

Proposed Changes to the Bylaws to be Presented to the Membership for Voting in October 2018

In addition to electing four directors, voting members will also vote on proposed bylaws amendments. The Board approved putting forward two proposed bylaws amendments for approval by the membership. The proposed revisions appear below and are posted online at www.atanet.org/bylaws_change.php. Please note that material proposed to be deleted is struck through; material proposed to be added is underlined. ATA's bylaws may be altered, amended, or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the voting members.

Proposed Bylaws Amendments

Proposed: That Article III, Section 2a. of the Bylaws be amended as follows:

“1) Any person who (a) is professionally engaged in translating, interpreting, or closely related work, (b) is a citizen or permanent resident of the United States, and (c) meets one of the following criteria: (i) has passed a certification examination administered by the Association, or (ii) has been granted Credentialed Interpreter status by the Association, or (iii) has achieved demonstrable professional status as determined by peer evaluation, is eligible for Active membership.”

Commentary: The intent of this amendment is to provide equal treatment to interpreters who are certified or accredited by an ATA-recognized body and given “Credentialed Interpreter” status by ATA by automatically granting voting rights to such members.

Proposed: That Article XIII, Section 2a. of the Bylaws be amended as follows:

“A petition for the establishment of a Division must be signed by ~~twenty or more voting~~ 150 or more active, corresponding, or associate members of the Association, at least 50 of whom must be active or corresponding members, who shall signify their desire to participate in the activities of the Division.”

Commentary: The requirements regarding the number of signatures necessary to petition for the establishment of a division have not changed since 1983, when total membership was about 2,175 and there was only one division (Sci-Tech), compared to the current approximately 10,000 members and 22 divisions.

The proposed amendment has two purposes:

First, to extend the right to support the establishment of a division to all individual members. The majority of individual members are not active or corresponding (voting) members. Yet associate members comprise the majority of division members. As only the division officers must be voting members, associate members may comprise the majority of volunteers in division activities. It is thus appropriate and just to allow associate members to demonstrate support for a new division.

Second, the number of signatures required is increased to ensure that a new division has sufficient core support to provide the required services. Divisions must have an administrator and assistant administrator. They usually also need a webmaster, newsletter or blog editor, listserv administrators, and other volunteers. The establishment of Leadership Councils for each division has also increased the number of division volunteers needed. Leadership Councils often have 10-15 members. Many divisions also have additional committees such as conference or networking committees that also require volunteers.

The increase in the number of signatures required helps ensure that a new division has the minimum level of support from individual members who will comprise the core volunteers who will make the division viable.