

Society for Military History
Policies and Procedures
Nominating Committee Procedures

Purpose. To explain Nominating Committee procedures for conducting SMH elections for vice president and trustee.

Description. A Nominating Committee shall select a slate of candidates for Trustees, Vice President, and President, choosing at least two candidates for each vacancy except, at its discretion, for the Presidency and/or Vice Presidency when a serving President and/or Vice President is running for re-election. No person shall be a candidate who is not a member in good standing and who has not agreed to serve if elected. The slate of candidates shall be prepared at least two months before the election date; the same shall be delivered to the Executive Director for the preparation of the ballot. Upon receipt before the preparation of the ballot of a written request signed by at least fifteen members in good standing, the Nominating Committee shall add the name requested to the slate of candidates.

Nominating Committee Composition. The Committee is composed of three members who serve a two-year appointment to coincide with the SMH's biennial election cycle. Members are nominated by the President and elected by the Board of Trustees.

From among the three elected members, the SMH President will select the Committee Chair. The Chair's primary role is to facilitate and coordinate the candidate solicitation process and ensure that the Committee meets deadlines. As part of her/his responsibilities, the Chair contacts the incoming Committee Chair (soon after that individual is elected) to pass along relevant information and suggestions on the process and responsibilities. The Chair also presents a written report of the nomination process at the SMH Annual Meeting that follows the election cycle.

Candidate Selection. All candidates must be individual members of the SMH in good standing. Committees should strive for a balanced slate in terms of the Society's diverse membership, interests, and backgrounds. The committee may wish to use past service in SMH leadership positions as a requirement for selection of vice presidential candidates.

Procedures include:

- An open call for nominations is posted on the SMH website year-round when appropriate. The call appears in a variety of communication outlets, including the *Headquarters Gazette*, the SMH home page, and social media. The typical deadline for nominations is November 1.
- Each year's election materials encourage voters to use an online form to suggest nominees for the next year's slate. This information is collected electronically and forwarded to the Nominating Committee.
- Suggestions may be passed along from the previous year's Nominating Committee. ▪ Committee members will also come up with additional names for consideration.

Sample Nominations Announcement:

“The Society welcomes nominations of qualified candidates for the positions of: Vice President and Trustees. The Vice President serves for two years and then serves two years as President. Trustees are elected for four-year terms. Terms of office begin at the close of the April 2017 annual meeting. Candidates must be members of the Society in good standing and must agree to serve if elected.

Send nominations (including name, contact information, curriculum vitae, nomination statement, and short biographical paragraph) via email by November 1, 20xx to the chair of the Nominations Committee Chair, [name and email].

Members of the Nominations Committee are: [names].”

Initial Vetting of Prospects. Among the critical factors that Committee members must consider is developing a diverse slate of professionally-minded historians that reflects the Society’s membership, interests, and communities. To ensure an informed decision about slating a candidate, Nominating Committee members should research prospective candidates’ backgrounds. Candidates will be required to send the committee their curriculum vitae, a short biographical statement, and a nomination statement. If needed, the Committee chair may ask potential candidates for additional information.

Strategies for Filling the Slate. The Committee should first develop a pool of potential candidates by:

- Developing a broad list of prospects for the offices based on nominations, suggestions from the previous year’s Committee, and their own personal knowledge.
- Dividing up the list and distributing to each Committee member the names of potential candidates to contact to determine their willingness to be considered for the slate.
- Updating the prospective candidate pool based on individuals’ willingness to stand for office.
- Taking into account the need for a diverse slate and develops the final list of prospective candidates.

After the final list is developed, the Committee Chair contacts the prospects selected, formally invites them to stand for office, and receives their final confirmation to be slated. Once the full slate of candidates has been finalized, the Chair or assigned Committee members should contact those prospects who were not selected to inform them that they were not selected for the final slate and to thank them for their consideration.

Talking with Prospective Candidates. The Nominating Committee informs candidates of the position term, responsibilities, legal and fiscal obligations, and that they must attend the annual trustee meeting at their own expense.

Above all, confidentiality throughout the process is paramount. Names of nominees usually are kept confidential until all are selected. Discussions within the Committee also are confidential. All information that a Committee member may have about a prospective candidate’s background should be disclosed so that the Committee can make the best possible decision. Nominating

Committee members should be able to discuss openly and honestly prospective candidates and their likely suitability for serving.

Be clear when describing the benefits and demands when making solicitations. When speaking with prospective candidates, be persuasive and promote the intangibles of holding office in a professional association. An institution benefits from the prestige of the position its employee holds, the attention drawn to the affiliation, and the professional development the employee gains through service. However, it is also important to be honest about the amount of work the position requires. Candidates are encouraged to talk with their department chairs or deans before making any commitments. In addition, encourage potential candidates to talk to current and past office holders to discuss the benefits and demands of the positions.

Suggested Annual Nominations Calendar:

May/June/July

- The SMH Executive Director confirms which positions are to be filled by the next year's ballot. The SMH office provides the Chair a list of individuals who have stood for office and those who were elected to office in the last ten years. The office also sends any names (and background information) that were submitted via the online nomination form.
- The Chair contacts Committee members, sends them a copy of this procedures document, and reminds them of the general schedule for their work.

August/September

- Information about the upcoming election—candidate openings, the voting period, and a link to the online nomination form for the next year—is posted on the SMH website.
- The Nominating Committee members conduct research on prospects.
- Through the SMH office, the Chair sends out a mass email NLT September 15 soliciting nominations and self-nominations for open positions.
- The Nominating Committee begins drafting a list of prospective candidates and contacting them to verify their willingness to serve.

October/November

- The Committee compiles nominations submitted via the online nomination form, from lists of those who previously stood for office but were not elected, and from suggestions by the previous year's Committee.
- The deadline for all nominations is no later than November 1.
- Nominating Committee finalizes the slate and sends to President and Executive Director.
- By December 15, the Chair communicates with all individuals who have been slated to thank them for agreeing to run and to let them know that the SMH office will be in touch with them shortly.

November/December

- The President and Executive Director shares the slate with the Board of Trustees. Upon approval from the President, the slate can then be shared with all candidates at this time.

- By at least the second week of December, if not sooner, slated candidates must review and return election materials (biographical information, statement, and digital image) via email to the SMH Executive Director.
- The SMH Executive Officer prepares candidate statements and biographical information for posting to the SMH website. This material is reviewed and approved by candidates before going public.

December/January

- The nominations with candidate information are published in the Winter edition of the *Headquarters Gazette* and on the SMH Website.
- Staff prepares online, secret ballot.
- The election is conducted when the electronic ballot is ready to send via email to the membership
- All individual members, student members, and primary contacts of institutional members who are in good standing on January 15 are eligible to vote in the election. Members who join after that date will be eligible to vote in the next year's election.

January/February

- The Executive Director monitors the digital election results and confirms the final tabulation result. The election tabulation results are confidential.
- The final election results are certified by the SMH President.
- The Executive Director contacts all candidates who stood for office and apprises them of the election results.
- The results are posted to the SMH web site and announced via other SMH media after the Executive Director has made contact with all candidates.
- From the three candidates elected to the Nominating Committee, the SMH President selects the Committee Chair.
- The outgoing Chair contacts the incoming Chair to offer assistance and to pass on relevant information and suggestions on the process and responsibilities.
- All election results are published in the Summer edition of the *Headquarters Gazette*.