



PEDAGOGY AND THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED

A GUIDE TO SUMMER 2014 PTO BYLAW CHANGES:

What does all this bylaw language really mean? Why these changes?

Read below for more information on why we proposed these changes to the bylaws.

Summary of Changes to Article II: Membership—We have revised our categories of membership and participation to include more options, and we have given more information about member rights and responsibilities.

Why: We wanted to offer several ways to engage as a member and to clarify membership benefits.

Summary of Changes to Article III: Meetings of Members—We have removed the “annual conference” language from our description of our annual meeting. We have also officially added June to our possible conference season.

Why: We’re adding June because some institutions cannot host if our time frame is May only. Several recent conferences have been in June. Other changes in this article allow our annual meeting to happen online if necessary. That way we can hold a member meeting even IF (and this is unlikely) we have a year when we are unable to hold a conference. We still plan to hold a conference every year. This change addresses a “what if” scenario.

Summary of Changes to Article IV: Board of Directors (Quorum section): We revised the definition of quorum on our board. Quorum is the minimum number of board members that must be present to do business. Our old quorum language was vague; it just required a “majority.” Our proposed language requires 2/3 of the board to be present for us to vote on an official action by the organization. We now also distinguish between “official” and “advisory” actions.

Why: We wanted to be sure that big decisions (AKA “official” actions) are made by a large enough group. This change increases our accountability to the membership. Official actions are ones for which we would say “PTO is choosing X” or “PTO is deciding Y.” We distinguished between “official” and “advisory” action because we also often serve you by moving ahead quickly with tasks that do not require quorum. Advisory actions are necessary for everyday work but do not merit a full-board vote: committee labor, assigning board tasks, volunteer recruitment, reporting on past events, discussing future actions that do not *yet* require a vote, etc.

Summary of Changes to Article IV: Board of Directors (Number, Tenure, and Qualifications section): We propose an increase in the minimum number of board members from 6 to 8. We specify that board terms will begin annually on Sept. 1. (Previously the board terms began at the end of each conference). We also spelled out important processes for nominating board candidates, online voting, and requesting paper ballots.

Why: The board should be robust if we want to keep improving PTO; the board should always have at least 8 members to carry necessary labor. We changed the board member start date to Sept. 1 to support our practice of online voting *after* the conference (rather than *at* the

conference). We now convene online elections because many members cannot attend the conference every year. We added the language about paper ballots to support those with limited internet access.

Summary of Changes to Article V: Officers—The new language eliminates the office of President-Elect and changes the term of President to 2 years rather than 1 year (followed by a year as Past President—3 years total). To be clear, we are not changing the *number* of years served by a President, but instead just a change in *how* those years are served. Previously, a President served 3 years: one as President-Elect, one as President, and one as Immediate Past President. Our latest language also specifies that, in the event that President can no longer fulfill their duties, the board will elect a replacement.

Why: It's hard to have consistency and follow-through when leadership changes every year. Recently we've asked 2 presidents to serve a double-term to ensure follow-through. We believe it benefits our membership to make a 2-year presidential term the rule, not the exception. But why eliminate the Pres-Elect position entirely? A few reasons:

a) We'd like someone to serve a 2-year presidential term plus a year as Immediate Past President WITHOUT forcing someone to make a 4-year *total* commitment (which would have been the case if we had increased to a 2-year presidential term without eliminating the President-Elect position).

b) Previously we used the President-Elect term as an orientation period for the President position. The board elected the President-Elect during meetings at the conference, and then that person became president one year later. Now the board will elect its next president earlier in the calendar year (typically in February or March), which gives the next president plenty of time to shadow the current president at the conference and over email, but without serving immediately in an officer position. We believe that this change will have only positive impact on the board's ability to serve you, the membership.

Summary of Changes to Article XIV: Parliamentary Procedure—The current language requires Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised) to be used in all meetings. The new language moves us as an organization to a model of consensus and democratic procedures, with matters unable to be resolved through consensus being put to vote.

Why: While perceived by some as being efficient, Robert's Rules can actually be extremely oppressive and do not always allow people to have a voice or to be heard. The Board attempts to work through consensus as often as possible, and this change helps formalize our support of dialogical action.