*Bylaws Modernization Workgroup.* A draft of an updated set of bylaws for the Association was developed by this workgroup. A number of details in the current bylaws were proposed to be moved to the Association Rules. Bylaws changes require a vote from the membership, while Association Rules changes only require a vote by Council. Groups and leaders had the opportunity to comment on the draft and expressed a number of concerns. It was clear that some groups had organized against the revisions, with numerous comments containing the same language and comments questioning the group's motivations. It appeared that some respondents confounded the bylaws changes with the P&P proposal for Council restructuring. Although P&P had just released its proposal in the 2019 report, there was no such change suggested in the bylaws revision draft put forward for comment. Some commenters also appeared to conflate bylaws modernization with the delegation of authority<sup>2</sup> vote from February 2020 and suggested that Council needed to take back the financial authority for the organization. Finally, the suggestion to move the Board and Committee structural details to the Association Rules raised alarm about reducing their importance or losing the pillars of the discipline by moving them from the bylaws to the rules. Apart from these specific concerns, there was general support for making the bylaws more up to date. Due to other key priorities for the association, the work of the group was paused indefinitely at the end of 2020. The group presented a report in 2021 with hopes that a future group would continue the bylaws modernization at a later time. It has not yet been revisited.

*Council Leadership Team (CLT) Work Group on Enhancing Council's Effectiveness as a Policy-Making Body (CEWG).* When the COR approved the Good Governance Project (GGP) in 2014, an aim was to reconfigure governance structure and operations to increase alignment with APA's strategic plan, enhance nimbleness and efficiency of governance processes, and increase engagement of all members. This aim involved a shift of work and responsibility in APA governance, including a transfer of duties and purview (i.e., some financial operations and internal policymaking to the BOD). As a result, Council would expand its scope to also focus on directing and informing policy aligned with APA's mission and strategic plan. At the February 2020 Council meeting, CLT designed table discussions to address how to increase the effectiveness of Council's policy role for the organization. Council members discussed these

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<sup>2</sup> Council voted to delegate to the Board of Directors "authority for decision-making related to budget and financial matters" but retained the requirement of Council approval "for any single, unbudgeted item that exceeds \$3 million or sale of Association real estate." (Association Rules 210-2.1, 210-2.3)



issues, and the Council Effectiveness Work Group (CEWG) was formed to analyze discussion notes with the goal of developing recommendations for more effective policy work.

Based on their findings and study, the CEWG made 24 actionable recommendations organized under six broad guidelines: (a) Council works with others to initiate and develop outward facing APA policies and is responsible for approving, reviewing, and overseeing the implementation of those policies; (b) Council will facilitate organizational structure and processes that will support the development and effective implementation of its policy-making role; (c) Council is responsible for ensuring that the policy-making process reflects further commitment to EDI initiatives, as well as adherence to principles of civility; (d) Council is responsible for promoting representation of all significant viewpoints in psychology as a whole, including opposing and alternative viewpoints, on every policy and to work toward consensus; (e) Council needs to understand the perspectives of APA membership and stakeholders outside of APA with interests in a particular APA policy and work toward consensus; and (f) Council needs additional resources and processes to effectively fulfill its policy-making role.

In March 2021, to address the recommendations of the CEWG, several members of Council organized themselves into five workgroups led by former members of the CEWG and organized under the themes: Education and Access, Governance Organization & Relations, Communication and Deliberation, Inclusion, and Culture, and New Vehicles for Policy Making. A report, submitted to Council for approval in October 2021 described the historical background of the CEWG initiative, presented 20 new recommendations and described the status of the work to date (i.e., completed, ongoing and outstanding) on those recommendations. During that Council meeting, two motions were ultimately voted on and approved that established two more workgroups: The CLT Evaluation Task Force and Council Effectiveness Implementation Oversight Task Force. Work from these two groups is ongoing.

