



Six Bylaw Amendments will be Advanced to PRSA National Assembly

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) National Board reviewed six proposed amendments to the organization's current bylaws and has voted to endorse two of the six proposals. All six bylaw amendments will be placed before assembly delegates for potential adoption during its national assembly in October.

The PRSA Board thoroughly and respectfully considered every detail of each bylaw amendment proposed by the Governance Committee and PRSA members Mary Beth West, APR, Fellow PRSA and Susan Hart, APR, Fellow PRSA. Through discussion and a unanimous vote, the Board endorsed two amendments proposed by the Governance Committee. More detailed information will be made available over the next few weeks to the Leadership Assembly delegates. A summary of the Board's conclusions follows.

The six bylaws amendments being submitted to the delegates for consideration are:

1. Refine and update the definition of a **member in good standing** (*submitted by the Governance Committee and endorsed by the Board*): This proposal states, among other things, that a member in good standing will work collaboratively to strengthen PRSA and not engage in behaviors that will discredit or harm PRSA, its members or the PR profession.
2. Provide **framework for a grievance** process (*submitted by the Governance Committee and endorsed by the Board*): This proposal outlines a three-step process that enables the Executive Committee to take action against members who act in a manner that discredits or may harm PRSA or the profession. It also provides for an appeal process should a member disagree with the decision.
3. A three-part bylaw proposal surrounding the **Board of Ethics and Professional Standards** (*submitted by PRSA members Mary Beth West and Susan Hart and not endorsed by the Board*):
 - a. Rename the Board of Ethics and Professional Standards to Advisory Council of Ethics and Professional Standards and make it an independent organization from PRSA;
 - b. Empower Assembly and Establish Ethics Review Task Force; and

c. Add an Independent Ethics Officer to the Board.

Since all three parts were submitted together, the Board reviewed this amendment in its entirety. The adoption of the Governance Committee's proposed grievance framework would eliminate the need for the Assembly to establish an ethics review task force or to modify the functions of BEPS or the composition of the PRSA Board. The Board views the Grievance Process Bylaw as a significantly stronger proposal as it uses precise language, allows for an appeals process, and is focused on prohibiting specific behavior.

4. Eliminate the role of the National Board in **officer nominations** (*submitted by PRSA members Mary Beth West and Susan Hart and not endorsed by the Board*): The 2016 Leadership Assembly voted to give officer nominating responsibility to the Board with the rationale that Board members are in the best, most informed position to evaluate officer candidates and see first-hand what skill sets would be best to lead the Society. The Board sees no reason to reverse the action of the 2016 Leadership Assembly, which was undertaken after substantial research on association best practices, and healthy dialogue among delegates and members.
5. Add a voting **ethics representative to PRSA nominating committee** (*submitted by PRSA members Mary Beth West and Susan Hart and not endorsed by the Board*): This proposal would modify the composition of the PRSA nominating committee. There has been no evidence to question the ethics or efficacy of the nominating committee or its processes. The nominating committee is composed of experienced, ethical leaders, including accredited members, members of the College of Fellows, past national leaders, and a parliamentarian. The role of BEPS is to inspire and educate members regarding the Code of Ethics, not to provide judgment about candidates for office.
6. State "**nonpartisan**" within **PRSA's purposes** (*submitted by PRSA members Mary Beth West and Susan Hart and not endorsed by the Board*): This proposal attempts to limit PRSA's purposes. To endorse this amendment, the Board needed a clear definition of non-partisan so a consistent, easily understood evaluation of PRSA actions and statements can be made. Until the Board feels confident this change would not hamper the Society's ability to advocate for the profession, the Board will not endorse this proposal. The bylaw amendment could discourage PRSA from taking actions or making statements that align with and advance our industry's goals and the PRSA Code of Ethics. Under existing bylaws, PRSA respects and follows all applicable federal, state, and local laws related to participation in the American political and legislative processes.