

ABRF COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

A Description of the Purpose and Responsibilities of the Society Committees

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The Association of Biomolecular Resource Facilities (ABRF) is a professional society composed of members from laboratories engaged in providing analytical, synthetic and other capabilities to a multitude of collaborating scientists. As with any society it is necessary to form committees to insure the proper functioning of the society. Each Committee is entrusted with making decisions concerning their particular task and bringing these decisions to the Executive Board for approval. Once a decision is made, it is the responsibility of that particular committee to accomplish the task. The most current list of the committees performing these duties may be found on the ABRF website at www.ABRF.org.

This Handbook describes the practices common to committees that have met these objectives consistently and in a timely manner. The Executive Board feels it is appropriate for the committees to review these Guidelines periodically, as a reminder of productive mechanisms for meeting the goals of the committee and the society as a whole. However, the committees should interpret and use these Guidelines with some discretion and apply the Guidelines to the specific context of the individual committee and its objectives.

A. PURPOSE of the COMMITTEES

The Committees of the Association of Biomolecular Resource Facilities (ABRF) are delegated by the ABRF Executive Board with the task of insuring that the organizational goals of the ABRF are met. Each committee is to perform a support function which furthers the goals of the ABRF, which are to advance core and research biotechnology laboratories through research, communication, and education. For example, the Finance Committee makes recommendations concerning the prudent use of ABRF funds which represent membership dues, donations, contributions, and scientific funding. The mission statement of each committee may be found on the committee page within the ABRF website.

It is a goal of the Executive Board to facilitate and enable the work of the committees. The Executive Board thanks the volunteer members of the committees for their time and energy. Assisting the members of the ABRF and the greater scientific community to increase the quality of their science is a goal shared by all of the volunteers who work for the ABRF.

B. PARTICIPATION

B.1 *Participation in the Committees*

All Members of the ABRF are eligible to serve on committees, which typically consist of 3-6 members. Committee members should serve no more than three consecutive years. Committee members may retire for one year then return for an additional three year cycle. About 1/3 of the committee generally retire each year. Retiring members will be replaced by new members, who are nominated by committee members and approved by the Executive Board. Committees are encouraged to plan the year so that all responsibilities of retiring members are completed before the annual ABRF meeting, and new members can be added at that time. Due to the nature and

functions of specific committees, particular members may continue for extended periods as members or as chair. The membership of certain committees will change each year, such as the Nominations committee, composed of the President and the outgoing EB members.

B.1.1 *Selection of New Members*

Often, recruitment of new committee members occurs during or shortly after the Annual Meeting. If at all possible, however, new members should be recruited one month before the end of retiring members' terms and meet with the committee at the Annual Meeting. A curriculum vitae and statement of interest from the candidate is circulated amongst the committee members and approved, then presented to the Executive Board for review and approval. Committees should make every effort to maintain balance and diversity in experience, research interests and geographical location.

Suggestions for selecting and nominating new committee candidates for EB approval:

1) *Committees nominate and vet members internally.*

Identify potential candidates. The Chair has several means of doing this including:

- a) Ask EB for advice, or if you're unsure of potential concerns or conflicts.
- b) Advertise (e.g., Website News, ABRF listserver, annual meeting, e-mail blast from the ABRF Business Office, Newsletter).

2) *Candidates are then forwarded to the EB for approval via the EB liaison for each Committee.*

- a) Submit the candidates CV/Biosketch along with a statement of purpose.
- b) All Committee members must be active ABRF members with a current COI form on file (must be re-submitted annually). This form is located on the website under "Documents and Forms."

B.2 *Participation of the Executive Board in the Committees*

A liaison from the Executive Board will be appointed for each committee and may Chair the committee. It is the responsibility of the liaison to inform the committee of actions taken by the Executive Board that may impact the committee or its members, to regularly attend conference calls of the committee, and to keep the Executive Board informed of the activities, progress and needs of the committee. The liaison also is the conduit for information which needs to be passed from the committee to the meeting organizers. Additionally, the liaison will serve as a consultant to the committee when questions arise about ABRF policies. The liaison may actively participate in the projects of the committee, if they so desire and if the committee members agree. The liaison will generally serve as a resource for the committee.