*The Board and Committee Workgroup of the Board of Directors.* Appointed by President Sandy Shullman in early 2020, this group was charged with developing interim solutions to create alignment within boards and committees toward driving the strategic plan goals and objectives, as well as identifying ideas for future alignment and processes to accomplish even greater impact. Based on comprehensive reviews of information and consultation with other groups (e.g., P&P, governance staff), this workgroup made four recommendations: (a) reassign minor duties of the Ad Hoc Committee on Legal Issues (COLI) to P&P and sunset COLI, (b) sunset the Standing Awards Committees of each of the four directorates, (c) continue virtual meetings for at least some groups, and (d) reimagine Public Interest committees. The efforts of this group are significant, in that APA governance often adds new governing groups but rarely sunsets any groups. As an Ad Hoc Committee, COLI had fulfilled its original mandate to develop a legal office within APA many years ago. Formally, it also had the responsibility to review amicus briefs, but due to the specialization required for each brief, the legal office now works with an ad hoc expert advisory panel to provide a final review.

#### *Board and Committee Self-Studies.*

As part of P&P's five-year review of governance functioning, the board began a self-study process with each board and committee. P&P piloted the process on itself in 2018 and facilitated the other boards, CLT, and the Finance Committee to conduct their own self-studies in 2019. The [P&P 2020 annual report](#) described the process and findings. A common theme across groups included a desire to better utilize liaisons. Groups were variable in perceived efficiency of meetings, noting leadership effectiveness changing year to year depending on the skill of the chair. Several groups commented on the importance

of APA staff liaisons who maintained excellent project management and often provided institutional memory for the groups. Most groups described the self-study discussion and process of reflection as helpful, and a number of groups subsequently sought changes to their functioning or mission to improve alignment or effectiveness. Reflecting on the results of the self-studies, P&P noted that groups were able to list activities but had difficulty demonstrating impact, and the report notes that boards may have strong connections with divisions or relevant groups outside APA governance but could strengthen coordination with Council and other APA boards. Subsequent to this report, P&P developed a liaison resource document with recommendations (see the P&P 2021 report). Board and committee chair leadership discussions or small groups may be a helpful project for the years ahead. In 2021 and 2022, the self-studies were extended to the committees, and a summary report is expected in early 2023.

*Work Group to Evaluate the Future of the Work of Governance and Volunteer Leadership.* The Future of Work (FOW) group was charged by the Board of Directors with making recommendations about how to best use and support the work of members whose volunteer service and professional expertise is essential to the work of the Association. Recommendations suggested that governance groups be organized (e.g., ad hoc vs. standing groups, make-up of group) based on the type of work required, such as maintenance activities, environmental scanning and identification of emerging issues. Tailored meeting models, including the use of face-to-face and virtual meetings in conjunction with asynchronous work, were also recommended to reflect the unique nature of the work to be done by each group. One of the recent obvious observations of the impact of this FOW report is in the way formerly referred to “volunteer leaders” are now commonly addressed as “elected and appointed leaders” or EALS.

Echoing the 2020 report from P&P, the group suggested that the central office offer to all EALS leadership training focusing on effective meeting management (especially in a virtual or hybrid format), cohesive team building, and other related materials. These trainings and opportunities intended to enhance all EALS’ leadership skills would presumably make the effectiveness of any group less dependent on the personalities and experiences of any given chair.

*Observations about Change Efforts within APA.*

Reviewing efforts to increase the effectiveness and alignment of APA governance groups, it becomes clear that well-defined decisions can be enacted when they are not complicated or when a small group has the authority to make the change. However, when broad changes are proposed, work can be delayed or closed down before any discussion with Council. For instance, moving to one in-person meeting for 2022 during the pandemic was a decision made by the Board of Directors and followed by the boards and committees. No further discussion or vote was required. The sunseting of COLI was slightly more complex, but as an ad hoc group, the Board of Directors had full authority to sunset the group. A year or more was spent in discussion with COLI and P&P, and legal office staff met with relevant stakeholders (e.g., Division 41, American Psychology – Law Society) to connect with needed experts for future review of amicus briefs. With the self-studies of boards and committees and with CEWG, groups spent time reflecting on their own effectiveness. Boards and committees were able to make immediate changes to improve, but improving the effectiveness and policy-making focus of Council has been a longer and more complex process, involving multiple groups and stakeholders.

