ABCT Board of Directors
Leadership and Elections Policy
Individual Vote Model

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a transparent, fair, and inclusive process for the nomination and election of members to the Board of Directors of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT). ABCT utilizes an individual vote model, whereby eligible members of the association vote for individual candidates rather than slates.

II. Principles of Governance

The nominations and election process is guided by the following principles:

a) Transparency in all nomination and election procedures
b) Equal opportunity for eligible members to participate as candidates
c) Fair and impartial review of all nominations
d) Representation of ABCT's diverse membership and principles of equity
e) Integrity and confidentiality in voting processes

III. Leadership and Elections Committee (LEC)

3.1 The Leadership and Elections Committee (LEC) is comprised of at least five [5] members, including a Chair. Members are staggered for three-year terms and represent the diversity of the association and the CBT specialty.

3.2 The LEC chair should be a person who has served in a leadership role within the association.

3.3 The LEC committee members appoint incoming LEC members by recruiting volunteers through Volunteer Me or by direct solicitation. LEC members will vet all prospective committee members by submission of their resumes or CVs to the LEC Chair so that the committee can ensure that they meet the qualities listed in 3.4. As with all ABCT committees board must approve chair. Board also retains right of refusal for any committee member.

3.4 LEC members and chair must:

a) Be current full members of the association in good standing
b) Have solid knowledge of ABCT's mission and the field
c) Have had experience with governance or leadership
d) Have independence and objectivity
e) Have strong networking and recruitment ability

3.5 The Leadership and Elections Committee

a) Solicits and receives nominations for open Board positions
b) Verify candidates' eligibility based on standardized criteria established by this policy.
c) Evaluate candidates based on established criteria
d) Present a final ballot of qualified candidates for election

e) Ensure that no member of the LEC is nominated for election during their term of service on the committee

3.6 The Leadership and Elections Committee operate in an independent capacity, meaning it is not subject to undue influence from the ABCT Board of Directors or any individual member of the association. While the LEC functions independently, the board still retains overall fiduciary responsibility of the organization and will step in **ONLY** if the committee breaches the association's Bylaws, fails to comply with legal requirements, or otherwise acts in an unethical manner at odds with the values of the association.

IV. Eligibility for Board Candidates

To be eligible for nomination, an individual must:

a) Be a FULL member of the Association in good standing
b) Have maintained ABCT membership for at least two [2] consecutive years prior to running for office
c) Not be under any disciplinary action at the time of nomination
d) Must have served in some leadership capacity within the Association (e.g., chair/vice-chair of a committee, taskforce, special interest group, panel, symposium). Past board members may run again after being out of office for two years.
e) Must demonstrate commitment to the mission, vision, and values of the association through prior engagement, service, or participation
f) Meet the evaluation criteria of the LEC

V. Call for Nominations

5.1 The Leadership and Elections Committee will issue a Call for Nominations each year within six months of the election date.

5.2 The call for nomination submissions include:

a) Number and type of available Board seats; Term lengths; Responsibility of board role; Eligibility requirements; Instructions for nominations submission; Deadline for submissions; and Information on the review process

5.3 Each year, nominations are sought for the President-elect and Director-at-large positions. In some years there may be more than one Director-at-large position to be filled.

5.4 Every third year, a call for the Secretary-Treasurer position is made one full year before they take office to ensure sufficient orientation and training in the position.

5.5 Nominations may be submitted by:

a) Self-nomination
b) Peer nomination by a full member
c) Identification by Leadership and Elections Committee, who can recruit nominees

5.6 Leadership and Elections Committee members may identify and themselves nominate qualified candidates. However, any LEC member who has a close

personal, professional, or financial relationship with a nominee **must** disclose the relationship and recuse themselves from discussion and voting related to that candidate. All nominees will be evaluated using the same criteria to ensure a fair and unbiased process.

5.7 Each nominee must receive at least two (2) nominations to be considered for candidacy. Nominations must be submitted securely and confidentially via an online electronic submission portal maintained by ABCT Central Office, or via another authorized third-party vendor. All nominations must be submitted to ABCT Central office by 12:00 midnight PT of the deadline date.

5.8 The CEO and designated Central Office staff will conduct a preliminary assessment of all nomination submissions to check for missing information, confirmation of ABCT membership, or other required information. Central Office may reach out to the nominee if necessary to request more information or seek clarification on the submission.

5.9 All nominees meeting the minimum required threshold must confirm acceptance of their nomination in writing to the LEC chair and/or Chief Executive Officer or designate by responding to the "Memo to Nominees" request and completing a preliminary Candidate Information form.

VI. Nominee Review and Candidate Selection

6.1 The Leadership and Elections Committee reviews all eligible nominations using a standardized evaluation process which will be conducted in two stages.

Stage 1 - An initial review will determine the nominees to be forwarded to the second stage based on a variety of factors such as: CVs/resume, disclosures, self-appraisal questionnaires or personal statements, record of service to the association and/or the profession, diversity and equity, as well as specific skills, experience or knowledge needed on the Board.

Stage 2 - Those forwarded to the second stage will do a brief interview conducted by all members of the Leadership and Elections Committee and barring any other disqualifying or aggravating factors, their names may be recommended to be placed on the final ballot as a candidate.