C. DUTIES and RESPONSIBILITIES of INDIVIDUALS

C.1 *Committee Members*

Members of each committee are expected to contribute to the committee activities and to expend a reasonable and timely effort in carrying out the mission of the committee. Duties should be divided as equally as possible among the individual members. Members who discover they unexpectedly have other commitments which prevent them from taking an active part in the committee activities must communicate this at the earliest opportunity in fairness to their colleagues. In this situation, the group may ask that individual to stand down and a replacement may be appointed. Members should not expect to be reimbursed as a matter of course for expenses incurred in the performance of their responsibilities as a committee member. If, in the course of operation it is decided that the budget will permit and the contribution is deserving, an individual may be reimbursed partially or completely for expenses incurred in the service of the committee or the ABRF. This must be agreed to beforehand by the committee and, when the amount is more than budgeted for the committee, the Executive Board. Those who are unwilling or unable to participate under these circumstances should respectfully decline membership.

C.2 *Conflict of Interest*

All members on a yearly basis (or prior to beginning service in a committee) must complete a Conflict of Interest form (obtained through the ABRF website). Members of the ABRF with conflicts of interest may, in some cases, serve on committees if those conflicts are fully disclosed to the President and the Executive Board approves their candidacy. Members should not expect or accept any personal gain over and above that which would generally come to all committee members as a consequence of working for the common good of the committee and the ABRF. ***No member should endorse any product, instrument, or commercial concern that can be construed to be involved in the committee's responsibilities.*** A member may feel free to express his or her professional opinion providing it is done as an individual and not as a representative of the ABRF.

C.3 *Chair of Committee*

The Chair of a committee should be selected by consensus of the members in consultation with their Executive Board liaison. The method of achieving this consensus, whether by vote or discussion, is the prerogative of the individual committee. It is the Chair's responsibility to organize the Committee's efforts and to preside over meetings. Additionally, the Chair ensures that each member carries out their responsibility and that the committee as a whole is successful in carrying out its mission. The Chair (or designee) keeps the business office updated as to the membership of the committee and ensures that the data on the ABRF WebPages is current. The Chair is also responsible for submitting candidates for committee membership, with the goal of achieving a balance of expertise in the composition of the committee. If appropriate, the Chair additionally communicates with the meeting organizers. The Chair also submits written updates on committee activities in a format that can be published in the Fall and in late Spring/early Summer.

The Chair provides committee members with a tentative agenda for upcoming meetings and conference calls, however s/he is not expected or required to bear an inordinate share of the work and should designate a secretary or rotation through all members in order to record and distribute minutes of the conference calls.

C.4 *Executive Board Members*

It is a goal of the Executive Board to facilitate and enable the work of the committees. This is accomplished through the EB liaison that is appointed by the EB for each committee. The role of the EB liaison is primarily to ensure continuity of the goals and performance of the committee with the rest of the ABRF and to provide a line of communication between the Executive Board and committee regarding wishes, concerns, and actions from both sides. The EB liaison thus is an active member of each committee and participates in all meetings and may become involved in the committee responsibilities at the EB liaison's discretion and if the committee members agree.

If an Executive Board liaison becomes non-responsive to the needs of the committee, then the chair of the committee should contact the president of the ABRF, who will resolve the matter.

C.4.1 *Specific Duties of the Executive Board with Regard to the Committees*

- 1) It is the responsibility of the Executive Board to approve the establishment of new committees or to redirect the focus of, merge, or bring to an end the activities of committees in order to fulfill the mission of the ABRF and to meet the needs of the ABRF membership.
- 2) The Executive Board will review and approve mission statements for committees
- 3) The Executive Board will approve and occasionally suggest new members for committees.
- 4) The Executive Board will review and approve committee activities. The Executive Board reserves the right to modify the scope of a committee's project if necessary where ABRF goals or policies are thought to be compromised.
- 5) If appropriate, the Executive Board will provide a timetable for preparation for the annual meeting in consultation with the chairs of the committees and the meeting organizers.
- 6) The Executive Board will provide a budget for annual activities of the committees.
- 7) The Executive Board may dissolve a committee if it is deemed desirable.
- 8) The Executive Board, being directly accountable to the membership of the ABRF, will provide general oversight of the committees via the liaisons to ensure that the goals and policies of the ABRF are not compromised.
- 9) The Executive Board will publish summaries of their Face to Face Meetings in the Communications Newsletter on a biannual basis.

D. GENERAL ISSUES

D.1 *Impartiality with Regard to Commercial Concerns*

It is the duty of the committee to remain completely impartial in regard to any commercial concern that might stand to gain from the committee's activities.

D.2 *Budget*

The Executive Board will establish a budget for the individual committee's expenses including conference call services. If appropriate, original receipts should be sent to the ABRF business office for reimbursement.

D.3 *Phone Call Reimbursements*

It is expected that many communications between committee members will be carried out by email. However, planning of committee activities often requires conference calls. It is typical for committees to hold regularly-scheduled conference calls at least monthly (or more often as necessary), which will be covered by the committee yearly budget. If necessary, reimbursement of expenses to participate in conference calls can be made on an individual basis which must be established and approved ahead of time.