Significant change requires investment, collaboration, momentum, and group alignment to accomplish. As seen with the bylaws work group and with delays in P&P’s efforts, when controversy arises, work can

be delayed or suspended by the President, Board of Directors, and/or through organized political opposition prior to broad discussion, making it difficult to work through differences to reach consensus. To allow for optimal organizational change that will help achieve the goals and priorities of the APA Strategic Plan, we must work toward a process that allows for complicated and controversial issues to be addressed without premature closure of discussion.

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#### Themes from Listening Sessions and Comments

From the 20 listening sessions and the open comments received, a number of themes were evident. Three P&P members reviewed the notes from listening sessions and comments received to create a list of themes. Lists were then compared and a single list created that would be brief enough for easy comprehension. These themes are presented in the table below and are then explained. Listening session participants included Council Representatives, division and SPTA leaders, and board and committee members. In the summary below, “leaders” is used to refer to these participants. Please note that the next content is simply a summary of what leaders shared in the listening sessions, rather than the opinion of P&P. For a more detailed list of themes, see the appendix.

#### Themes from Listening Sessions and Comments

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| <b>Representation Issues</b>   |
| All APA members should be able to vote and run for Council.  |
| Does the proposed model really address the representation of members who don’t belong to SPTAs and divisions, given their low voting rate? They choose not to join SPTAs and divisions |
| Need to have SPTA and division representation to ensure diversity of opinions and perspectives.  |
| SPTAs need more representation to ensure APA is doing more advocacy for psychologists.   |
| For science, difficult to have ECPs because they focus on the tenure process. Ensure science representation.   |
| Board of Directors and Council Leadership Team have higher representation in the proposed model.   |
| Representation is important and there is support for the idea of diversifying Council.   |
| A smaller Council will pose more challenge to representation and diversity.  |
| Public Interest is not the same as People of Color.  |
| Need more People of Color on Council.  |
| <b>Suggestions for Restructuring</b>   |
| Have a more nimble, inclusive, and civil Council.  |
| Ambivalence about the importance of nimbleness as a value for Council.   |
| Need a better process for policy items that are fast-tracked.  |
| Have term limits so people don’t stay on Council for a long time.  |

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| The current structure is fine.  |
| Council and boards should be connected meaningfully to coordinate on policy development.                        |
| Reduce the number of representatives from divisions, maybe one per division.                                    |
| Add members-at-large to be elected by all APA members.  |
| Good to have collaboration among practice, science, public interest, education, with equal voice.               |
| Add general applied psychology as a foundational area.  |
| Slating committee to determine slates, not nominees for slates. Divisions and SPTAs should nominate for slates. |
| Ensure that APA members, not staff, lead APA.   |

### Competing Interests

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| Apparent competing interests between Council Effectiveness Task Forces and Policy & Planning Board's proposal. |
| Awkward that Council elects members of boards and then have the board chairs serve on Council.                 |
| Council should commit to the best interest of APA and not competing interests.                                 |

### Membership Issues

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| Include free division membership with APA membership.  |
| The proposed model is more about divisions and SPTAs serving APA rather than APA serving them. |
| What do members want from APA? Would like more membership data.                                |

### Process Issues

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| Reach out to SPTAs, divisions, students, and ECPs directly to discuss proposal. |
| Discuss with stakeholders prior to revealing a model.                           |
| Council membership is a key way some SPTAs and divisions feel connected to APA. |

### *Representation Issues*

Council members and other leaders in APA, divisions, and SPTAs voiced concerns about representation. Council currently consists of elected leaders from each APA Division, each SPTA, and each Ethnic Psychological Association. Some stated that all APA members should be able to vote and run for Council, not just members of divisions and SPTAs, but some suggested that those not in divisions and SPTAs may not be interested in voting or running and thus do not need to be enfranchised this way. The low voting rate for APA Presidents (9-10% the past 4 years) was cited as a likely indicator of how many would vote for Council by general election.

