

Memorandum

From: David Rodney

Date: 18 June 2019

Subject: Survey of Board of Governors regarding potential ACBL reorganization

A joint committee of Board of Directors (BoD) and Board of Governors (BoG) members has been considering ways to reorganize the BoD and BoG to better meet the needs of the ACBL in the years ahead. A survey was sent to the BoG asking them for their opinions regarding a number of issues regarding a potential reorganization. This memo provides a summary of the responses to the survey.

Survey Content

The survey asked for opinions regarding 14 aspects of the reorganization, which are listed below.

1. Executive Board has 9 members
2. Executive Board members are identified based on skills that will fit the responsibilities of the new board. Sample skills include Project Management; professional work experience in management of staff, Boards, teams; financial expertise; managerial or Board not-for-profit experience, Tournament Management; Bridge Stakeholder experience/involvement.
3. A slate of potential Executive Board members would be developed by a Nominating Committee that would both seek candidates and screen self-nominated candidates (composition of Nominating Committee TBD)
4. Most of the current program or “Bridge Committees” (e.g., Masterpoints, Bridge in General, Tournaments, NABCs) will fall under the Senate
5. A 50-person Senate will enable many current Board members to serve their districts and continue to make important decisions about bridge issues
6. Bridge Committees will report to the Senate
7. Bridge Committees will report to the Executive
8. Bridge Committees will report to Management
9. In order to give the Bridge Committees real authority, their decisions may be overridden only by a super-majority of the Senate
10. In order to give the Bridge Committees real authority, their decisions may be overridden only by a super-majority of the Executive
11. In order to give the Bridge Committees real authority, their decisions may be overridden only by Management with input from the Executive

12. The Senate in its entirety will meet initially (e.g., during its first year) on a schedule similar to that of the current Board of Governors

13. The Senate in its entirety will meet only once annually after the initial year of restructuring is complete

14. Senate Committees will meet as needed and as determined by the Senate and/or the Committees

To each question a respondent could provide one of 5 responses: (1) strongly agree; (2) agree; (3) no opinion; (4) disagree; and (5) strongly disagree

Survey Responses

25 members of the BoG responded to the survey. Their responses are summarized in the following table. (*Note: A few responses were blank – I included them under No Opinion*)

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
EB has 9 members	12	7	2	1	3
EB based on skills	14	7	0	2	2
Nominating comm. for EB	11	11	0	1	2
Bridge Comms. Under Senate	14	8	0	1	2
50 person senate for BoD continuity	5	11	1	4	4
Bridge Comms. report to Senate	7	7	4	5	2
Bridge Comms. report to EB	7	7	5	5	3
Bridge Comms report to Mgt.	6	7	4	3	5
Bridge Comms. over-ride by Senate super majority	9	6	2	4	4
Bridge Comms over-ride by EB super majority	3	8	2	5	7
Bridge Comms over-ride by management and EB	1	6	2	9	7
Senate initial schedule similar to BoG	6	12	3	2	1
Subsequent Senate meetings annually	8	3	2	8	4
Senate meet as needed	9	9	3	3	1

Observations from survey responses

There were a few clear take-aways from the survey responses. A large majority of the responses were for:

- A 9-person executive board

- Executive board members based on skills
- A nominating committee for the executive board
- Bridge Committees under the Senate
- A senate schedule initially following current BoG guidelines and subsequently, at the discretion of the Senate

There was much less agreement/consensus regarding other survey questions.

I have a couple of concerns regarding the survey.

- I know one of the main contention points is whether a reorganized BoD / proposed Executive Board will/should have some regional representation. I presume Question 5 was trying to address whether the proposed Senate addresses the concerns re regional representation. I don't know if the respondents understood that the proposed EB may have zero geographic representation (e.g., it may be that the 9 best candidates all come from Alaska). This should have been made clear in the survey.
- The questions regarding who oversees the Bridge Committees had some conflicting answers. I assume that only one body would oversee the Bridge Committees, and that the survey was trying to get at which body this should be. However, many respondents gave the same responses to all of these questions (e.g., the Bridge Committees should report to the EB, and the Senate, and Management). I think the questions could have been better worded.

I did not compute statistics (percentages, correlations, etc.). I don't think they would add much to the discussion.

Respondents' Comments

There were also some comments provided by the respondents that were varied in content. My take away from the comments is that there are many unanswered questions and concerns regarding this proposed reorganization.

Their comments are listed below.

- I like the concept and I will look forward to seeing how the details are worked out
- I think 50 and 9 is a bit too small. Mostly because we want a good pool of people to place on committees -- the Senate doesn't need to be much smaller than the current BoG. Perhaps 75 and 11 or 13? If the time comes to reduce the number of districts, those of us in the sparsely populated area will be anxious to 'see our rights preserved' -- rather as the U.S. Senate "overrepresents" small states.
- Ref #2. I really like this one. The emphasis on skills needed has been missing. Ref#9. The Senate should have the "super authority" over the committees, and not the Executive or Management, since the Committees deal with "Bridge Issues". Ref #7 and #8, the Bridge Committees should report only to the Senate, with Senate review and concurrence to take the import of "law".

- 1. Nine is a little too small. 2. Exec. Bd. needs at least a decent representation of top or near-top players. 3. Who decides who is on the board? As proposed, a very few people would decide, which is a bad idea. 5 & 12. 50 is unnecessarily large. Should be about the same size as the current BOD. Are we going to pay 50 Senators for their trip to the nationals and hotel during the meetings? 9-11. This would give the committees, comprised of very few members and easily taken over by one or two influential/energetic members, excessive power over bridge matters. 13. Too few meetings. Little would ever get done.
- I did not care for the survey. Did I miss the question, of "Should a Senate be formed?" Where is the statement that "the District lines must be redrawn? The current Districts are a joke. Currently, members are not equally represented. Where does the concept of a Senate come from? Who determined that one should be formed?
- There must be some form of election after a slate is selected. It's not advisable to select people on the basis of a specific expertise. For example, if one board member is an IT guru the rest of the board will defer to them. Best to have strong managerial experience and good knowledge of the myriad issues involving the bridge world. The phase out of remaining terms is a cop out IMO. It is only being done to appease certain BOD members. Best to flip the switch. IMO this will never happen. Good luck
- No one on the nominating committee should either be serving or eligible for the Executive Board.
- I strongly believe in general the decision-making authority must be left to a small group of experts.
- Other than reducing the BoD to 9 members, which I wholeheartedly support, this new plan sounds as potentially bureaucratic and ludicrous as the old one. A nominating committee with no plan for how it works? A giant Senate with a pretentious name? The idea should be to create a nimble system that lets a small BoD set broad goals and push management to enact those plans. They s/b able to appoint committees on an ad hoc basis and return as much day to day operations to management and those committees. These new plans don't sound like that big an improvement to me, (though it's hard to get a real sense of where they are going), but rather a repackaging and renaming of the bloated system we already have. Moreover, I'm not sure your survey is getting you the answers you want. I wasn't really able to click answers that conveyed my true ideas about the plan so I'd be wary of the data you collect.