**eat**™ **Academy of Nutrition**
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**BACKGROUND**
The 2016 national election process began with a call for nominations which ran from April to October 2015.  The Nominating Committee successfully filled a slate of 26 qualified candidates for the 2016 election which took place via electronic voting February 1 – February 22. The tactics implemented by the 2015-16 Nominating Committee to increase member engagement in the nominations and election processes are outlined in this report.

**NOMINATIONS HISTORY**
The Nominating Committee received 76 acceptances out of a pool of 134 nominees for the 2016 election (Table 1). The Nominating Committee identified strategies to collaborate with other Academy committees to enhance member engagement and identify various tools to provide to committees and organizational units to promote nominations. The outreach resulted in increased submission of nominations for the national election and in provision of names for inclusion in the leadership database.

Table 1. Nomination Statistics by Election Year

|  | **Nominations** | **Nominees** | **Declines** | **Non-responders** | **Acceptances** | **Candidates Needed** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Election 2010** | 351 | **220** | 112 | 13 | **95 (43%)** | 30 |
| **Election 2011** | 211 | **144** | 63 | 17 | **64 (44%)** | 24 |
| **Election 2012** | 246 | **169** | 59 | 21 | **89 (53%)** | 30 |
| **Election 2013** | 174 | **147** | 52 | 29 | **66 (45%)** | 22 |
| **Election 2014** | 218 | **157** | 43 | 38 | **76 (48%)** | 28 |
| **Election 2015** | 243 | **154** | 51 | 39 | **64 (42%)** | 24 |
| **Election 2016** | 193 | **134** | 22 | 37 | **76 (57%)** | 26 |

**NOMINATIONS PROMOTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS TACTICS**
- Communications were sent to delegates, affiliates, DPGs, MIGs and organizational units from the Nominating Committee requesting assistance in providing nominations and encouraging members to vote.
- Committee members personally contacted the member leaders of these groups to establish a communications link. During the fall House of Delegates meeting and FNCE Committee members successfully promoted nominations with over 70 submitted post FNCE. The Nominating Committee chair presented at the HOD meeting to encourage participation in the nominations and elections processes.
- The Call for Nominations was promoted on organization unit listservs, and through *Eat Right Weekly*, the *Journal*, *Daily News*, Facebook, Twitter and other social media outlets.
- A Nomination and Election Toolkit and webinar was developed and promoted to all committee staff partners, in *Eat Right Weekly*, on social media and on the elections website.

**VOTING HISTORY**

The 2016 election has been run electronically for eight years on an external web-based election platform and is managed by a third-party vendor. The Nominating Committee and staff do not have ability to change or adjust any data. After the close of the polls the election results are tallied and verified by the vendor and a report is sent electronically to the Chair of the Nominating Committee. Figure 1 shows an average of 12% of members voting in the last seven years. Survey & Ballot Systems[2] reports associations with over 34,000 eligible voters have an average of 11% voter turnout.

Figure 1. Academy Election Voting Statistics

| Year | Total Ballots Cast | Total Eligible Voters | % Voted |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2010 | 8,387 | 68,863 | 12.2% |
| 2011 | 8,481 | 65,850 | 12.8% |
| 2012 | 8,899 | 71,189 | 12.5% |
| 2013 (Shortened voting period from 4 to 3 wks) | 10,119 | 72,166 | 14.0% |
| 2014 | 8,636 | 72,238 | 12.0% |
| 2015 | 6,469 | 72, 291 | 9.0% |
| 2016 | 8,971 | 71,943 | 12.5% |

**ELECTION PROMOTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS TACTICS**
- Vote progress statistics were easily accessible to members on the elections site to enhance election transparency. Members could view the voting percentages by affiliate, and voting percentages by DPG/MIG to help motivate members to cast their ballot in support of their affiliate or DPG/MIG.
- Committee members worked with Strategic Communications team to develop social media messaging to spark conversation online among members. Animated GIFs and static memes were posted on the elections website landing page to enhance member engagement in voting.
- The committee identified opportunities to collaborate with Academy committees, specifically Member Value Advisory Committee and students to promote voting.
- Along with weekly blast emails sent to all vote eligible members to promote the elections, reminders to vote were posted on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and in DPG, MIG and affiliate newsletters; published in a promotion ad in the *Journal*; and included in weekly vote reminder messages in *Eat Right Weekly*.
- A VOTE banner was prominently displayed on the Academy's eatrightPRO website landing page which was linked directly to the ballot.
- Academy staff were encouraged to display a "vote" graphic in their signature tagline to promote voting.
- According to Votenet.com[1] as an organization's size increases, voter turnout usually decreases, citing "members of smaller organizations usually have a stronger sense of community and stronger social ties. They're more likely to know the candidates who run for leadership positions." To increase that sense of community in the Academy election, *Project Vote* for the affiliates was continued this year and expanded to include DPGs and MIGs. It is a voter incentive competition which awards the affiliates and DPGs/MIGs with the highest percentage voters at the conclusion of the election with a free FNCE registration. *Project Vote* encouraged the DPG/MIG leaders to push the voting message,

share links to the Meet the Candidates Forums and post regular updates on where the groups stood in voting percentage.

- The Meet the Candidates Forums for president-elect and speaker-elect candidates were held on February 1 and 2, respectively. There were 316 registered and 226 in attendance for the president-elect webinar and 213 registrants and 162 members logged on for the speaker-elect webinar, a similar participation rate to previous years. For those unable to attend, the webinars were recorded and posted on the elections webpage and in *Eat Right Weekly*. The President-elect webinar had 52 online views and the Speaker-elect had 21 views.

**NEXT STEPS: LOOKING AHEAD TO ELECTION 2017**

To collect feedback from the candidates and identify areas of improvement and areas of success, a survey will be sent to all 26 candidates on the 2016 ballot. In mid-March a survey to assess member satisfaction with the nomination and elections processes will be sent to all vote-eligible members. The results of both surveys will be compared with previous years and help guide the program of work for the coming year.

Features were added to this year's nominations and elections platform providing nominees and candidates improved usability options. The structure of the voting site will be reviewed in 2016-17 for improved functionality.

The Nominating Committee will discuss the 2016 nominations and elections process during a Debriefing conference call in April. The survey results, campaign guidelines, petition process, biographical information form, interview questions for president-elect, speaker-elect and treasurer-elect and the Meet the Candidates Forums will be included on the agenda. Identified issues will be further examined during the committee's 2016 summer planning meeting.

**CONCLUSION**

The Nominating Committee will focus its energies on engaging Academy members to participate in the nominations and elections processes to identify future leaders and select a ballot comprised of the best qualified individuals with demonstrated personal, interpersonal and leadership skills for leading the Academy into the next century. The many enhancements to the promotions and structure of the nominations and elections processes this year set the course for more creative tactics to be implemented in the future.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Deanne Brandstetter, Chair, Nominating Committee

1. http://blog.votenet.com/shrink-your-organization-to-increase-voter-turnout, Oct 6, 2015.
2. *Secrets of Election Response Rates*, Survey & Ballot Systems, 2011.