Many leaders stated that APA should retain direct representation from all divisions and SPTAs in order to keep the current range of perspectives on Council; some framed these differences as a matter of diversity. SPTA representatives expressed concern that there is not enough advocacy for psychologists and that they are needed on Council to ensure this guild advocacy is occurring.

With the smaller model proposed, it became clear that the Board of Directors and Council Leadership Team would then be too large compared to the rest of Council. If Council is made smaller, these other groups may also need to be made smaller.

Related to diversity, several leaders expressed strong support for increased diversity of Council, as well as the awareness that structure alone cannot create an equal, diverse, and inclusive governing body. Leaders pointed out that a public interest perspective and diverse identity are not the same, and both are needed on Council. Several participants made note that structural change alone, especially with a focus only on diversity, cannot address issues with equity and inclusion. Some division leaders suggested that they have just achieved more diversity on Council by getting more seats through the apportionment ballot process, and they worried that any change would result in a set-back. Others suggested that Council is now diverse enough (68% White, 18% non-white, 14% prefer not to answer), especially with data from the EDI office showing that the percentage of non-White Council members is higher than the percentage of non-White APA members.

### *Suggestions for Restructuring*

Leaders suggested a number of ideas about how to restructure Council. Many agreed that a more nimble, inclusive, and civil Council, or at least a more efficient Council, would be helpful. The P&P model has 84 Council members; some suggested this was still too large. Others expressed concern about the value of nimbleness, wondering if it took away from the thoughtfulness of Council. Some suggested that a clear process for fast-tracked policies was needed. All agreed that Council should be more meaningfully connected to Boards and Committees, primarily to be more included when Boards and Committees are developing policies.

A number of leaders suggested reducing the number of representatives from divisions to just one per division. It should be noted that this would dramatically change the balance of division and SPTA representatives (currently, divisions have roughly two-thirds of Council seats, and SPTAs have roughly one third; with one seat per division, divisions would have fewer seats than SPTAs). Some suggested or supported the idea of added members-at-large who could be elected by all APA members. There was support for equal representation of the four foundational areas (practice, science, public interest, education), and there were requests to add a fifth area of General Applied psychology. However, some argued that since more members are working as Health Service Psychologists, this group should have more seats than other areas. Some were supportive of including more students and ECPs on Council.

The slating process was widely criticized. Ideas for slating included having the slating committee determine the slates while divisions and SPTAs nominate the candidates, or having Council vote on the slates to select what is needed. Leaders expressed concern that the slating process would not solve the divisiveness of Council; rather, Council members might still feel they were representing the groups that nominated them (their divisions and SPTAs), and the election process might become very political, which could result in less equity and inclusion. Small divisions and SPTAs particularly expressed concern that they would lose connection to APA and not have a member serving on Council in the future if they were competing against nominees from larger divisions and SPTAs. Leaders expressed concern about who would select the slating committee, the amount of power the committee would have, and they viewed this aspect of the structure as top down while describing the current system as more grassroots. Leaders suggested that division and SPTA members now can vote for a Council representative they know, and there is a clear pathway to APA leadership through the Council representative positions.

Several leaders stated that any changes to Council need to ensure that APA members, rather than APA staff, are leading APA. These concerns included some worry that the more powerful leaders in APA (e.g., the Board of Directors, the Executive Management Group) have too much power. Many leaders

suggested that they and their groups (divisions, SPTAs, EPAs) were disempowered, disconnected from APA, and struggled to make an impact in APA, even with their current Council representation.

