

Hello AFOS membership!

The focus of this article is to summarize the 18 proposed bylaws amendments that will be reviewed at the 2012 American Optometric Association's House of Delegates (HOD) from June 24-26, 2012. Each amendment has a bulletined summary listed and some have a "summary of benefits" as viewed by the AOA. Each amendment has been reviewed and debated by the AFOS Executive Council (EC) and, in some cases, clarification was sought from the AOA or outside sources. The current feelings of the EC are listed along with each amendment. It is important to remember that the exact wording of the amendment can change during the HOD and these changes can substantively alter the essence of the amendment and thus AFOS's decision on how to vote. During these fluid decisions, AFOS members must rely on its appointed delegates to make decisions about what is in the best interests of our organization.

At this time, these summaries are being provided with our current feelings for your review. The EC welcomes your feedback which can be emailed to Dr. Sunman ([sunmike1@hotmail.com](mailto:sunmike1@hotmail.com)) who will coordinate the responses. The complete Bulletin from the AOA with full text versions of each amendment change will be posted on our website's homepage.

#### **JUDICIAL COUNCIL ADVISORY OPINIONS (A)**

- To modify the duties of the Judicial Council to include the Standards of Professional conduct adopted by the House of Delegates in June 2011.

*AFOS EC View: No concerns; we support.*

#### **NOTICE AND EFFECTIVE DATE OF BYLAW CHANGES (B)**

- This change would permit the Association to have greater latitude in the method and manner of notice provided for future amendments to the Bylaws.
- Given the obvious popularity of e-mail and other electronic and internet-based delivery methods, such a change will not only facilitate the distribution of future proposed amendments but potentially save the AOA a significant amount of money in postage and other costs and fees.
- Unless otherwise provided in the bylaws, all amendments are effective on January 1, following approval by the House of Delegates.

*AFOS EC View: No concerns; we support.*

#### **MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION AND QUALIFICATIONS (C)**

*This proposed change addresses the barriers to entry into membership.*

- Eliminate the current licensing requirement, which may hinder membership growth because many Optometric Educator Members and Special Class Members, as defined under the current Bylaws, may not be licensed and unable to join.
- Graduates from Optometry Colleges are also unable to transfer their student membership to active membership and are often lost in the current transition process.
- Affiliate member must have Doctor of Optometry degree from an ACOE accredited college or school of optometry or its equivalent.
- The work and/practicing requirements will be removed.
- Members will be permitted to affiliate through the association where they live or work.
- Special Class classification will be eliminated because it will no longer be needed with the elimination of licensing and practicing requirements. Special class members would now join as General members.

- Active Members will pay 100% of annual dues. Modified ascending dues available, descending dues eliminated.

#### **Summary of Benefits**

- Many of these current requirements limit membership and subsequently hinders membership growth for the AOA and the affiliates due a variety of factors including, but not limited to: limiting membership to only those who are currently employed and currently licensed.

*AFOS EC View: Initial concerns were answered to our satisfaction; we support.*

### **CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION (D)**

*This proposed change addresses two objectives of streamlining processes and eliminating financial loopholes.*

- Change in classification allowed only once per year.
  - Changes made between May 1 and December 31 will be effective for next membership year.
  - Changes made between January 1 and April 30 will be retroactive to the beginning of that year.
- This provision will have no effect on the eligibility of new members and reinstated members to have their dues prorated on monthly basis. Members who drop and reinstate in same year cannot prorate dues and must pay full dues for that year. Drops would still be process throughout the year.

#### **Summary of Benefits**

- This revision will eliminate complicated transactions from members changing classification throughout the year as well as reduce write-offs incurred throughout year as a result of changes in classification.

*AFOS EC View: No concerns; we support.*

### **FEDERAL SERVICES MEMBERSHIP (E)**

*This proposed change addresses two objectives of streamlining processes.*

- Any individual with a properly accredited Doctor of Optometry degree, affiliating through the Armed Forces Optometric Society would be eligible for classification as a Federal Services Member.
- Federal Services Members will pay 100% of annual dues. Modified ascending dues are available, and descending dues eliminated.

*AFOS EC View: No concerns; we support.*

### **OPTOMETRIC EDUCATOR, DISTINGUISHED, AND HONORARY MEMBERSHIP (F)**

- State affiliated and Board of Trustee approvals will be eliminated from the Optometric Educator Member classification change. If applicant meets the criteria of full-time educator then additional approvals are unnecessary.
- Dues for Optometric Educator Members will be 50% of annual dues, which is unchanged.
- Distinguished and Honorary Members will not pay dues, which is unchanged.

