



Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis Region Secular Franciscan Order

Alabama · Georgia · North Carolina · South Carolina · Tennessee

CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS

NOMINATION PROCEDURES AND INFORMATION FOR FRATERNITY

In the United States the following two nomination procedures are the most commonly used.

- a) Nominations committee which, according to its own norms, proposes at least two candidates for each office;
- b) Discernment process whereby the members of the chapter gather previous to the elective chapter and dialogue in a prayerful atmosphere and open manner with the help of a facilitator. The requirements and characteristics for each office and the specific persons to fulfill these responsibilities are discussed. If possible, at least two suitable candidates are called forth for each office.

Suggestion: That all the factors involved be brought into the discernment process. Truth and compassion must always interact with each other, and it is wisdom to include both virtues in the discernment process. All manipulations, even well intended ones, should be avoided. Honesty and openness are essential (Mt. 5:33-37).

-
- Ministers notify the regional minister and regional spiritual assistant three months in advance of desired date for elections. Regional minister responds by letter. (email acceptable)
 - Fraternity prepares for transition from present council to incoming council.
 - Records of the minister, secretary, treasurer, formation director and fraternity are in order according to the document “Records and Resources to be Maintained”.
 - Well-organized and completed binders and files are “gifts of love” to be presented to your newly elected brothers and sisters.
 - Records will be given to incoming council at time of elections.
 - Consider a symbolic “transfer of records”, i.e., one binder, at the installation ceremony.
 - Consider a “retreat of transition” for the incoming council with the outgoing council.
 - Fraternity thanks the outgoing council for their service to the fraternity.
 - Voting members will be the temporarily and perpetually professed members.
 - Voting members must be present on the day and in the designated place of the elections.
 - Voting by mail or proxy is not acceptable. (FAQ Concerning Elections)
 - An individual may nominate himself/herself for an office. (FAQ Concerning Elections)
 - An individual may campaign for oneself for office. (FAQ Concerning Elections)
 - The “appointed” spiritual assistant does not vote in the election.

- A local fraternity must vote for a formation director. [*General Constitutions*, article #49]
 - Source: The National Formation Commission second quarterly mailing - August 2, 2001: “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)- Is the local formation director elected or appointed?”
- The out going minister cannot be elected vice minister. [*cf. General Constitutions*, article #79.2]
- In a Chapter of Elections, neither the Commissioned Spiritual Assistant nor a Spiritual Assistant in Training can be nominated or accept nomination for the position of minister or vice-minister. This same individual may be nominated as secretary, treasurer, formation director, or councilor and, if elected, serve until appointed to assist a local fraternity. They will be obliged to resign the position when and if appointed as Spiritual Assistant to a local fraternity. There is no guarantee that a Commissioned Spiritual Assistant will be assigned to a fraternity. [BSSF SA Training Program guidelines]
- An individual, who arrives after the Rite of Elections has begun, may begin voting at that time. The individual does not add their vote to previously accepted elections.
- A professed member that cannot be present for the elections can be nominated for an office.
 - This should include a written statement of acceptance.
 - A proxy can accept the election of the absent professed member.
 - Fraternities will provide a stipend to the Visitors for travel expenses.
[*cf. National Statutes*, article #8.8 and *Regional Guidelines*, article #8.4]
- In accord with article #54.3 of the *General Constitutions*, for the fraternities at each level, a financial audit must be done every 3 years, just prior to the end of the Council’s term of office. This audit may be conducted by a professional accountant who is not a member of the fraternity Council, or by a “board of examiners” established by the particular fraternity (consisting of two or more experts selected at large by the membership who are not also members of that fraternity’s Council). A written report of such audit must be given to the Council of the higher fraternity. [*cf. National Statutes*, article #4.5 and *Treasury Guidelines*, article #3]

**** Suggestion:** Consider electing 1-3 councilors. The councilors could assist the council with special activities and would be available for the position of vice minister if the minister transfers or resigns for any reason. Also they would be available to assume any of the other positions if vacated through transfers or resignations. The councilors would attend the council gatherings and have a vote.

NOTE: Spiritual Assistants in training may continue, if previously elected, to serve on the local fraternity council. If minister or vice-minister, this individual can serve in that position until appointed to assist a local fraternity.

Revision: 9-20-14