### *Competing Interests*

Leaders wondered about P&P bringing the proposal forward for discussion when there are current Task Forces just beginning their work on improving Council effectiveness. It was suggested that P&P work with these groups or simply wait for their work to be complete and some effects to be evident. There was concern about Council electing the Board members and then having those Board chairs serve on Council (BSA, BPA, BAPPI, and BEA). Council members stated that all Council members should be voting in the best interest of APA rather than the group that elected them. However, others suggested that this apolitical approach is not reasonable or possible and that a new structure would not change the inherently political nature of engagement on Council.

### *Membership Issues*

Because so many members are not in a division or SPTA, it was suggested that APA members automatically be granted a free membership in a division or SPTA (though funding might be needed to support these groups). Then, they would be able to vote for their Council representative for that division or SPTA. Leaders asked questions about the members who are not in divisions and SPTAs and wondered what they would want. Some suggested that APA is becoming more of a professional association (like AARP) and less of a membership association. Leaders criticized the proposed model as having divisions and SPTAs serving APA rather than APA serving divisions and SPTAs.

### *Process Issues*

Leaders suggested we talk with SPTAs, divisions, students and ECPs to discuss the proposal. There was criticism that P&P developed a model alone and then brought it forward for discussion, rather than discussing the problems and getting stakeholder input to develop a model. For instance, one group suggested that APA should consult the SPTAs who recently restructured to have smaller boards and learn from their experience.

Concern was expressed that the proposed model, by removing direct representation of divisions and SPTAs, would reduce the key connection between these groups and APA. SPTAs help inform APA about legislation coming forward in the states that may threaten the practice of psychology, curtail human rights, or negatively impact population health. Divisions provide a professional home for members to connect with others in their sub-fields and specialties and provide a leadership pathway to APA leadership. Without strong connections, both APA and these groups would be affected.

## *Discussion and Future Possibilities*

### *Relationships between APA and SPTAs*

One theme that emerged across groups was that changing Council structure would amount to their loss of influence or power within APA. There was a sense that resources were zero-sum and that one group's gaining voice meant another would lose some of theirs. Groups that recently felt they had lost or had a threatened loss felt this particularly acutely. P&P heard this concern from multiple groups but most clearly from SPTA leadership. Throughout the listening sessions and in written feedback it was clear that SPTA leadership felt that representation on Council was a critical connection to APA. The companion message was that other connections between APA and SPTAs were unclear or unstable. Other notable connections include primarily APASI projects: the Practice Leadership Conference, advocacy resources



from APA staff, operational grants for very small SPTAs and for legislative advocacy (coordinated by the Committee of State Leaders). Concern for what the future of the APA-SPTA partnership will look like was readily apparent.

Attention to this partnership may be an opportunity to build organizational trust and be mutually beneficial. Relatively recently, APA ended the previous c6 organization, the APAPO and created the new c6, APA Services, Inc. (APASI). In the process, the Committee on the Advancement of Professional Practice (CAPP) was sunset, and additional seats were added to the Board of Professional Affairs to reflect healthcare practice concerns. Given the relatively recent restructuring of APA's c3/c6 structure, it may be a good time to review how the current structure is working. In the listening sessions, a number of SPTA representatives expressed concern that APA Council is not focused enough on issues important to their members, naming c6 or guild issues particularly. As Council is the governing body for APA, not APASI, these issues would not be appropriately attended to by Council. However, the concern does raise the question: how can APA and APASI better support SPTAs and guild advocacy, to include health service practitioners, general applied psychologists, scientists and educators, and other types of psychologists? For instance, APA is largely funded by publications and real estate investments, while APASI is entirely funded through receiving a percentage of membership dues. APASI is dramatically smaller than APA in its staffing and budget. Should we then delegate a larger percentage of member dues to APASI to better fund this work? Should APASI have a governance group with a general charge similar to CAPP? Currently, APASI has three governing bodies, the Board of Directors, the Finance Committee and the Advocacy Coordinating Committee, which has a very narrow scope of work to create the advocacy priorities for APA and APASI. These kinds of questions could be discussed in a thoughtful review of how the c3/c6 split is functioning.

