Introduction

The Evolution Designers Team (EDT) presented its report to the House of Delegates during the HOD Spring 2019 Virtual Meeting. Following the meeting, delegates were encouraged to ask questions for clarification on the report. The questions were answered by the Evolution Designers Co-chairs and are provided below. Numbers in parentheses after the subject indicate where additional information can be found in the HOD Evolution Designers Report.

DIVERSITY OF MEMBERSHIP (Page 9-10)

Q1: With respect to the At-Large delegates age 30 and younger and proposed new delegates 35 and younger: is the goal to increase the number/% of "young RDN/NDTR" chronologically or "young" in practice experience?

A: The recommendation is focused on age rather than years of practice experience. Younger generations are currently underrepresented in the HOD as compared to the total Academy membership.

RDNs and NDTRs new to practice might also be under 35 years of age, however these individuals could also be second-career professionals and so may not bring the “youth” demographic we are seeking.

Q2: I was wondering if any thought or discussion went into having the focus be on newly credentialed professionals (certain time since becoming RDN or DTR). While the intent is to draw in newly credentialed professionals, I am concerned that focusing on age only as a requirement may lead to discrimination concerns. For example, we could not at our work have a requirement based on age. I have discussed this issue with others and I think we would be better served in the long run to focus on newly credentialed vs an age requirement.

A: The Evolution Designers Team did consider both aspects (age versus years in practice) and determined that based on the demographics of the HOD versus overall Academy members, in order to be more representative of the overall membership we needed a way to ensure various generations/generational perspectives were include in the HOD’s composition. The data showed gaps in terms of younger generations. When we get into the dialogue and deliberation phase of the report-vetting process, we welcome you and others to weigh in on the pros and cons of doing so. We also welcome alternative options.
Q3: Will emerging leader delegates need to be under the age of 35 or will the age continue to be under 30? Page 9 of the report states: “To increase diversity in the HOD, the suggestion was made for...the addition of emerging leader delegates, which are members under the age of thirty.” On the same page the recommendation is made to change the Delegate-at-Large: Under 30 Years of Age classification to “under 35 years of age.”

In this context we were using "emerging leaders" as a generic term and not as a title. Within the Academy structure, the term “emerging leader” is only officially used to our knowledge for the Emerging Dietetic Leader Awards conferred through the affiliates. It is not used for any positions on Boards or Committees. There are no delegate roles that have "Emerging Leader" in their title.

Given this, the current Delegate-At-Large position related to younger practitioners is called "Delegate-at-Large: Under 30 Years of Age." The only change recommended by the Evolution Designer Team is to change it to "Delegate-at-Large: Under 35 Years of Age" given the 2024 requirement for master’s degrees for registered dietitian nutritionists.

Q4: How will the proposed 3 new delegates representing the MIGs be funded?

A: The Evolution Designer Team recognized that the MIGs are not all in a position in terms of infrastructure and resources to support a delegate. Therefore, the recommendation as noted on Page 9 of the report states, “Financial support of these roles would align with the policy for other At-Large Delegates.” The current policy covers travel, per diem (3 days) and lodging (3 nights shared room rate) to attend the fall HOD meeting (approximately $2440/person).

Q5: What other ways besides MIGs could be used to increase diversity of underrepresented groups?

A: The Evolution Designer Team did discuss diversity and inclusiveness training for Affiliate and DPG nominating committees as one mechanism for building a pool of diverse individuals serving as delegates.

TERM LIMITS (Page 10)

Q6: What is different about the term limits- aren’t they the same as before?

A: Currently policies regarding term limits for Affiliate and DPG delegates are established by those respective organizational units. So while some may set a limit, others may not, and the limits set may vary from group to group. The At-Large Delegate positions follow the national ballot criteria which state “no person will be eligible to serve more than one term in the same office except as otherwise specified in the Bylaws.” As a result, for some delegates this recommendation may represent a change, while for others it will not.
Q7: Will the change in term limits apply to newly elected delegates once changes goes into effect and not currently elected delegates?

A: The charge of the Evolution Designer Team did not include the specifics of implementation. When changes have been made in the past in delegate composition within the HOD, seated delegates have never been removed from office before the end of their current term. If this recommendation moves forward from the HOD to the BOD for approval, your question will be considered as the implementation plan is developed.

Q8: What is the thought process of one year break after serving 2 terms as delegate?

A: At the Fall 2018 meeting, there was feedback from delegates about avoiding having the "same ten people" represented in the HOD. The break in term of service is to encourage a diversity of Academy members to represent their constituencies within the HOD. Continuity is allowed with the two term limit, which means a delegate can be in role for six consecutive years.

Q9: Please clarify the recommendation of the 3-year delegate term with a maximum of two consecutive terms. Does the recommendation apply only to a delegate holding the same position or being in any position as a delegate? That is, does the "two consecutive terms as a delegate" relate to the delegate's time in the HOD or the position the delegate holds. For example, if a delegate represents an affiliate for three years, could that person immediately follow with 2 terms representing a DPG, which would be 9 consecutive years as a delegate? Or after the one term as an affiliate delegate and one term as a DPG delegate, would the person need to leave the HOD because the person had served a total of 6 years (representing two different groups) in the HOD?

A: In regards to term limits, a delegate can serve two consecutive terms (6 years total) and then must take at least a one-year break before serving again as a delegate. For example, an individual could be an Affiliate Delegate for two terms, take a one-year break, and then run as a DPG Delegate. The point is that there has to be a break after six consecutive years. The ultimate goal is to maximize rotation of representation within the HOD.

OVERALL REPORT:

Q10: Are the recommendations in the Report bold enough?

A: The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is a member driven organization and as a governing body over the practice of food, nutrition and dietetics, the HOD is representative of the total membership. From the start of the process, the Evolution Designers Team felt strongly that it was essential to maintain the HOD as a representative body of the membership. This concept is foundational in the new process model and structure recommended by the Evolution Designers Team, and the team feels these recommendations align with the desires of delegates and their constituents. We expect the HOD to continue to evolve based on member needs.
**Q11: Can you clarify further the difference between professional and strategic issues?**

A: Strategic issues are ones with potential impact for the whole profession in three or more year. Professional issues are more practice-based topics that may impact a smaller subset of the profession. Strategic issues are more long-term while professional issues are short-term.

**Q12: What process will be used to submit recommendations for Subject Matter Experts (SME)?**

A: The charge of the Evolution Designers Team did not include the specifics of implementation. In the past the House Leadership Team (HLT) has worked with Academy staff to identify subject matter experts. The HLT will determine the process moving forward and those responsible for implementation considering key principles in the Report around leadership opportunities for delegates, overall member engagement, and the desired benefits of internal and external expertise.