

TIMELINE: Anonymous Elections

Created March 2022

Anonymized voting was implemented as a way to increase equity. It was initiated as a response to feedback from historically marginalized group members who had incurred harm. There has been wide support for its implementation as well as voices of opposition. This timeline is being shared to provide clarity, accuracy, and transparency into how this equity measure was implemented and related information was shared and discussed with the MAR-AMTA community.

Bolded text represents any time there was an announcement or time for discussion around anonymized elections

Spring 2019	Members shared concerns about announcing the slate of candidates at business meeting as having them stand and come to the front is ableist and may encourage bias based on sight and name recognition
September 27, 2019	Noted in Immediate Past President Michael Viega's Board Report that there were no current policies or procedures in place for creating the slate of nominees. Conversations about creating more diverse and representative nomination slates, while avoiding tokenizing began with CHADI Co-Chairs Jasmine Edwards and Jenny Fu
December 2019	Email and social media announcements went out about setting up a series of meetings with membership to examine institutional barriers and systematic issues that prevent participation in the nomination and election processes
January 5, 2020	Q&A MAR-AMTA Regional Election and Nominating Process First meeting with general membership to discuss the current processes of nominations and elections, and to begin examining structural barriers that might get in the way of people wanting to serve on the Board, which prevents equity, inclusion, and representation for our membership. Meeting minutes can be found here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IX_v5EIsNKVHI4C6lrXCCvqIssD-cDjbg0nLDiYky_I/edit?usp=sharing

- March 9, 2020 Annual call to membership for suggestion and ideas regarding revisions to the Constitution & Bylaws
- June 11, 2020 Meeting for music therapists who identify within an affinity group(s) (facilitated by Gabriela Asch-Ortiz, CHADI member with Michael Viega, Immediate Past President on standby for any questions). Participants again discussed many of the barriers they have experienced or have witnessed when considering serving, or when they served
- June 11, 2020 The Vice President for Membership resigned from their position. The Immediate Past President is charged with forming a Nominating Committee and facilitating a special election as stated in the MAR-AMTA Bylaws in Article VI, Section 5
- June 15, 2020** **General membership meeting**
Several points around equity in the nominating and election process were discussed including:
1. Removing photos and names within nominee descriptions to avoid “popularity contests”
 2. If a BIPOC is elected to the Board, making steps to avoid tokenization
 3. Making language more inclusive by creating plain language summaries for the positions
 4. Finding ways to be inclusive throughout the nomination process
- October 3, 2020 Approval of Nominating Committee (2020-2021 term) Members. Tony Torres, Rachel Reed, Jae Swanson, Gabriela Asch-Ortiz, and Becki Warren.
- October 4, 2020 The MAR-AMTA Executive Board forms the Anti-Oppression Accountability Ad-hoc Committee. This ad hoc was formed as a direct result of EB members actively harming historically marginalized folx in open meetings, and being called by CHADI to do our own work, instead of relying on CHADI to hold us accountable. Charge includes: *Review and examine the oppressive structures that perpetuate harm to historically and systemically marginalized stakeholders of the region,*

- October 2020 *explore alternative organizational structures, and present initial findings to the board.*
Nominating Committee met to discuss how the VP for Membership special election ballot would be presented after the November 5th call for nominations deadline. Feedback from the meetings on 1/5/2020, 6/6/2020 and 6/15/2020 were considered and implemented. *“Biographical information”* was included in the questionnaire for candidates via the following question: *“Describe how your background and experiences could contribute to being the Vice President of Membership for the MAR-AMTA. This can be related to your training and work as a music therapist, previous volunteer experience, life experiences, or any other items you feel are relevant.”*
- October 15, 2020 Special election for VP for Membership call for nominees went out to membership. Election would be anonymous. Deadline for nominations was November 5, 2020.
- October 17, 2020 Nominating Committee member and CHADI representative Gabriela Asch-Ortiz spoke at an AMTA DEI training, where she reported on the work of the Nominating Committee, including changes being considered, namely anonymity.
- November 9, 2020** **Social media post went out announcing candidates for VP for Membership special election.** Rationale drawn from member feedback and from scholarly references for anonymized elections is shared. The process of how anonymized elections unfolded is shared. Feedback is invited via email. This information is made available on the MAR website with the candidate statements.
<http://mar-amta.org/2020/11/07/special-election-vice-president-of-membership/?fbclid=IwAR3LbHY1fuWjsl0ws9QXOJ90zvv9Y0WgcejRu57kZHZxfwCXn5wAcsn4R9GU>
- November 11, 2020** **Email blast went out announcing candidates for VP for Membership special election. Candidates’ information was anonymized**

November 2020 Immediate Past President and Nominating Committee received initial feedback (via email and phone calls) that included both praise and sharing concerns regarding the anonymized election. All feedback was saved to help inform future review of the policies and future elections

November 24, 2020 Special Election for VP for Membership electronic ballots were emailed to membership. Voting was open for one week.