*AFOS EC View: No concerns; we support.*

### **ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATIONS, QUALIFICATIONS, AND DUES (G)**

*This proposed change addresses the barriers to entry into membership.*

- Associate Members may also be associate members of the affiliate.
- International Members must be an optometrist as defined by the World Council of Optometry and must reside or practice in a foreign country or U.S. commonwealth, possession or territory.
- Substantial Interest classification will be renamed "Public Member" classification and is open to anyone so long as the individual is not an optometrist. Approval from affiliate for membership will no longer be required.
- The Paraoptometric Member classification will remain unchanged.
- International and Public Member dues will be determined by the Board of Trustees. Paraoptometric Member dues will still be determined by the Paraoptometric Section, but will be subject to approval by the Board of Trustees.
- No Associate Member will be eligible for ascending dues.

#### **Summary of Benefits**

- This would be a name change that will be more consistent to what other associations call these types of members.
- These member are direct members of AOA and do not affiliate through the state associations, AFOS or AOSA. This would be similar to the non-optometrist members that many affiliates have where AOA is not required to approve.

*AFOS EC View: No concerns; we support.*

#### **LIFE MEMBERSHIP (H)**

- Age requirement will be eliminated, and the number of membership years will be increased from 35 years to 45 years.
- Life Members will not pay dues, which is unchanged.
- Would allow members affiliated through AFOS to also be eligible for Life Membership.
- All Life Members as of March 31, 2012 shall be grandfathered into Life Membership status (e.g. shall retain Life Membership status).

*AFOS EC View: AFOS lobbied for amendment of this bylaw to include our members. We have, however, raised concern regarding another part of this amendment that is being stricken which may make it difficult for disabled members to seek Life membership. We support the amendment, but would like the disability clause left intact.*

#### **RETIRED MEMBERSHIP (I)**

- Any individual with a properly accredited Doctor of Optometry degree who is a member in good standing of one of the permitted affiliates would be eligible for classification as a Retired Member provided that the member no longer works in an optometrically related activity.
- Retired Members electing to receive membership benefits other than the title "Retired Member" are required to pay membership dues of \$100.00.
- Would allow members affiliated through AFOS to also be eligible for Retired Membership classification.

*AFOS EC View: AFOS lobbied for amendment of this bylaw to include our members; we support the amendment.*

#### **STUDENT MEMBERSHIP (J)**

*This proposed change addresses the barriers to entry into membership by making it clear to*

*students that they are AOA members.*

- Student members would be expressly exempt from the "optometrist" requirement.
- The dues for student members would now be \$35.00

#### **Summary of Benefits**

- All members of the AOA pay dues to their affiliate and to the AOA except for students.
- It is in the best interest of the AOA and the affiliates to treat the students as what they aspire to be, doctors of optometry. In addition, when there is no dollar cost placed on a membership, then it would appear that the membership has little or no value.
- Optometry students get a wide range of benefits from the AOA including AOA Compass, an online service that helps them transition to practice, and *Eyes on the Future*, an e-newsletter just for students and new graduates.
- Students also benefit from all the AOA's other online resources, have discounted registration and OD-level continuing education at Optometry's Meeting® and daily access to AOA First Look.
- The student's AOA dues under this proposal would be a nominal \$35.00 per year, helping the association continue to offer tailor-made services and most importantly, strengthen optometry for the future so they have a robust profession in which to practice.

*AFOS EC View: We voiced concerns about this to the AOA and requested feedback from our Student Liaison. AOA is attempting to increase the number of students converting their memberships from "student" to "active" upon graduation and creating a nominal annual fee may increase perceived value in their opinion. Based on our Student Liaison's reply and his discussions with the AOSA, the EC feels there should be more exploration of alternative avenues to increasing conversion rates before enacting a dues change. We are unlikely to support as written.*

#### **POST-GRADUATE MEMBERSHIP (K)**

*This proposed change addresses the barriers to entry into membership by making it clear to post-grads that they are AOA members.*

- Any individual with a properly accredited Doctor of Optometry degree, a member in good standing of any affiliate, and a resident in an accredited optometric program would be eligible for classification as a Post-Graduate Member of the AOA.
- Dues for Post-Graduate Members will be \$35.00.

#### **Summary of Benefits**

- Similar to the student member category, it is in the best interest of the AOA and the affiliates to treat post-graduates as what they aspire to be, doctors of optometry. In addition, when there is no dollar cost placed on a membership, then it would appear that the membership has little or no value.
- As with students, post-graduates receive a wide range of benefits from the AOA including the Online Career Center, AOA Compass, an online service that helps them transition to practice, and *Eyes on the Future*, an e-newsletter just for students and new graduates.
- The post-graduate's AOA dues under this proposal would be a nominal \$35.00 per year, helping the association continue to offer tailor-made services and most importantly, strengthen optometry for the future so they have a robust profession in which to practice.

