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FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL

**Guide to Elections and Voting at the  
Annual Symposium**

**Washington, DC**

**April 7, 2018**

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# I. Introduction

This year's Symposium is not only the Council's first national event, but also a turning point for in our group's growth. Our business meeting at the Symposium marks the end of interim management and the beginning of the members' representative self-governance. In addition to an opportunity to offer questions and comments at the Board of Governors' town hall, we will elect our first officers and committee chairs.

The following pages provide an overview of officer nominations and elections and committee chair elections for the 2018 meeting. This guide also provides a preview of section delegate elections, bylaw proposals, and resolution and amendment votes at the 2019 meeting.

## II. Board of Governors Elections

This year, the Council will elect its first regular officers to replace the Interim Board that has managed the Council since its incorporation. Below is information on nominations, voting, and position descriptions.

The Board of Governors is the managing body for the Council. Board members are responsible for setting the organization's policies and strategy, ensuring the Council's mission and purposes are faithfully carried out, and ensuring volunteers and projects have the resources needed to carry out their roles. The Board meets on a quarterly basis, including one in-person meeting following the elections.

### Key Dates:

- **March 7, 2018:** Deadline to submit nominations and candidate statements.
- **March 9, 2018:** Candidates' list and statements circulated to members.
- **March 31, 2018:** Last day to request an absentee ballot. Also the day absentee ballots will be emailed.
- **April 6, 2018:** Last day to cast an absentee ballot.
- **April 7, 2018:** Election day.

### A. Nominations and Eligibility

Nominations for officer positions must be submitted at least 30 days before the Symposium. To nominate yourself or another member, submit the candidate's name to [membership@dpeforeignaffairs.org](mailto:membership@dpeforeignaffairs.org). Only Annual Members are eligible to hold office.

Nominations for the 2018 elections must be submitted by **March 7, 2018**.

### B. Voting

All officer positions are elected by a simple majority vote of the Annual Members at the Symposium on **April 7, 2018**. Prior to the vote, candidates will be given an opportunity to make brief remarks and answer questions from the members.

## Candidate Statements

Candidates are strongly encouraged to provide brief written statements ahead of the elections. Statements should be no longer than 300 words and should provide background information, qualifications, and reasons for running for the officer position.

Submit candidate statements to [membership@dpeforeignaffairs.org](mailto:membership@dpeforeignaffairs.org) by **Wednesday, March 7, 2018**. If a member is nominated on that date, he or she will be contacted and given an opportunity to submit a statement after the deadline.

Candidate names and their statements will be circulated to the members on **Friday, March 9, 2018**.

## Absentee Voting

Members who can't attend the Council's elections in person may still vote absentee. Ballots will be emailed to absentee members on March 31, 2018. Absentee votes must be cast by **Friday, April 6, 2018** to ensure they are counted the following day. Proxy votes (i.e. designating another member to vote on the absent member's behalf) will not be allowed.

To request an absentee ballot, email [membership@dpeforeignaffairs.org](mailto:membership@dpeforeignaffairs.org) by **March 30, 2018**.

## Runoff Voting

If no candidate receives a simple majority vote on the first ballot, the top two candidates will proceed to a runoff vote. Whichever candidate gets a majority of votes from those present and voting shall be declared the winner of the runoff.

## C. Officer Positions

Four officer positions will be on the ballot this year: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Each office may serve up to two consecutive two-year terms. Any interim officers elected to the regular Board may serve one two-year term.

- **President** - The President is chief executive officer of the Council and chair of the Board of Governors. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Council; set the agenda of Board of Governors meetings; appoint committees, except as determined by the Board of Governors; and shall perform such other duties as assigned by the Board of Governors.

- **Vice President** - The Vice President is chief operating officer of the Council. The Vice President shall have responsibility for general executive direction of the Council and perform such other duties as assigned by the Board of Governors. In the absence of the President the duties of that office shall devolve to the Vice President.
- **Treasurer** - The Treasurer is the chief financial officer of the Council. The Treasurer shall have custody of the Council's funds and disburse and invest them subject to the rules and direction of the Board of Governors
- **Secretary** - The Secretary shall keep records and conduct the general correspondence of the Council, and shall perform such other duties as assigned by the Board of Governors.

## D. Section Delegates

Member Sections will begin electing delegates to the Board at the 2019 Symposium in order to allow time for the Council's membership to grow and create staggered terms. At that time, each section will elect two representatives to the Board. Section delegates have voting rights and serve up to two consecutive two-year terms.

Delegate nominations and voting will follow the same procedures as this year's officer elections.

## III. Committee Chairs

Beyond the Board, each member committee will elect a chair this year. Committee chairs lead group meetings, act as points of contact for the Board, and generally oversee his or her committee's activities. Chairs serve one-year terms without term limits.

### Key Dates:

- **March 7, 2018:** Last day to submit nominations and candidate statements.
- **March 9, 2018:** Candidates' list and statements circulated to committee members.
- **March 31, 2018:** Voting opens.
- **April 6, 2018:** Last day to vote.
- **April 7, 2018:** Results announced.

### A. Nominations

Any Annual Member may be nominated to chair a committee on which he or she already sits. Self-nominations are permitted. Given the small size of some committees, chair nominations will not require petitions. **Submit nominations by March 7, 2018 to [membership@dpeforeignaffairs.org](mailto:membership@dpeforeignaffairs.org).**

### B. Voting

Because many members are part of multiple committees, voting for chairs will be done electronically prior to the Symposium. Ballots will be sent to committee members through their committee listservs on **Friday, March 31, 2018**. Voting will close **Friday, April 6, 2018**.

