

The APsaA Alliance

for the 21st Century

June 1, 2006

Dear Fellow APsaA Members,

Recently we all received a mailing titled “Renew the American,” a set of bylaw proposals sent out by four members of the APsaA Executive Committee. This complete revision of the current APsaA bylaws was crafted in secret by this small group—even their fellow Executive Committee members were kept in the dark. **We want to respond to this mailing by explaining why we view the “Renew” proposal as harmful to all of us, the individual members of APsaA. In brief, it centralizes power in the Association in a small set of hands, and it distances individual members from the operations of our Association.**

We object especially strongly to two results of the proposed bylaws. First, they eliminate the broadly representative Executive Council that now serves as the Association’s Board of Directors, replacing it with a smaller and less representative Board. Second, they divide up the functions of the Board of Professional Standards, assigning some of them to the “Institute Council” and some to a new “Board on Accreditation and Certification” in such a way as to give these new bodies substantially more power than BoPS has over the individual institutes of our Association.

I. The Executive Council

Our current Executive Council—the APsaA Board of Directors—is made up of both local and national representatives. Every local Affiliate Society elects one Executive Councilor; in addition, APsaA members elect a national slate of 8 Councilors-at-large plus 4 Officers (President, President-elect, Secretary, and Treasurer). This Board currently reflects more closely than any other body in APsaA the actual demographics of our active membership. Although it is somewhat weighted in favor of those involved in training activities (institute faculty and training analysts), it does contain a meaningful number of rank-and-file practitioners, researchers, and administrators. Most importantly, every Affiliate Society is represented and has a voice.

The reorganization proposed by the officers scraps this arrangement in favor of a smaller Board, in which your Society would have no direct representation, in which all Board members would have to stand for national elections (a very expensive proposition), and in which most elections would be based on name recognition and printed CVs, as opposed to direct long-term personal acquaintances that many of us have with our local representative Councilors. It seems likely that such a Board would be dominated by institute faculty and training analysts. Rank and file practitioners could easily be shut out of APsaA governance altogether. Despite their repeated claims that we need a more “streamlined” and “effective” BoD, they have yet to offer any specific instances of the presumed ineffectiveness of our current Board to be “cured” by such restriction.

II. The Board on Professional Standards

The “Renew” bylaws slightly liberalize the makeup of the two bodies that would succeed the Board on Professional Standards by making all institute faculty members eligible (in theory) to represent their Institutes on the renamed “Institute Council” (IC). The IC would have essentially the same power over local institutes that BoPS has today, but that power would be enhanced by a change which would make it easier for the IC to withhold approval of an Institute that chose to innovate in its training procedures. Certification of Institute graduates would be transferred to another new body, the Board on Accreditation and Certification (BAC), set up as a Delaware subsidiary LLC. The rules under which this new body would operate would be written by a 12-member Board of Managers, appointed by the new small nationally elected Board of Directors that we described above. Thus the rules regarding accreditation (of institutes) and certification (of individual members) would not be clear until AFTER the proposed bylaws were adopted. Would you buy a pig in a poke?

All in all, the “Renew” proposal is more a way to renew—and aggravate—APsaA’s past and current problems than a path toward real democratizing change for APsaA. While we agree that APsaA’s bylaws are in sore need of revision, we think that this process requires calm, careful, and public thought—not a wholesale revision, devised in the absence of broad input, thus creating an open invitation to the “law of unintended consequences.”

Prior to this new reorganization program, we proposed and made available to all, an alternative gradual approach which is the opposite approach to the radical changes in the “Renew” Plan. OUR simple program of governance changes is intended to enhance the functioning of the Executive Council, to bring us into compliance with the New York Not-for-profit Corporation Law, and to lay the basis for further orderly and sequenced changes. **We place our emphasis upon the need to assure a voice to our individual members and our local Societies, rather than transferring power over APsaA policy to a small group of nationally elected directors and officers.**

You can read our proposals, collectively called “A Simplified Alternative Program for APsaA” (ASAP) on the Internet at <http://ASAPforAPsaA.org>. There you also will find a long and growing list of APsaA members who support the ASAP approach.

Should the “Renew” bylaws be presented to you for your vote, we urge you to vote AGAINST them. Furthermore, if you agree that the ASAP program has significant advantages over the “Renew” bylaws proposal, we cordially invite you to add your name to the list of ASAP supporters using the link on the ASAP Web page. We also urge you to speak to your local Councilor NOW, before the next Executive Council meeting on June 15th in Washington, DC.

Let’s work together to reform APsaA in a way that takes account of the needs of ALL APsaA members and local affiliate societies rather than handing APsaA’s governance over to a select few!

Signed,

The Alliance [Supporters of the ASAP Program]

Names available on the ASAP website: www.asapforapsaa.org