

## SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON MEMBERSHIP APPOINTMENTS AND COUNCIL OPERATING PROCEDURES

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed proposed changes to the Council Operating Procedures (COP) 2, 3 and 4 ([Agenda Item E.6, Attachment 3, September 2021](#)). The SSC also discussed needs for expertise that should be prioritized in the upcoming call for nominations for at-large SSC seats.

### Changes to COP 4

The SSC discussion of changes to COPs focused on proposed changes to COP 4 regarding Alternate Members for the SSC. The changes eliminate language from COP 4 that prohibited at-large SSC committee members from designating alternates. The revised COP would allow at-large members of the SSC who are unable to attend an SSC meeting to request an alternate subject to 30-day advance notice and approval by the Executive Director.

A primary concern of the SSC with regards to designating alternates is that the policy be consistent for at-large members and agency-appointed members. The proposed changes to COP 4 address this by eliminating language that specified that only agency-appointed members could designate alternates. An alternative policy to consider would be to disallow alternates for both agency and at-large seats except under exceptional circumstances as determined by the Executive Director. The treatment of requests for alternates for at-large and agency-appointed members should be consistent.

The SSC notes that, if designation of alternates is allowed, it is important to ensure that all alternates meet the same standards as formally appointed members regardless of whether alternates are for at-large or agency-appointed seats. These standards include strong scientific credentials, appropriate disciplinary expertise to substitute for the absent member, assurance that the individual will be scientifically objective and policy neutral, and documentation of any potential conflicts of interest. It is also important that any alternate be knowledgeable of how the SSC operates and be well prepared for the topics to be covered in the meeting as well as ongoing issues that may carry over from prior meetings. The current COP does require prior approval by the Executive Director who can ensure these qualifications be met. It would be useful to outline a vetting procedure that specifies qualifications for alternates, and consultation with the SSC chair may be advisable to ensure an alternate will meet the needs of the SSC for the meeting(s) they will attend.

The SSC notes that the current process of appointing all at-large members for concurrent three-year terms, or vacated seats only for the remainder of a three-year term, could be made more flexible by having offset terms for subsets of at-large seats such that two to three seats would be reappointed each year. This would enable the SSC to respond more quickly to changing needs for expertise and could allow three-year appointments for appointees replacing a member that did not complete a three-year term.

There is a typo in the first sentence of current COP 4 in the section titled Alternate Member. The sentence reads “request and alternate” and should read “request an alternate”.

#### Call for new SSC Nominations

The Council will soon be requesting nominations for appointment and re-appointments of at-large SSC members for three-year terms beginning in 2022. The SSC notes nominees with expertise in stock assessment and ability to serve on stock assessment review panels are high priorities. The Groundfish Subcommittee is in need of these additional at-large members to meet the demands of its workload. The SSC notes that the current slate of at-large members provide expertise in a variety of areas and maintaining membership that includes those areas of expertise is desirable. These include stock assessment, management strategy evaluation, acoustics, ecosystem science, oceanography, and economics, as well as fishery management plan-specific knowledge (e.g., groundfish, salmon, coastal pelagic species, and highly migratory species).

PFMC  
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