



2015 BALLOT INITIATIVES

Members are asked to vote on TWO ballot initiatives that require member support. Both initiatives propose adding an additional member to the Executive Committee.

The Association of Black Sociologists is a small organization that functions almost entirely through the labor of fewer than 10 volunteers who serve on the organization's Executive Committee. However, the organization's tasks—membership management and support, scholarly journal administration, election administration, conference planning and hosting, collaboration with other organizations, technology maintenance and support, and the maintenance of scholarly and community service initiatives—are similar to those of larger organizations with sizeable, specialized paid staffs. For the foreseeable future, the organization will continue to run without such staff. Because Executive Committee members bring different knowledge sets to the organization's administration and are often managing multiple complex tasks, in addition to their personal and professional lives outside of the organization, ensuring the efficient operation of the organization is often challenging. These positions are being proposed in light of these organizational realities with an eye to increasing organizational efficiency, ensuring responsible fiscal management, and improving the quality of service to members. This position will support the organization's volunteers by helping to manage task and operation completion. These proposed changes, outlined below, are designed to strengthen and expand the leadership of the organization and ensure the organization's longevity.

Ballot Initiative #1: Changing the Organization's Presidential Succession Structure

You are being asked to approve the addition of another position--VICE PRESIDENT--to the Association of Black Sociologists Executive Committee.

Rationale:

Like other organizations, ABS is concerned with maintaining and cultivating a skilled leadership that can oversee the day-to-day affairs of the organization as well as collaborate on long-term and strategic planning goals for the organization. We are also invested in expanding the number and kind of voices that are in the pipeline of organizational leadership. However, again, as with other organizations, it is increasingly difficult to locate a variety of leaders willing to serve the organization effectively and consistently. As part of the Executive Committee's charge to ensure the health and functioning of the organization, the EC has been re-evaluating how to improve the leadership structure to address and anticipate challenges.

The organization's current leadership model consists of a President-Elect, who organizes the national conference; a President, who presides over meetings and other ABS business; and an Immediate Past President, who provides institutional memory and chairs the Committee on Committees. After studying other organizational models and evaluating best practices in maintaining robust guidance and leadership for the organization long term, the Executive Committee has proposed a new leadership structure for which it seeks member approval. This structure would add the new position of Vice President to the Executive Committee. Thus, the presidential succession structure of the organization would be:

Vice President
President-Elect
President
Immediate Past President.

The Vice President would shadow the President-Elect and learn the various organizational processes of ABS that would ensure effective conference planning and management during her or his President-Elect year. The President-Elect would plan and manage the annual conference with the Vice President's assistance. The President would continue to preside over meetings and other ABS business and the Immediate Past President, would continue to chair the Committee on Committees.

Do you approve the addition of the position of Vice President to the Executive Committee?

Ballot Initiative #2: Adding an Advisor to the Executive Committee Position to the Executive Committee

You are being asked to consider the addition of another position--ADVISOR TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE--to the Association of Black Sociologists Executive Committee.

Description:

The Advisor to the Executive Committee must be an active member of the Association of Black Sociologists (ABS) for, at minimum, 5 consecutive years and in good financial standing. Ideally this person will have served on the Executive Committee since 2010, have in-depth knowledge of the functions of the Executive Committee, and possess institutional memory of the Executive Committee operations. The post has a two-year tenure and is filled by selection and vote of the Executive Committee (EC). The Advisor to the Executive Committee is a member of the Executive Committee with full voting rights. Her or his primary responsibilities are to work in collaboration and consultation with the EC to provide guidance for the organization's long-term strategic planning goals, to provide institutional memory for the EC, and to help with the socialization of new EC members. This role is designed to facilitate, not replace, the responsibilities and roles of individual members of the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee as a body, and standing and other Committees and their Chairs.

Do you approve the addition of the position of Advisor to the Executive Committee to the Executive Committee?