SPTAs are evolving with members expressing more concern with social justice issues, and a number of SPTAs have also recently created foundations that are c3 associations. It may be useful to examine whether the current partnership between APA, APASI, and the SPTAs is effective for all. Critical advocacy work, psychological science and practice, and leadership development in SPTAs may be strengthened by further structural support from APA, and APA benefits from the grassroots advocates and innovative association programming developed in the SPTAs. Working to clarify expectations and evolve this relationship may create a pathway for more productive conversations about APA governance in the future.

### Relationships between APA and the Divisions

Divisions have developed organically, and APA has largely supported divisions to form and relate with APA in unique ways. For instance, some divisions are separately incorporated, keep their own membership records, and have more non-APA members than APA members. Divisions vary from quite small to very large, some have lucrative journal revenues while others have very little funding, and the culture of each division is unique.

In contrast to the more unified SPTA response, division representatives and leaders expressed a number of different responses to proposed changes in Council structure. There was some concern about loss of influence but less organized advocacy for the status quo. Division leaders supported having a more diverse Council, some greater efficiency of Council's work, and some balance across the foundational areas. However, they also expressed concern about divisions feeling disconnected from APA. Some described feeling disempowered within APA.

Some of the most heartfelt discussions centered around the importance of the divisions for psychologists' identity, development, and professional support. Leaders spoke of divisions as their professional home in which they experienced connection with colleagues, leadership development, and the ability to advocate for important issues. It was clear that within these smaller groups, leaders felt empowered in a way that they did not feel as they came to APA Council.

It may be worth having a productive discussion about the relationships between divisions and APA to identify the expectations and roles on each side and what is most needed to strengthen connections. For instance, very small divisions expressed fear that without representation on Council their division may die out. Some leaders from larger divisions which are separately incorporated suggested they might disconnect from APA and simply operate as an independent association. It may be helpful to explore what connections divisions have with APA and how these are mutually beneficial for APA and the divisions.

### Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The proposed model was designed to allow for structural equity and diversity, while the current Council structure has no pathway to ensure robust diversity. In listening sessions, leaders used the words "diversity" and "representation" in a number of ways, and there was no common understanding of what good diversity and representation would look like on Council. Many leaders were supportive of EDI but did not agree with the proposed model's solution. Rather, the organic, large, and messy nature of Council's current structure was framed as more democratic or grassroots, while the proposed model was framed as top-down, essentially a technocratic solution. To increase diversity on Council, suggestions included adding diverse members-at-large, asking divisions with more than one seat to slate for diversity (as some now do), and helping divisions and SPTAs with leadership development pathways for diverse psychologists.

On the other hand, a number of Council members appeared to suggest that Council is now diverse enough. A more thorough reading of the EDI Office's audit may be helpful to identify underrepresented groups on Council. Student and Early Career Psychologist (ECP) leaders articulated the need for more students and ECPs on Council, as they constitute large numbers of APA members but are much less represented on Council.

Some suggested that structural change may enhance diversity but may not really effect change in equity and inclusion of Council. It was clear that the proposed model was one structural idea toward increased diversity, but that a broader change needs to occur in how APA governance understands EDI and accomplishes true inclusion.

Overall, comments revealed little willingness to consider a structure designed to be diverse, especially if it was perceived that divisions and SPTAs might lose both power and voice by this change. These concerns seemed to limit creative and open thinking about what APA Council could be. More discussion may be needed to consider how to create a more transformational sense of inclusion and equity within APA governance.