All committee members, including Student Members, will be allowed to vote.

### Candidate Statements

Candidates are strongly encouraged to provide brief written statements ahead of the elections. Statements should be **no longer than 200 words** and should provide background information, qualifications, and reasons for running for the officer position.

Submit candidate statements to [membership@dpeforeignaffairs.org](mailto:membership@dpeforeignaffairs.org) by **Wednesday, March 7, 2018**. If a member is nominated on that date, he or she will be contacted and given an opportunity to submit a statement after the deadline.

Candidate names and their statements will be circulated to the members on **Friday, March 9, 2018**.

### **Runoff Voting**

If no candidate receives a simple majority vote on the first ballot, a second ballot will be circulated over the committee's listserv. The top two candidates from the first round will proceed to the runoff. The candidate with a simple majority wins the election.

## **C. Committees**

There are currently eight member committees with chair elections. To check your committee memberships, log in to our account at [www.dpeforeignaffairs.org](http://www.dpeforeignaffairs.org) and select "My DPE" > "My Sections and Committees" from the menu bar.

- **Audit** - The Audit Committee provides oversight for the Council's annual independent audit of financial records. The committee recommends auditors for approval by the Board of Governors; reviews the audited financial statements, management letter, and management's response; and reviews the circulation of financial statements among the Council's members.
- **Ethics** - The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Ethics oversees the Ethics Project, an ongoing effort to develop guidance for members and the public on professional responsibility in foreign affairs and international trade.
- **Honors** - The Honors Committee solicits nominations for awards and honorary memberships, and makes recommendations to the Board of Governors.
- **DC Committee** - The DC Coordinating Committee organizes events in the Washington, DC metro area.
- **New York Committee** - The New York Coordinating Committee organizes events in the New York metro area.
- **San Francisco Committee** - The San Francisco Bay Coordinating Committee organizes events in the Bay Area.
- **Membership Committee** - The Membership Committee oversees the admission of new members. The chair of this committee becomes the

Membership Director, leading the committee in recruitment and retention programs and responding to membership inquiries.

- **Scholarship Committee** - The Scholarship Committee oversees the management of the Council's scholarship and grant endowments. The committee identifies undergraduate and graduate recipients of the annual Emerging Research Award and recommends new grant and scholarship programs to the Board of Governors for approval.

## IV. Bylaws, Resolutions, and Constitutional Amendments

Beginning next year, members will be able to vote on bylaws, resolutions, and constitutional amendments. These three types of measures affect how the Council operates and any official policy positions it may take. Below is an overview for reference.

### Key Dates:

- **October 8, 2018** - Deadline to file draft bylaws and amendments for voting at the 2019 Symposium.

### A. Bylaws

Bylaws are Council rules that govern the day-to-day operations of the organization. Bylaws can be used to (a) create or dissolve committees, (b) institute new classes of membership, (c) change dues rates, (d) establish projects or programs, or (e) direct any other administrative functions consistent with the Council's Constitution.

Any member may propose a bylaw, which may then be approved by a simple majority vote of the Board of Governors. Bylaws must be proposed at least six months before the Annual Symposium and Business Meeting or before a special meeting of the Council.

Unfortunately, time has elapsed for bylaws to be submitted for the 2018 Symposium. To submit a proposal for the 2019 Symposium, submit your draft bylaw to [membership@dpeforeignaffairs.org](mailto:membership@dpeforeignaffairs.org) by **October 8, 2018**.

### B. Resolutions

Resolutions are statements of positions or views of the Council's membership. At any time throughout the year, members may propose resolutions to the Board of Governors. Proposed resolutions must include draft text and a petition from at least three Annual Members. Resolutions should address substantive issues related to the mission and purposes of the organization.

After receiving a proposal, the Council's President will refer the draft resolution to a committee for a review and recommendation. The draft and the committee report will then be circulated to

the members. Voting takes place at least 3 months after the members receive notice to allow time for debate. Resolutions require a three-fourths majority vote of the Annual Members.

The Council is a nonpartisan organization by law. As such, the Council may not endorse candidates for any public office, any political campaigns, any political party, or lobby for specific legislation. Proposed resolutions may not address these issues, and political statements submitted to the Board of Governors will be rejected by the President.

To propose a resolution, submit your draft and petition to [membership@dpeforeignaffairs.org](mailto:membership@dpeforeignaffairs.org).

## C. Amendments to the Council Constitution

Amendments make substantive changes to the Council's Constitution. Amendments may be proposed by a petition of at least five Annual Members. Proposed amendments require two-thirds majority approval of the annual members at the Annual Symposium and Business Meeting.

Amendment proposals must be submitted no later than six months before the next Annual Symposium and Business Meeting. Proposals for the 2019 Symposium should be submitted by **October 8, 2018**. Send proposals to [membership@dpeforeignaffairs.org](mailto:membership@dpeforeignaffairs.org).

## V. Student Voting

The Council is an alumni-centric organization; therefore, in general only Annual Members have the vote. The two exceptions are committee chair elections and elections for Student Delegates to the Board of Governors.

Student Delegates represent the Students Section on the Council's Board of Governors. These delegates are voting members of the Board like all other Section delegates. The Students Section will elect two delegates to serve one-year terms at the 2019 Symposium.

Note that while students generally can't vote, they can still participate in debates and Q&A sessions. Students are encouraged to attend the business meeting to participate in the Board's annual report and town hall, and to ask candidates questions.