



VII. Policy & Admissions: Monday - Tuesday

General Service Conference - Conférence des Services généraux -
Conferencia de Servicios Generales

Apr 15, 2024 9:00 AM - Apr 16, 2024 12:00 PM EDT

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2024 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions

ITEM A: Review GSO General Manager's memo regarding General Service Conference site selection.

Background notes:

Excerpts from the trustees' General Service Conference Committee January 2024, meeting:

The committee reviewed a memo from the general manager on the status of Site Selection for the 2027 General Service Conference.

The committee also reviewed the background forwarded to the 2023 Conference Committee on Policy and Admissions, which included sample information about the General Service Conference potentially meeting outside of New York City. The committee agreed to forward the memo update from the General Manager on Site Selection status to the 2024 Conference Committee on Policy and Admissions.

2023 Committee Consideration of the Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions:

The committee reviewed the GSO General Manager's report regarding General Service Conference site selection. The committee appreciated the detailed analysis of the costs and logistics of holding the Conference at sample facilities in four of the eight regions. The committee is not requesting a site selection report from the General Manager in 2024, recognizing that contracts have been executed with hotels in the New York area for 2024, 2025, and 2026, and that site selection for the 2027 General Service Conference could be impacted by the results of the Location Plus Committee and possible relocation of the General Service Office. The committee is requesting that the trustees' General Service Conference Committee conduct a survey of current General Service Conference members regarding the spiritual implications of holding the Conference outside the New York area. An additional option to explore in the survey could be alternating between holding the Conference in the New York area and the Akron/Cleveland area. The committee looks forward to reviewing the survey results or a progress report at the 74th General Service Conference.

2022 Committee Consideration of the Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions:

The committee reviewed the GSO General Manager's report regarding General Service Conference site selection, noting with appreciation the level of detail regarding specific sites considered. The committee requested that the next site selection report provide detail on the financial, logistical, and spiritual implications of holding the General Service Conference at other locations throughout the eight regions of the U.S./Canada service structure, perhaps in rotation with the New York City metropolitan area.

Current Conference Charter excerpt:

9. The General Service Conference Meetings: The Conference will meet yearly in the City of New York, unless otherwise agreed upon. Special meetings may be called should there be a grave emergency. The Conference may also render advisory opinions at any time by a mail or telephone poll in aid of the General Service Board or its related services.

Background:

1. General Manager's memo on General Service Conference site selection

2024 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions

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Background:

1. General Manager's memo on General Service Conference site selection
2. Conference Advisory Actions Regarding General Service Conference Site Selection.

Conference Advisory Actions Regarding General Service Conference Site Selection

2017 *It was recommended that:*

General Service Office management submit a report on the process, implementation, and status on the site selection of the General Service Conference for review by the 2018 Policy/Admissions Committee.

2008 *It was recommended that:*

The responsibility for General Service Conference site selection be delegated to General Service Office management, subject to approval of the General Service Board; and that a report be forwarded to the 2009 General Service Conference.

1991 *It was recommended that:*

The 1992 General Service Conference annual meeting be held in the city of New York. (Floor Action)

1970 *It was recommended that:*

The General Service Office have the right to choose the hotel for the 1971 General Service Conference without conferring further with the delegates to the Conference. (Delegates Only Meeting)

1969 *It was recommended that:*

Inasmuch as GSO is now giving consideration to relocation of the office in New York, consideration might also be given to the relocation of the site of this annual meeting, with a view to returning to single-room accommodations, so that the advantages of private meditation, study, thought, and rest might be restored. It was further suggested that the rising costs of the annual meeting might be controlled, or at least reduced, by a study of possible alternative hotel accommodations. (Delegates Only Meeting)

1956 *It was recommended that:*

The proposal that meetings of the General Service Conference be "rotated" from New York City in even years to a different geographical section in odd years be tabled for consideration at some future date.

2024 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions

ITEM B: Review dates for the 2028 General Service Conference.

Background notes:

2023 Committee Consideration of the Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions:

The committee reviewed the dates for the 2027 General Service Conference. In order to provide additional flexibility to the General Service Office management in contracting the most cost-effective and appropriate venues for the General Service Conference, the committee agreed to select three proposed dates for the 77th General Service Conference, as follows (in order of preference): May 2-8, 2027; April 11-17, 2027; May 23-29, 2027. The committee noted that these proposed Conference dates are the best choices available for avoiding conflicts with significant holidays. The committee asked that all Conference members be notified of the final dates for the 77th General Service Conference as soon as they are finalized by GSO management.