*AFOS EC View: No concerns; we support.*

### **ASCENDING DUES SCHEDULE (L)**

*This proposed change addresses two objectives of streamlining processes and eliminating financial loopholes.*

- The ascending dues schedule has been reduced from a 5-year schedule to a 4-year schedule in which the percentages are revised to 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100% respectively.
- Only full dues-paying members are eligible for the ascending schedule.
- Graduation Year will be used as basis for determining eligibility for the ascending dues schedule, which replaces the original license year currently in use.
- Post-Graduate Members will be eligible for the ascending dues schedule following the completion of residency at an appropriate level based on the member's year of graduation. For example, upon completion of a one-year residency, the member will be assessed 50% of annual dues for the second year after the member's graduation.
- All members eligible for ascending dues as of March 31, 2012, shall be grandfathered and allowed to continue on the ascending dues schedule for the first four years of membership. For the fifth year of membership, grandfathered members shall pay 100% dues, as is the current rule.

#### **Summary of Benefits**

- Ascending and descending dues schedules are not a common practice in most associations. In fact, no other examples of these types of schedules could be found.

*AFOS EC View: Raised initial concerns with the AOA and are now content that the change to streamline and eliminate loopholes is sound. Will support.*

### **DESCENDING DUES (M)**

*This proposed change addresses the two objectives of streamlining processes and eliminating financial loopholes.*

- The descending dues schedule will be eliminated.

#### **Summary of Benefits**

- Ascending and descending dues schedules are not a common practice in most associations. In fact, no other examples of these types of schedules could be found.

*AFOS EC View: This rarely affected us and is very difficult to manage; we support.*

### **PARTIAL PRACTICE MEMBERSHIP (N)**

*This proposed change addresses the objective of streamlining processes.*

- The partial practice member classification would be limited to those members working 16 hours or less per week.
- Partial practice members would pay 60% of annual dues (currently graduated scales of 20%, 40% and 60% are used based on number of days worked).

#### **Summary of Benefits**

- Although the partial practice members may only work a few days per week, they continue to receive full benefits and see no reduction in their benefits as a result of their reduced dues.

- As the population shifts to more members in part-time status or reduced dues – partial practice, ascending dues, retired, and life – it does not seem appropriate that those members working full-time and paying full dues should subsidize a significant portion of the costs related to those members not paying full dues.

*AFOS EC View: Raised initial concerns with the AOA, but satisfied with response. Will support.*

### **ASSESSMENT AND COLLECTION OF DUES (O)**

*This proposed change addresses the two objectives of streamlining processes and eliminating financial loopholes.*

- Dues to be paid 30 days following the end of the quarter.
- Members will be notified of the delinquency if payment is not received by this due date.
- Delinquent members will be dropped 60 days after the quarter.

### **Summary of Benefits**

- This proposed change will eliminate prior year(s) outstanding balances of past due members.
- Timely quarterly payments by the affiliates will ensure that all members are current and are appropriately receiving AOA member benefits.
- Improves fairness to dues paying members.
- This change creates good and fair business practices between the AOA and all affiliates.

*AFOS EC View: No concerns; we support.*

### **SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION COUNCIL (P)**

- This will provide ACOE with the authority to inspect and accredit providers of continuing professional optometric education.
- This motion is in response to Substantive Motion M-2011-4 directing ACOE to “modify its mission and expand its scope to include accreditation of providers of continuing professional optometric education”.

*AFOS EC View: Concerns about the timing of the issue and the potential for discord in the profession. Would prefer there to be additional debate/discussion on the topic before proceeding. We are unlikely to support as written.*

### **REMOVAL OF LICENSURE REQUIREMENT (Q)**

- To be consistent with the Bylaw revisions eliminating the current licensing requirement and permitting affiliate members to simply be those with a Doctor of Optometry degree from an ACOE accredited college or school of optometry or its equivalent.

*AFOS EC View: No concerns; we support.*

### **NOTICE AND EFFECTIVE DATE OF CONSTITUTION CHANGES (R)**

- This change would permit the Association to have greater latitude in the method and manner of notice provided for future amendments to the Constitution.
- Given the obvious popularity of e-mail and other electronic and internet-based delivery methods, such a change will not only facilitate the distribution of future proposed amendments, but potentially save the Association a significant amount of money in postage and other costs and fees.

- Unless otherwise provided in the constitution, all amendments are effective on January 1, following approval by the House of Delegates

*AFOS EC View: No concerns; we support.*