D.4 *Conflict of Interest*

The Conflict of Interest policy applies to everyone who serves the Association, including the Executive Board, Research Group and Committee members, the Editorial Board, meeting organizers, and employees. The policy states that individuals who wish to serve the ABRF must complete a form that discloses any potential conflicts of interest to the President of the Executive Board. The President then treats this as a confidential disclosure: the President can discuss a potential conflict of interest with other Executive Board members only when the individual who wishes to serve agrees to this. Under no circumstances will a potential conflict of interest be discussed beyond the Executive Board. After review, the President will give notice that the individual can serve without restriction, can serve in some capacities but perhaps not others, or cannot serve.

Conflicts of interest are defined in the written policy that accompanies the disclosure form and can be obtained from the ABRF website and are electronically submitted.

E. DUE PROCESS

E.1 *Removing a Committee member*

If it is felt by at least a 2/3 majority of the other current members of a Committee that there is substantial reason, such as when a member is consistently disruptive, counter-productive, or non-productive, a member can be asked to leave. Further, the Executive Board may, with a 2/3 majority vote, initiate removal of any member if it is felt necessary. That member may then either accept the decision and resign voluntarily or may appeal the decision within two weeks to the Executive Board, who will have the final decision. The Executive Board must make a decision within a period of 2 months after receiving a written appeal. The Executive Board

should defer to the wishes of the committee unless there are substantial mitigating circumstances. The departing member should be replaced as soon as possible.

E.2. Removing an Executive Board Liaison

If an Executive Board Liaison appointed to a committee is unresponsive, the Chair should contact the President of the ABRF, who will resolve the matter. If it is felt by at least a 75% majority of the current members of a committee that there is substantial reason, such as a liaison who is disruptive, counter-productive, or non-productive, the Executive Board may be asked to appoint a different liaison to the group. Further, the Executive Board President may reassign Executive Board liaisons as s/he thinks necessary. That liaison may then either accept the decision or may make a written appeal to the full Executive Board who will have the final decision. The Executive Board must make a decision within a period of 2 months after receiving a written appeal. The Executive Board should defer to the wishes of the committee unless there are substantial mitigating circumstances. A new liaison from the Executive Board will be appointed as soon as possible.

E.3 Differences of Opinion between the Executive Board and the Committee

If the Executive Board and the committee have a difference of opinion on the correct course to be taken in a matter, the committee has the right to appeal the matter to the Executive Board in a written statement. The Executive Board must respond to the statement within one month. If the committee is still in disagreement with the decision of the Executive Board they have the right to have a representative of the committee present their opinion to the full Executive Board in a conference call. In matters of substance, such as dissolving a committee, 75% of the current Executive Board members must be in agreement for the action to proceed. If the Executive Board fails to respond to the committee within one month of the conference call or the presentation of a written statement, the recommendation of the committee will become final. If the Executive Board cannot reach a decision within three months of the original written appeal, the recommendation of the committee will become final.

E.4 Dissolution of a Committee

If the Executive Board decides by a 2/3 vote that a committee is no longer fulfilling the needs of the ABRF it shall dissolve the committee. A dissolved committee has the right to appeal the decision or to petition the Executive Board for reestablishment after reorganization.

E.5 Establishment of a New Committee

The Executive Board may determine the need to develop a new Committee due to evolving needs of the ABRF. If the Executive Board decides to create a new committee, it will ask a member of the ABRF to act as the chair of the new committee. If a member takes the initiative, they must submit a proposal to the Executive Board. A poll may be used to gauge the level of interest of the membership or the Executive Board in the proposed committee. If there is sufficient interest, the Chair of the proposed new committee should draft a mission statement for

the committee and submit it to the Executive Board for approval. After approval is received, the chair may follow the usual procedures for selecting new members for a committee. It is understood that a new committee will have members serving terms of unusual lengths until a rotation is established.

F. *Degree of Autonomy*

The committee should have a substantial degree of autonomy in conducting its tasks as long as it remains within the policies and framework of the ABRF, carrying out the wishes and intentions of its parent organization. At the same time, it is also recognized that the task to which the committee is called is very demanding and time-consuming - the task of coordinating the efforts of members from diverse geographical locations to work in concert while faced with very real time constraints is difficult in its own right without the need to consult extensively with additional individuals. When the committee accepts the responsibility of conducting its activities as outlined in these Guidelines, it also accepts the authority from the Executive Board to meet that responsibility. The Executive Board member of the committee is present to monitor the actions of the committee only should the need for intervention arise.