Background:

1. List of past GSC dates
2. 2028 calendar with holidays and observances

List of Conference Dates from 1993 to 2023

- April 18 – 24, 1993
- April 17 – 23, 1994
- April 30 – May 6, 1995
- April 21 – 27, 1996
- April 13 – 19, 1997
- April 19 – 25, 1998
- April 18 – 24, 1999
- April 30 – May 6, 2000
- April 22 – 28, 2001
- April 21 – 27, 2002
- April 27 – May 3, 2003
- April 18 – 24, 2004
- April 17 – 23, 2005
- April 23 – 29, 2006
- April 22 – 28, 2007
- April 27 – May 3, 2008
- April 26 – May 2, 2009
- April 18 – 24, 2010
- May 1 – 7, 2011
- April 22 – 28, 2012
- April 21 – 27, 2013
- April 27 – May 3, 2014
- April 19 – 25, 2015
- April 17 – 23, 2016
- April 23 – 29, 2017
- April 22 – 28, 2018
- May 19 – 25, 2019
- May 16 – 19, 2020
- April 18 – 24, 2021
- April 24 – 30, 2022
- April 23 – 29, 2023

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2028

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Holidays and Observances:

2028

April 9 – Palm Sunday

April 10 – Pesach First Night seder

April 11 – Pesach Second Night seder

April 14 – Good Friday

April 17 – Easter Monday

April 18 – Last day Pesach

April 23–24 – Yom HaShoah

May 5 – Eid al-Adha (tentative date)

May 14 – Mother's Day

May 22 – Victoria Day

May 29 – Memorial Day

May 31 – Shavuot

2024 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions

ITEM C: Discuss report on the Equitable Distribution of Workload process.

Background notes:

Excerpt from the trustees' General Service Conference Committee January 27, 2024, meeting:

Subcommittee on Equitable Distribution of Workload (EDW): The committee reviewed and accepted a final report (including a distribution plan of agenda items and survey results) from the Subcommittee on EDW. The subcommittee chair noted their activities focused on a final report that summarized each pilot year's work, summarized survey results of Conference members, and presented considerations and recommendations from the three-year pilot for the 2024 Policy and Admissions Conference Committee to be considered at the 74th General Service Conference.

The committee expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the comprehensive final report and **agreed to forward** the EDW final report to the 2024 Conference Committee on Policy and Admissions, pending minor edits.

The committee recommended to the General Service Board that the Equitable Distribution of Workload plan be implemented for the 2024 General Service Conference.

Committee Consideration from the 2023 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions:

The committee reviewed the progress report from the 2023 Subcommittee on the Equitable Distribution of Workload (EDW) regarding year two of the three-year pilot. The committee appreciated the improvements made to the joint meetings and the simplification of forms and processes. The committee requested that the trustees' General Service Conference Committee (TGSCC) explore all possibilities for extending the deadline for submitting Proposed Agenda Items (PAIs) to allow areas more time to consider items at their Fall assemblies. The committee also requested that the TGSCC conduct a survey of delegates to find out the effect EDW has had upon their areas, especially related to the submission deadline and the engagement of members and groups in the group conscience process. Finally, the committee requested that the TGSCC consider creating a simple video or other form of communication that would reinforce the idea that PAIs can be submitted year-round, as well as help the Fellowship better understand the role of PAIs as a

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document to reflect the outcome of a group conscience rather than a petition or suggestion box.

2021 Advisory Action of the General Service Conference

It was recommended that:

The Equitable Distribution of Workload Process, as detailed in the Report from the 2020 Trustees' General Service Conference Committee, be implemented for the 72nd General Service Conference (GSC) on a three-year trial basis, with a progress report to be brought to the Conference Committee on Policy and Admissions after each year of the trial.