December 7, 2020 New VP for Membership was announced.
(Term: December 7, 2020 - June 30, 2021)

January 26, 2021 **At a MAR-AMTA Executive Board Meeting**, the Nominating Committee presented newly created policies and procedures for MAR-AMTA nominations and elections for Board approval. No policies regarding this had existed until this point. All proposed policies were passed by the MAR-AMTA Executive Board. Proposed (and subsequently approved) policies can be found here:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bfUNL96jLaWX0MZFWsznfsu2tZDgvtPnngT3ia3rdA/edit?usp=sharing>

Information on limiting implicit bias and anonymizing the election slate can be found here:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Y1h1IVcRYxWgyEsSuLf1N_kpBBwY7nJ9?usp=sharing

January 25, 2021 **Newly approved policies and procedures for nominations and elections were announced to membership through the Winter 2021 edition of the Region's newsletter, Rx Music.**

January 31, 2021

MAR-AMTA General Membership Meeting (online)

Newly created and approved policies and procedures for nominations and elections were presented to meeting attendees. Some members expressed concerns over the newly approved policies and procedures regarding nominations and elections. Several members voiced support for the new policy and voiced concern about how resistance against this equity measure was causing harm. Time for explanation/discussion was provided.

February 15, 2021

Call for nominations for MAR-AMTA Executive Board and Assembly of Delegates positions.

As part of an effort to center and amplify historically marginalized voices and to increase equity and inclusion in the nomination and election process, the slate of nominees was anonymized. The call for nominations announcement, including informational links provided can be found here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1d0KMpjcBx_UPg1qS8pTPdoxQ-9AhUh87-pb5knuLRs8/edit?usp=sharing

March 7, 2021

Nominating Committee hosts informational meeting on positions and election process for general membership providing a general overview of the available elected positions for the MAR-AMTA Executive Board or Assembly Delegate, and provided an opportunity to answer any questions relating to the process of running for an elected position

March 11, 2021

Nominating Committee hosts informational meeting on positions and election process for affinity group members

March 14, 2021

Nominating Committee hosts informational meeting on positions and election process for general membership

- March 17, 2021** **Nominating Committee hosts informational meeting on positions and election process for affinity group members**
- April 3, 2021** **Proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws sent to membership for review**
- April 11, 2021** **Anti-Oppression Accountability Ad-hoc Committee Initial Report at MAR-AMTA Conference Presentation**
The AOAA shared progress with their research and report, invited participants to reflect on the questions that had been asked in interviews, and shared preliminary results of the interview data. Among the results were the overwhelming support of anonymized elections from those interviewed, and how that was understood as a “move in the right direction” away from an executive board that was always based on who is in the right circles or who was the most popular. The AOAA shared direct feedback that most participants shared that getting onto the EB was a popularity contest that allowed the same people to serve over and over. Concurrent session attendees were invited to and asked questions via chat.
- April 17, 2021** **MAR-AMTA General Membership Meeting 1** at the Annual MAR-AMTA Regional Conference (online)
Basic overview of the upcoming election was presented including how nominees would be taken “from the floor”. Proposed changes to the C&B were presented, including anonymous elections
- April 18, 2021** **MAR-AMTA General Membership Meeting 2** at the annual regional conference (online)
Large portion of the meeting was devoted to discussion of the presented revisions to the C&B with the majority of that

	focused on anonymous elections. Members spoke both for and against the revisions
April 2021	Social media communication: Community members are invited to send feedback or request assistance with voting for the 2021 elections to the Immediate Past President via email
April 24, 2021	Election Ballots emailed to members for 2021 - 2023 term of Executive Board members and Assembly Delegates
May 1, 2021	Ballot of proposed revisions to the MAR-AMTA Constitution and Bylaws emailed to members
May 4, 2021	MAR-AMTA Town Hall The vast majority of the conversation was around the proposed changes to the C&B instituting anonymized voting. Attendees voiced both support and opposition to the change. All feedback was recorded to use in review and for future elections
May 11, 2021	Results of Executive Board and Assembly of Delegates election announced
June 1, 2021	AMTA affirms that the process was legal
June 9, 2021	Results of the revisions to the C&B were announced in the Spring 2021 edition of Rx Music. All proposed revisions passed. A break down of the results can be found here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mbKV5zZI6L2PdEJ3HEBNZimQiJHqe6m8/view?usp=sharing
June 14, 2021	Anti-Oppressive Accountability Ad Hoc Committee

submits its final report. Results include the overwhelming support of anonymized elections from those interviewed, and how that was understood as a “move in the right direction” away from an executive board that was always based on who is in the right circles or who was the most popular.

https://mar-amta.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Final-Report_-AOAA.pdf

July 1, 2021

2021 - 2023 term begins for new MAR-AMTA Executive Board members

September 26, 2021

MAR-AMTA Town Hall

The vast majority of the conversation was around the changes to the C&B instituting anonymized voting. Attendees voiced both support and opposition to the change which had already been voted on and approved by the membership. All feedback was recorded to use in review and for future elections

January 2021

After participating in meetings and receiving a number of emails that used tokenizing and harmful language around the anonymizing process, the MAR-AMTA EB decides to set a boundary that discussions are limited to being constructive and productive toward revision, enhancement, and improvement on the current voting process.

March 2, 2022

Town Hall: Feedback for the C&B Committee

April 8, 2022

Nominating Committee presenting at the MAR-AMTA Conference in Harrisburg, PA