

Example Advisory Council Models

In the Entomological Society of America's Governance Upgrade project, one recommendation is to "create an Advisory Council with representation from ESA constituency groups to support the Governing Board's development and decision-making."

Below are four generic examples of how such an Advisory Council could be structured. These examples are not meant as a menu of choices but rather to simply illustrate possibilities. The structure of an ESA Advisory Council would be based on member feedback and consensus and would be subject to future iteration and refinement. The key to success would be that the Governing Board receives the constituency input it needs to make informed decisions.

Advisory Council Model #1:

- **Purpose:** Consider matters of concern at direction of board; Facilitate accomplishment of initiatives at direction of board; Submit slate of potential Nominating Committee members to board.
- **Communication:** Maintain lines of communication between membership and BOD; Assist in communication of strategic directives to membership; Facilitate communications/share best practices to assemblies/committees.
- **Composition:** Primarily Representational: Chair/Co-chairs from each body; Secretary (ex officio); Flexibility to invite special experts on ad hoc basis
- **Leadership:** 1-year term; Ex officio member of BOD; LDC briefly vets candidates from nominated/self-nominated pool of outgoing Council members to identify top 3 for Council to vote; Leader identified by simple majority of vote
- **Meeting Frequency:** Quarterly before or after BOD meetings
- **Meeting Framework:** Standing update from CEO; Standing financial update from treasurer; Topics as requested by BOD; Topics as requested by Council members; Educational opportunities about how various areas function
- **Potential Discussion Topics:** How to maintain Chair-elect involvement/onboarding; Whether assembly chairs should continue to meet separately; Whether committee chairs should meet separately; Whether current constituents are appropriate/if voice is missing

Advisory Council Model #2:

- **Purpose:** Provides advice, counsel, expertise, and insight to board on major initiatives and matters of strategic importance; Develops recommendations for policy changes; Advises on programs/supports organizational planning; Facilitate accomplishment of initiatives at direction of board.
- **Communication:** Maintain lines of communication between membership and BOD; Assist in communication of strategic initiatives to membership; Convey member ideas/concerns to BOD; Facilitate communications/share best practices to Sections, Committees, and Interest Groups; Support communication/implementation of strategic plan.
- **Composition:** Primarily Representational: Chairs from each Section, Committee, and Interest Group; 1 journal EIC representative; 3 non-Officer BOD members in second term year and CEO (ex officio); Any BOD member may attend at will; Flexibility to invite special experts on ad hoc basis
- **Leadership:** Chaired by President-elect; Organizing team of 1 Section Chair, 1 Committee Chair, 1 Interest Group Chair (selected by corresponding body)
- **Meeting Frequency:** Similar cadence to and before BOD meetings; Flexibility to increase or decrease number of meetings
- **Meeting Framework:** Chair and organizing team approve agenda; Flexibility to invite vice chairs/chair-elects to attend meetings; Staff reports to AC on relevant issues advanced during Board meeting and throughout organization; Flexibility to increase/decrease breadth and depth of meetings
- **Potential Discussion Topics:** How to create opportunities for engagement without over-taxing; Determining core offerings; How to expand community; How to provide a more comprehensive orientation program for Section and Committee chairs

Advisory Council Model #3:

- **Purpose:** Amplify voice of membership; Advises and counsels BOD on major initiatives and matters of strategic importance; Develops recommendations for policy/practice changes; Coordinates activities among divisions, regions, org affiliates, and students to further strategic plan objectives; Provide feedback/input on specified topics at direction of BOD.
May serve as previewer of topics from BOD before shown to membership, such as redesign of Publication, BOD prioritization of annual work, BOD minutes and motion control forms.
- **Communication:** Maintains lines of communication between membership and BOD; Assists in communication of strategic initiatives to membership; Facilitates communications/share best practices across divisions, regions, org affiliates, and students; Minutes, reports, and recommendations shared with BOD including standing report to BOD; President and CEO report to AC on relevant issues advanced during BOD meetings and throughout organization, including recommendations made by AC
- **Composition:** Primarily Representational: 3-year terms with option of 1 additional consecutive term (6 years total); 1 representative from each division, region, and organizational affiliate within Org; 1 student representative; President and CEO (ex officio); Flexibility to invite special experts and BOD members on ad hoc basis
- **Leadership:** Chair elected from within AC; Chair invited to present annually to BOD
- **Meeting Frequency:** At least twice a year; Flexibility to increase number of meetings as needed
- **Meeting Framework:** Chair creates agendas; AC may request from BOD information on topics such as strategic drivers, research/data on practice trends
- **Potential Discussion Topics:** Salary/compensation study; Usage of AI in counseling sessions and companies request counselors to provide this information; Practice trends

Advisory Council Model #4:

- **Purpose:** To identify and process issues of strategic importance to the community and association; To inform strategy; Identify talent to feed the leadership pipeline; Amplify voice of membership; advise and counsel the BOD on major initiatives and matters of strategic importance; Provide feedback/input on specified topics as directed by the BOD; Hold generative discussions on potentially emerging issues.
- **Communication:** Report to Council based on issues and annual scope of work (set the stage, background information; strategic plan; expectations of service, commitment)
- **Composition:** 1-year term with option for reappointment; President and CEO (ex officio);
- 1 staff liaison; Members identified via open call and reach-out to local associations for nominees; Based on knowledge/competency/balance including: Geography, license type, position in your professional firm, fields of expertise, professional firm size
- **Leadership:** Board Vice President serves as Chair
- **Meeting Frequency:** Number of meetings determined by need/annual scope of work
- **Meeting Framework:** Set expectations annually as part of commitment; Flexibility for Board to be invited to meeting depending on topic
- **Potential Discussion Topics:** Topics may be suggested by committees, membership (e.g., Association Executive Peer Group; President and President-Elect Forums); Survey results and analytics (e.g., membership needs); Board may suggest topics; Generative topics (e.g., how the organization can provide value to membership; anticipatory organization concepts [trends]); Leadership team visits with local associations