Background:

1. EDW Year Three Report to 74th GSC
2. PAI form
3. CAR form
4. EDW Year Three Survey Summary
5. EDW Year Two Report to 73rd GSC
6. EDW Year One Report to 72nd GSC

Trustees' General Service Conference Committee
Subcommittee on Equitable Distribution of Workload Pilot
Year Three Report
2023

Subcommittee: Tom H., Chairperson; Irma V., John W. and Diana L., Secretary

Introduction

At the General Service Conference (GSC), committee work is one of the most anticipated and important parts of the conference week for the 93 Delegates. However, the distribution of the agenda items to conference committees had been consistently weighted with several committees often getting the bulk of agenda items to discuss year after year, while other committees get few, if any, new agenda items. That imbalance has led to some committees working well beyond their allotted meeting times and other committees finishing their work with hours to spare. Seeking a better-balanced workload and a more equitable Conference experience has led to the three-year pilot known as the Equitable Distribution of Workload (EDW). This final report will summarize each year's work, describe the distribution process, provide the year three survey results (attached), and present recommendations for the Policy and Admissions Conference Committee (P&A) to consider during their deliberations at the 74th GSC.

The goal of the three-year EDW Pilot was to "ensure that the Conference committees receive an equitable distribution of agenda items that require a depth and substance of discussion." The term equitable was defined in the 2020 plan to mean that, "everyone gets their fair share of something, it's an adjective meaning fair or impartial. Something that is equitable does not unduly benefit one person more than any other person."

The EDW pilot was developed in response to many comments and requests over the years pertaining to the imbalance of conference committee workloads. The subcommittee recognizes that should EDW continue beyond a pilot there will be more latitude to make improvements.

Several progress reports from the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference (TCGSC) to the Conference Committee on Policy and Admissions led to the following:

2021 GSC Advisory Action:

"The Equitable Distribution of Workload Process, as detailed in the Report from the 2020 trustees' General Service Conference Committee, be implemented for the 72nd General Service Conference on a three-year trial basis, with a progress report to be brought to the Conference Committee on Policy and Admissions after each year of the trial."

Scope and Procedures for TCGSC Subcommittee on GSC Committee Workload:

“The purpose of the trustees’ Committee on General Service Conference (TCGSC) Subcommittee on General Service Conference (GSC) Committee Workload is to ensure that there is a reasonable attempt to distribute the workload for conference committees equitably across the standing committees. Prior to the formation of this subcommittee, little consideration has been given to the complexity and time-demand of individual agenda items. Experience shows that the number of items assigned to a committee is itself, an insufficient indication of the workload demand on a committee during conference week.

Each agenda item is first handled by Staff assigned to the Conference desk, who assigns the item to the appropriate corporate board or trustees committee or GSO department for review, in consultation with the Chair of TCGSC, and GM. This committee or board uses a scoring tool to evaluate the item and assign an estimate of the complexity and thus, time demand that each item would place on a GSC committee.”

Year One Summary

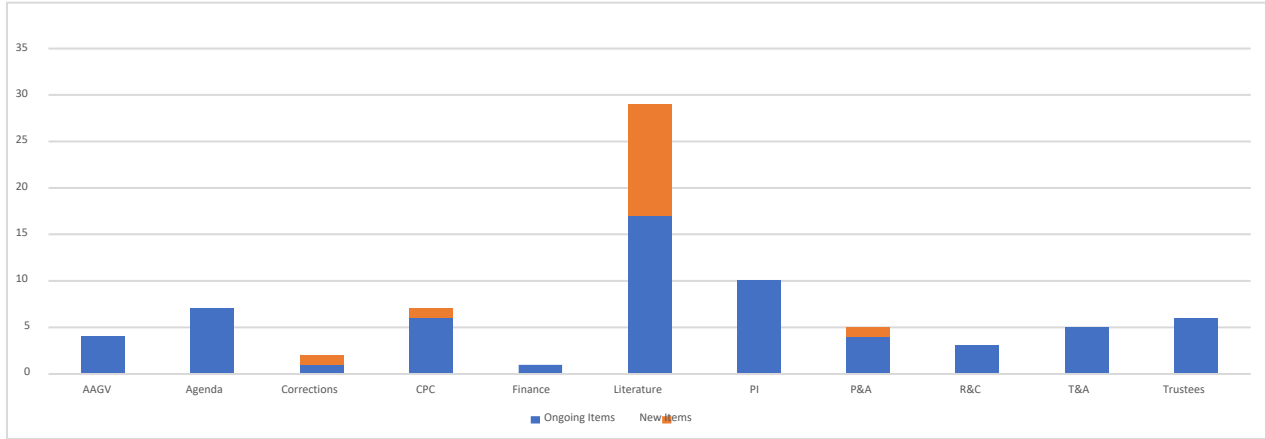
Year one saw challenges to the workflow and the joint committee meeting communication, and scoring tool challenges documented in the report, as well as the significant challenges to Areas and to the group conscience process caused by moving up the deadline for submitting proposed agenda items to September 15. The TCGSC was encouraged to strive to address these challenges.