6.2 Evaluation criteria may include:

- Leadership experience in the field of cognitive behavioral therapy or the association
- Representation of geographic, professional, racial, ethnic or other diversity
- Prior volunteer or governance service
- Strategic skills aligned with organizational needs
- Commitment to the mission and values of the association

6.3 The Committee ensures that **up to** five (5) qualified candidates are presented for each Director-at-Large seat and Officer positions (e.g., President-elect or Secretary-Treasurer) whenever possible.

6.4 The final list of candidates should be presented to the ABCT Board to confirm procedural compliance and not to alter candidate selection.
6.5 Nominees are not candidates. Only when the nominee's name is selected to be placed on the final ballot is that person considered a candidate for office.
6.6 LEC members may communicate feedback to nominees who are not selected for the slate to cultivate their leadership skills and identify other avenues for governance positions within the organization.

VII. Electioneering

7.1 Prohibited Activities. Candidates may not:

a) Use the association's funds, mailing lists, staff time, or assets for campaigning
b) Imply endorsement by the association or current board
c) Engage in defamatory, misleading, or false statements about other candidates
d) Offer incentives, gifts, or anything of value in exchange for votes
e) Disrupt official disrupt events for campaign purposes
f) Infractions of any electioneering policies should be brought to the Leadership and Elections Committee Chair and CEO to be resolved with the parties involved.

7.2 Campaigning and Use of Organizational Resources

a) The association may provide equal access to certain of its membership platforms (e.g., candidate statements on abct.org website, internal ABCT forums, message boards, other online communities)
b) Any such access must be standardized and offered equally to all candidates
c) SIGs may provide equal access to electioneering to candidates. There is no prohibition on electioneering within SIGs and among SIG chairs except that there will be no open endorsements of candidates on the SIG's internal ABCT forums, message boards, or other online communities.
d) LEC members, staff, and the Board must remain neutral and may not assist any candidate. Board members may privately vote for any candidate of their choice in the elections.
e) Candidates may begin campaigning as soon as they receive the Election Memo from the LEC chair confirming their placement on the ballot as a candidate in the election.
f) "Quiet Period." All campaigning must conclude and cease 24 hours before voting opens.

VIII. Individual Vote Election Process

8.1 The Association conducts elections using an **individual vote model**, in which each member votes for individual candidates rather than a slate.
8.2 Each eligible member may cast votes for candidates corresponding to the number of open Board seats.
8.3 Candidates receiving the highest number of votes for each open seat will be elected.

8.4 In the event of a tie affecting the outcome of election results, there will be a runoff election between the candidates tied for the position. Under Robert's Rules a tie vote means the motion fails or candidate(s) fail because a majority was not achieved. In the event of another tie vote after the runoff, the chair of the LEC casts the deciding vote. If the LEC chair has a previously disclosed conflict of interest with any of the candidates participating in the runoff, the ABCT president casts the deciding vote.

IX. Voting Procedures and Results

9.1 Voting will be conducted securely and confidentially via an online electronic submission portal maintained by ABCT Central Office, or via another authorized third-party vendor, which ensures that double votes and write-in votes will not be allowed. Voting may also be done by mail ballot (if requested) or other secure method approved by the Board.

9.2 The voting period will remain open for a minimum of 30 days.

9.3 All ballots cast are confidential, and results will be initially tabulated by the ABCT Chief Executive Officer. A second staff member of the Central Office will calculate the final votes independently to confirm the election results. If an independent third party or designated election service provider is used, the provider will tabulate the results and present the raw data AND aggregated results to the CEO for verification. A second Central Officer staffer will also verify the vote results count if managed by a third party.

9.4 The election results will be shared by the CEO to the LEC, who will officially certify the results and report it to the slated candidates and Board of Directors prior to public announcement.

X. Communication of Results

10.1 Election results will be communicated to the membership within 15 days of certification by the LEC.

10.2 Candidates will be notified of the results by the LEC chair via an "Election Results Memo."

10.3 Results notification will include:

a) Names of elected directors
b) Term start and end dates, and
c) Number of votes cast for each candidate **as a percentage** of the total cast
d) Voter turnout rate

10.4 Deidentified raw data and actual vote counts may be requested by candidates in the event of a dispute or challenge to the election process or election results.

XI. Disputes

Any complaints disputing election results must be procedural, specific, evidence-based, and anchored in the association's policies or bylaws. Complaints may be sent to the CEO or the LEC chair. The Leadership and Election committee along with the CEO will serve as the disputes review panel, may convene a hearing if necessary and will make a ruling. Appeals of the review panel ruling can be made to the Board of Directors who is the final arbiter and whose decision is final.

XII. Transition and Onboarding

Newly elected Board members will be invited to participate in a New Board Member orientation meeting conducted by the CEO and incoming president prior to the commencement of their term. The meeting will include orientation on ABCT governance responsibilities, fiduciary duties, and long- and short-term strategic plans.

XIII. Amendments

This policy is approved by and may be amended by a majority vote of the Board of Directors, provided that any amendments are consistent with the Association's bylaws and applicable governance requirements.

[*Policy approved/updated on July 13, 2026*]