

Proposal to Amend Society of Women Engineers Bylaws

Proposal #	Description	Article	Section	Proposed by
S-2110	<p>Amend Article IX, Section 4, parts G and H - Change calendar deadlines to timeline based</p> <p><i>Amend Article IX, Section 4.G by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> striking out “the previous December 31” in part 3 and inserting “the day the slate is announced” and striking out “by March 1” in part 4 and inserting “no later than 30 days after the announcement of the slate.” <p><i>Amend Article IX, Section 4.H by striking out “March 1” and inserting “30 days after the announcement of the slate.”</i></p>	IX	4	Kristine Barnes, Stephanie Loete, Alison Bergmann, Lisa Rimpf, Heather Wiest, Stacey DeVecchio, Heather Bernardin

<u>Current Language:</u>	<u>Proposed Changes:</u>	<u>If Adopted:</u>
<p><u>ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES</u> <u>Section 4. Nominating Committee</u></p> <p>G. Additional candidates for all positions may be nominated by petition, provided that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The member is eligible for the position. The member has given written consent to be placed on the ballot. At least one percent of the voting members as of the previous December 31 have signed a petition or endorsed an e-mail to place the candidate’s name on the ballot, with no more than ten percent being from any one section or group, the members at large, or the international members. 	<p><u>ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES</u> <u>Section 4. Nominating Committee</u></p> <p>G. Additional candidates for all positions may be nominated by petition, provided that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The member is eligible for the position. The member has given written consent to be placed on the ballot. At least one percent of the voting members as of the previous December 31 the day the slate is announced have signed a petition or endorsed an e-mail to place the candidate’s name on the ballot, with no more than ten percent being from any one section or group, the members at large, or the international members. 	<p><u>ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES</u> <u>Section 4. Nominating Committee</u></p> <p>G. Additional candidates for all positions may be nominated by petition, provided that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The member is eligible for the position. The member has given written consent to be placed on the ballot. At least one percent of the voting members as of the day the slate is announced have signed a petition or endorsed an e-mail to place the candidate’s name on the ballot, with no more than ten percent being from any one section or group, the members at large, or the international members.

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<p>4. The petition, together with the written consent, is submitted to the Society headquarters by March 1.</p> <p>H. Members whose dues are current as of March 1 shall be eligible to vote in the election. The executive director shall be responsible to ensure that the ballot, listing the candidates proposed by the nominating committee and any candidates who have properly petitioned, shall be sent to each voting member by April 1. No member may be nominated for more than one office or position on the ballot.</p>	<p>4. The petition, together with the written consent, is submitted to the Society headquarters by March 1 no later than 30 days after the announcement of the slate.</p> <p>H. Members whose dues are current as of March 1 30 days after the announcement of the slate shall be eligible to vote in the election. The executive director shall be responsible to ensure that the ballot, listing the candidates proposed by the nominating committee and any candidates who have properly petitioned, shall be sent to each voting member by April 1. No member may be nominated for more than one office or position on the ballot.</p>	<p>4. The petition, together with the written consent, is submitted to the Society headquarters no later than 30 days after the announcement of the slate.</p> <p>H. Members whose dues are current as of 30 days after the announcement of the slate shall be eligible to vote in the election. The executive director shall be responsible to ensure that the ballot, listing the candidates proposed by the nominating committee and any candidates who have properly petitioned, shall be sent to each voting member by April 1. No member may be nominated for more than one office or position on the ballot.</p>
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Conforming Amendment:

None

Rationale:

Currently petition and member voting eligibility deadlines are held to specific dates (December 31st and March 1st) regardless of when the slate is presented to the membership.

It is proposed that the deadlines be revised to a specified amount of time (30 days) post-slate presentation to the membership to not delay balloting or transition activities. Deadlines for presenting the slate to the membership and sending ballots to eligible members would remain unchanged.

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This proposal increases operational flexibility without modifying the original Bylaws intent for the petition period. Changing the language to 30 days does not alter the Bylaws intent for a set length for the petition period. If the slate is presented on February 1st, members have 29 days (depending on leap year) to submit a petition by March 1st.

The proposed changes in the petition process may be interpreted as a large change from the FY21 and FY22 election cycles because the slate was released much earlier than had been done previously. However, it was moving the timeline up that highlighted the desired change to elapsed time. Completing the election cycle earlier is in line with the direction to have elected leaders determined earlier, allowing for a better transition.

This proposal removes all date constraints for the initiation of election activities which may lead to the temporal variation in the number of required petition signatures and number of members eligible to vote in the election. From recent membership trends, July numbers range from 20k – 24k members, Oct/Nov increase to 34k – 36k, and end of December increases to 37k – 39k.

Pros:

Benefits of adoption of the proposed amendment include:

- It is desirable to release the slate once the Nominating Committee process is completed. Holding the election earlier gives additional transition and planning time for incoming leaders.
- Currently no work can be done to finalize the list of members who receive ballots until after the March 1st deadline. If the slate is presented prior to the February 1st deadline, the proposed 30-day limit allows staff to start preparations for balloting and voting communication earlier.
- The slate must be presented to the membership by February 1st. With the current petition deadline of March 1st, the amount of time to complete a petition was variable. Moving to 30 days post slate announcement standardizes the petition timeline from year-to-year.
- The petition due date and deadline for member voting eligibility remain linked as intended. Instead of the specific March 1 date, they will now be timeline based.

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Cons:

The following items have been identified as potential risks and/or topics that will require education or action in the implementation plan:

- In the existing language, a petition candidate would have until March 1st no matter when the slate was announced. With the proposal, if the slate is announced before the February 1st deadline, there would not be an extended petition period.
- The time for creating balloting materials may be decreased by 1 day if the slate is announced on the February 1st deadline, depending on the length of February.
- Global public holidays, sacred religious observances, or other unknown variables may make it unreasonable to collect petition signatures in a timely manner depending on what date the slate is announced.
- A timed deadline of 30 days post slate announcement makes the due dates for petition and members eligible to vote variable. Determining the number of required signatures on the date of the slate announcement versus a fixed date of December 31 adds temporal variation in the quantity. In other words, an earlier slate announcement results in fewer required signatures for a petition and fewer eligible voters, potentially up to a 50% reduction depending on the release date of the slate.

Action Items:

Slate announcements must include the official deadlines for petitions and ensuring membership dues are paid.

Balloting expenses could hit the budget earlier if activities are started earlier than previous years. It is unlikely that the amount would be affected, but cash flow and payment timing could be a consideration.