The committee noted that the plan allowed 50 more delegates to participate more equitably in the Conference committee process and appreciated the spiritual aspect of that accomplishment.

The year one pilot distribution results are as follows:

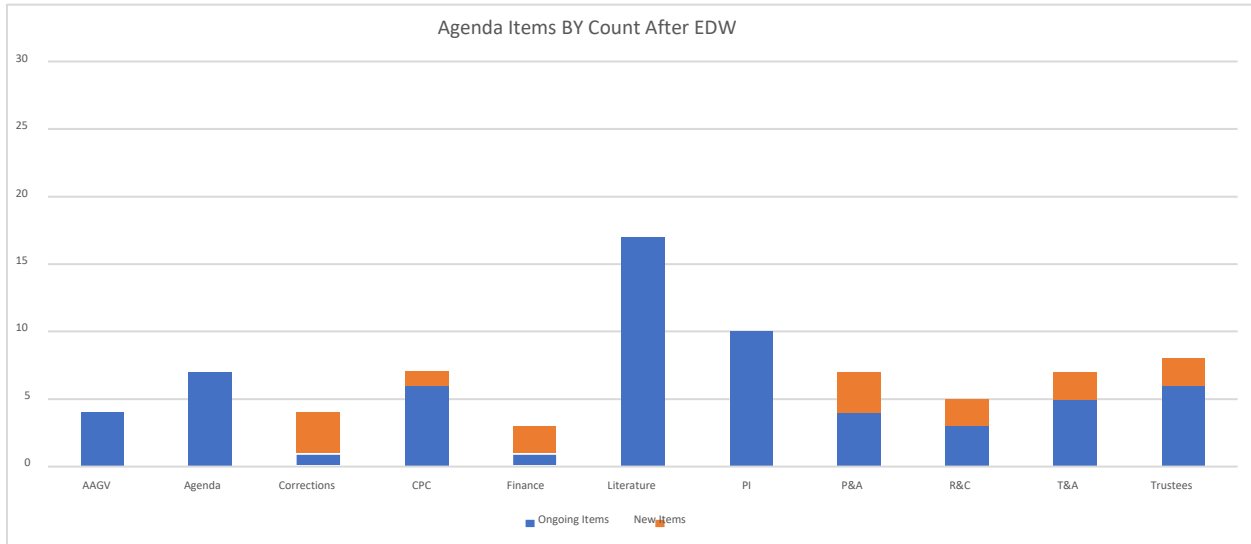
Year One before EDW - Orange notes the new items per committee.

Agenda Items BY Count Before EDW



Year One after EDW

Agenda Items BY Count After EDW



Year Two Summary

The subcommittee made significant improvements to the overall process compared to year one, such as:

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- In response to feedback received from Trustees Committees and Staff Secretaries the Scoring Tool was replaced with a simplified Conference Agenda Routing (CAR) form that no longer required an estimate of the time that each agenda item might take to discuss in committee at the Conference.
- A presentation describing the EDW process and timeline was developed by GSO Staff and shared with both Staff and Trustees.
- Joint committee meetings for committees with EDW items were reworked. The large, combined EDW joint meeting was eliminated. Each conference committee with a carry over EDW item had a member from the applicable trustees' committee present in case there were questions or feedback.

Some challenges:

