

Fostering Transparency Around ABCT's Election Process

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FOR SO MANY of us, ABCT is a professional home, one that is distinctive for its vibrant climate, compelling vision, and edifying connections. Indeed, one of the purposes of ABCT is to “facilitate professional development, interaction, and networking” among our members as we collectively strive to achieve a collective vision: to promote wellness through the application of science to human problems.

Because we pride ourselves as an organization that fosters human connections, we must go beyond naturally occurring networks to build social capital that helps all members to understand our governance systems. Indeed, ABCT's current President, Laura Seligman, has publicly stated that transparency is a theme of her presidency. To that end, here are some attempts to demystify our annual nomination and election process:

MYTH: I just don't have the time to nominate.

REALITY: Completing a nomination itself is a very easy process. Any full or new professional members of the organization can nominate a full member in good standing in the organization and there is no limit to the number of nominees you can put forward for any position. All you need to do is to share your name and the name of the person you want to nominate on the brief form provided in this issue or on the website (<https://services.abct.org/i4a/forms/index.cfm?id=31>). Then (e)mail it along. The whole process takes just a few minutes.

MYTH: There are some ABCT colleagues whom I admire and would like to see lead the organization but I feel like it would be an imposition to nominate someone unless I was sure that they wanted to become a candidate.

REALITY: Nominating someone does not obligate them to run. For a period of time, ABCT collects self and peer nominations. At the end of nomination season, the two candidates with the most nominations for each position are con-

tacted by the chair of Leadership and Elections and asked to confirm that they are willing to stand for election. If so, they are placed on the ballot. If they decline, we move onto the next person on the list until we have the ballot for each position filled. Nominees who declined to run in recent years often remark that they are honored by their peer nomination(s). Some of these nominees report that hearing about others' confidence in their qualifications made them entertain a bid for election. When you nominate a peer, it is most likely to be taken as a compliment, not an imposition.

MYTH: I am interested in self-nominating but I am not [fill in the blank: senior, well-known, accomplished] enough to stand for election.

REALITY: We seek a wide range of members who can bring their energy, commitment, and good ideas to the organization. Feel like ABCT's historic leadership profiles do not fully align with what you have to offer? This is even more reason to consider your candidacy. The diversity of our membership is what brings such vibrancy to ABCT. We are constantly seeking candidates who can expand the organization's leadership to match the diverse needs and perspectives of our membership. There are many individuals in recent years who have landed on the ballot who started from a tentative place but who have thrived in the leadership of the organization over the years. Why not you?

For the upcoming 2023 election, the Leadership and Elections Committee seeks nominations for ABCT's next President-Elect (2023-24; President, 2024-2025; Immediate Past President, 2025-2026) and for a Representative-at-Large (RAL; 2023-2026). Each RAL serves as a liaison to one of the governing branches of the association and the representative position open for 2023 will connect and coordinate with the Membership Issues Coordinator and committees.

Remember that there are many ways to invest in ABCT's future. We'll share three. The first is to nominate yourself or a colleague. Another is to remember to take a few minutes to vote in our annual election this November. It is easier than ever, with an email reminder delivered right to your inbox. Finally, know that there are other ways to get involved in ABCT governance beyond running for office. Look for announcements of appointed committee openings through our online member forum. For example, what about joining the committee on Leadership and Elections? Each year we shepherd annual elections and consider how to expand the leadership pool for the future. Membership is approved by ABCT's Board of Directors and includes a chair and two members. Our Chair is Patricia DiBartolo (pdibarto@smith.edu), from Smith College, who has served on the committee since 2016. Simon Rego at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine (dr.rego@gmail.com) is a continuing member (kpl9716@u.washington.edu) and we are recently joined by Angela Fang (angfang@uw.edu) at the University of Washington. If you are interested in joining our committee or are curious about other ways to get involved in the organization, please contact any one of us or ABCT's Executive Director, Mary Jane Eimer (mjeimer@abct.org).

For so many of us, ABCT is a professional home. Claim the privileges of ABCT membership—nominate, vote, and serve—so that together, we can realize the organization's loftiest goal to promote human health and wellness. Please be in touch any time, in the voting booth and outside of it, with your questions and suggestions. ■