### Possible Next Steps toward Evolution to Achieve Greater Impact

Issues of power and distrust appear to be blocking open discussion and dialogue about change at this time. Although a number of leaders engaged openly with the proposed model, organized responses from SPTA and practice leaders appeared to lobby for the interests of this group before any open

dialogue about the model could be achieved. In the listening sessions, we heard tensions between the c3 and c6 missions of APA and SPTAs, concerns that small divisions and SPTAs would simply fold, assertions that larger divisions would leave APA or that SPTA members would end their APA membership. We heard some distrust of APA leadership and staff, fear of loss of influence, and some disconnection with identifying as an APA leader. At times, APA Council members spoke of “APA” as if it were a monolithic and powerful agent rather than an association in which they hold a key leadership role. These divides, disconnections, and feelings of disempowerment seem to block openness to discussing change. We hope that articulating some of the rifts and concerns may begin a process of mutual understanding and trust, leading to community-building among APA leaders.

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Over the course of this year, some changes have already occurred. Related to the needs of divisions, APA’s Division Services Office has begun facilitating small group discussions with division leaders, and APASI’s Advocacy Coordinating Committee (ACC) began the Division Advocacy Partner Program in June. ACC and the Advocacy Office work with all advocacy concerns across practice, science, education, and public interest areas in ways that can break down silos. Related to the needs of practitioners, the Practice Office has added staff specifically to attend to independent practice concerns, and they are working with SPTA leaders to adapt the Practice Leadership Conference. The Finance Committee has discussed increasing funding to APASI to allow for more guild advocacy. Related to EDI concerns, the EDI office, the EPA representatives, and the new Council Ombudsperson are working to enhance equity and inclusion on Council. Other efforts we are not aware of are likely also occurring. Most of these efforts are collaborations between APA staff and elected and appointed leaders.

What is needed next? P&P recommends the following collaborative actions:

- Continued efforts to attend to the connections between APA and its divisions and between APA and the SPTAs
- Continued efforts to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in APA governance, particularly helping APA leaders embrace a transformational approach to inclusion
- New efforts to build trust and enhance connection between APA staff and elected and appointed leaders

APA leaders should be able to hold difficult discussions about ideas that some may consider potential threats to power in a spirit of trust in their colleagues who hold different perspectives. For now, P&P will continue to work collaboratively with Council and boards and committees to enhance the functioning of APA. Given our mission, P&P will likely prompt Council and boards and committees to discuss potential structural changes at various times in the future. With enhanced trust and collaboration, APA governance should be able to openly and thoughtfully consider change in the interest of APA’s strategic priorities.

## Appendix: Detailed List of Themes from Listening Sessions and Comments

### Council Size and Efficiency:

- Smaller Council would increase engagement and civility
- 84 is still too large; could have just 10 members in each foundational area
- Too small may silence minority views, as it is difficult to speak up or be heard if just one voice
- Smaller Council size reduces leadership opportunities (currently is leadership pathway from SPTAs/ Divisions to APA)
- Nimble could mean being less thoughtful
- Increasing efficiency would be helpful
- Need different pathways for urgent policies, could have fast and slow tracks

### SPTA Representation:

- SPTAs want to be represented on any policy-making body in APA
- Council is an important link between APA and the SPTAs, and the link has been getting weaker
- Small states may especially lose their voice with APA
- Concern that geographical or regional diversity would be lost
- Members like to know the people they are voting for
- Council and APA are too focused on c(3) advocacy and not enough of c(6) – the model doesn't change that – some assumption that APA Council is the Council for the c(6) side of the organization (which is not the case)
- APA can do more for SPTAs, but ultimately the SPTAs need to have more voice with APA

### Division Representation

- Members will feel even more disconnected from the process if their divisions and SPTAs are not represented on Council
- Divisions provide content area expertise to Council
- Assembly members would not feel accountable to any specific group
- Divisions who are separately incorporated or who feel that APA limits them may just leave APA
- Concerned about science divisions and losing more science members
- Divisions are where active members work on initiatives for the field, and having seats on Council allows APA to connect with this energy

