

Comments on statutes:

6.1: I wholeheartedly agree with abandoning the distinction formerly drawn between "effective" and "corresponding" members.

6.3: I oppose the proposed distinction between "active" and "non-active" members. All effective members, not just those who have paid their dues, should have the right to vote and to stand for membership on the Academy's bodies and committees. Those who consistently fail to pay their dues are dealt with under Statute 6.5, and that, I believe, is sufficient; until their membership is terminated, they should enjoy all the privileges of membership.

11.1: Why cannot amendments of the Statutes be voted on at an Ordinary General Assembly? Why is an Extraordinary General Assembly required?

12.3.1: I do not agree with the proposal that the Administrative Council should include, ex officio, all former Presidents and Permanent Secretaries. They have surely earned their rest! While I agree that some continuity between one Council and the next is desirable, this would be sufficiently achieved, I believe, by including a provision often used in societies similar to our Academy, that the Immediate Past President should be a voting member of the Council during the term of office of the person who succeeds him or her as President.

Comments on electoral regulations:

Rule 1.2: I totally disagree with the idea of limiting an election to "underrepresented disciplinary fields". People should be elected on merit, not according to the part of our field in which they work.

Rule 1.3: Why are separate letters of recommendation from the two nominators required? One is surely enough.

Rule 1.6: Why are two-thirds of the nominees condemned at the outset to failure? If the proposal is intended to impose a form of quality control, it seems a bizarre way of doing this. At the very least, the number of seats to be filled should be set at a higher figure than one-third of the number of nominees, perhaps at two-thirds.

In my view, a much better form of quality control would be achieved if, as nominations are received, the Electoral Committee arranges for them to be sent to referees (two?) who are knowledgeable in the relevant field, to provide comment on the candidate's work and standing in the field; with the referees' reports then being included in the candidate's dossier. Nominators could be asked to provide contact details of people they would regard as suitable referees (up to four, perhaps), but the Electoral Committee's choice of referees should not be limited to those so named.

Under the rules proposed, I can envisage candidates being elected by securing just the votes of only their two nominators and a couple of other friends. There needs to be some kind of hurdle to prevent this, provision that says that to be elected, a candidate must secure at least X votes, where X is a modest but significant number. I have no knowledge of the numbers cast in previous elections, so I'm not able to judge what a reasonable value for X might be; but something in the order of 12 - 15 might be reasonable.