### Competing Interests (APA vs. SPTA or Division)

- Council reps are able to keep perspective of group who sent them while voting for interests of APA
- Having competing interests may be healthy and positive for APA
- Council reps see themselves as representing the group that elected them, and they would continue to do so even in a new structure (with groups that endorsed them or groups they have been leaders in)

### APA members not in Divisions and SPTAs

- Important to enfranchise all APA members by allowing them to vote for Council members



- The apportionment ballot, BOD, President, and bylaws voting is enough of a vote, as they are not very engaged or doing the work of the Divisions and SPTAs
- Could give them a free membership to a division or SPTA
- APA should do more to help Divisions and SPTAs get more members

#### Diversity:

- Rather than try to diversify Council through structural change, help SPTAs and divisions increase leadership pathways for diverse members
- Proposal undermines diversity by creating a more top-down approach with the slating committee
- Reducing the number of Council members will reduce diversity, including the voices of psychologists from small states and small divisions
- Council is already very diverse
- It would be important to have more representation of both POC and Public Interest individuals
- Changing the system may help reduce inequity but there is no guarantee that structural changes alone would ensure this
- Concern about over-taxing and/or tokenizing POC on Council

#### Foundational Areas:

- Four equal foundational areas, equally represented as in the proposal
- Need more Health Service Psychologists because more members work in this area (should have more than ¼ of seats) - (House of Reps model)
- How do we define representation? Should Council reflect all members (including students, affiliates, etc.) or all psychologists?
- Science is currently very under-represented, so the balanced domains in the model is positive
- 15 in each area is not enough to include all the different perspectives within that area
- Need to ensure disciplinary diversity within each area

#### Slating Process

- Would be confusing and overly complex, difficult for new leaders to navigate
- Unclear if it would help or make political processes worse (creating more exclusivity and knowledge barriers)
- How would the slating committee or Council determine what is needed next for upcoming slates? Who would select the slating committee?
- With low voter turnout, this process would likely still result in groups that are well-organized getting more representation (e.g., large divisions and SPTAs)
- Slating process takes away the “grassroots” element of the current model
- Could allow for more ECPs and possibly students to be on Council, where they are currently barely represented
- Would need to be very transparent – maybe have Council choose or vote on which slates are needed

#### Ideas:

- Include one seat per division and SPTA (Senate model)
- Add a seat for Board of Convention Affairs along with content board chairs
- Add a fifth Foundational Area of General Applied Psychology
- Add Member-at-Large seats to represent members not in Divisions or SPTAs
- Have a federated approach to policy (e.g., each domain would pass policy relevant to its area)
- Find a way to enfranchise division and SPTA members who are not members of APA
- Make Council smaller by removing the Board of Directors and CLT
- Make Council smaller by grouping together SPTAs and grouping together Divisions so they each at least have someone representing their group, or have Divisions and SPTAs on a rotational schedule with a Council rep every few years
- With a smaller Council, need to reduce the size of the BOD and CLT so they are not such a large proportion of Council
- With current lack of trust and desire to keep some power, it may be difficult for Council to change its structure or imagine a different structure; may need to discuss issues of trust, power and representation before developing ideas for new structure

#### Top-down:

- Model is more centralized and top-down, moves away from a membership organization, would make Council very corporate
- Feeling that the Central Office staff and leadership are more in control than the elected and appointed leaders; sense of being under-valued and not consulted enough (e.g. APA does a lot with technology without consulting the relevant division)
- Model looks like the divisions and SPTAs are serving APA instead of APA serving them

#### Process Issues:

- Council's work to improve its own functioning is ongoing, and P&P should not be bringing forward structural change ideas until that work is done.
- Council is better than it was a few years ago and the proposal addresses issues that are no longer problems.
- Council should have been included in the process of developing model ideas
- Concern that P&P will take the proposal to the membership for a vote without Council
- Several SPTAs have recently reduced the size of their Boards; they should be consulted about lessons learned and what worked and didn't work – (Ohio, California)