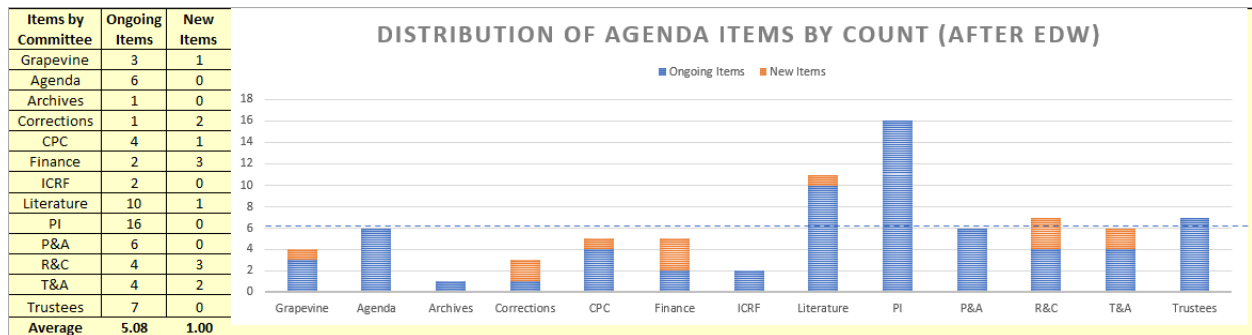
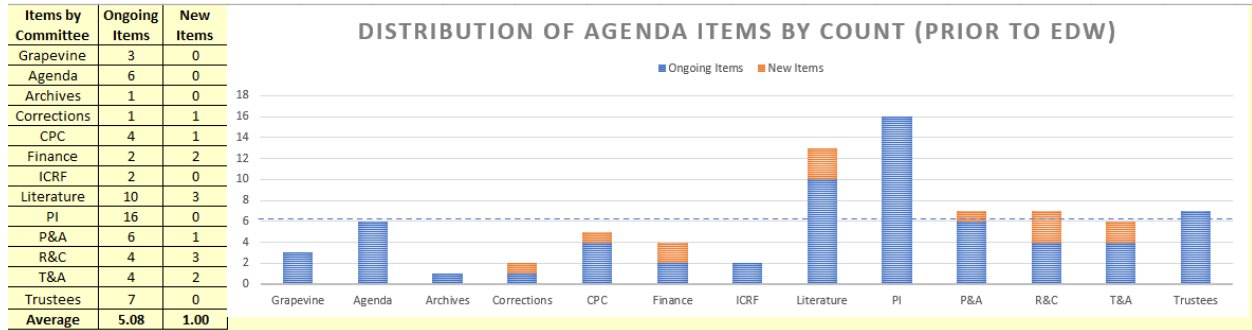
- Seven out of the 184 PAIs were not included to the October/Q4 GSB agendas but were discussed for forwarding at subsequent meetings. This did not affect whether they were included on the agenda for the 73rd GSC or not but did complicate the review and distribution process.
- The fillable PAI PDF form was determined to be cumbersome to use during the overall process (the PDF format was replaced in year three).
- The volume of content of some PAIs was very large. Consider character limits per field, and maximum attachment sizes to ease document management and translation, and foster similarity in the amount of content attached.

Three committees (Grapevine, Corrections, and Finance) participated more equitably with new agenda items at the 73rd GSC:

- Corrections – Discussion of SMF 209 (from AAWS)
- Finance – Discussion of changes to the 12 x 12 (from Literature)
- Grapevine – Request that alternate delegates receiving access to the Conference Dashboard (from Policy and Admissions)

Additionally, one Conference committee (Trustees) continued work from the 72nd GSC on an EDW item from Literature.

Year two distribution before and after EDW:



Year Three Summary

In year three, the EDW subcommittee focused on consolidating the learnings over the three-year pilot and collecting survey feedback on the overall process and its impacts from Conference members.

The PAI form (attached):

The PAI form was reformatted from a fillable PDF to a Smartsheet form to be more user friendly and better aligned with the conference assignment processing.

The CAR form (attached):

The CAR form was developed in year two and implemented in year three in hopes of simplifying the scoring process and how items are forwarded from the trustees’ committees to the conference assignment.

Input from the Policy & Admissions Conference Committee, 73rd GSC:

Several questions were brought to the P&A Conference Committee at the end of year two:

1. How, and from whom, should members gain access to the PAI form?
2. What is the role of delegates? Is there a need to prevent PAI forms being used as petitions/suggestion box forms? If so, how might this be achieved?
3. What can be done to encourage submission prior to the deadline to prevent everything coming in at once?
4. Should the PAI form ask specifically whether the idea has been discussed at an area assembly and what the outcome of the vote was?
5. How heavily should whether the PAI was supported by group conscience factor into decisions to move items onto the GSC agenda or not?

The response from the Policy and Admissions Conference Committee was as follows:

“The committee reviewed the progress report from the 2023 Subcommittee on the Equitable Distribution of Workload (EDW) regarding year two of the three-year pilot. The committee appreciated the improvements made to the joint meetings and the simplification of forms and processes. The committee requested that the trustees’ General Service Conference Committee (TGSCC) explore all possibilities for extending the deadline for submitting Proposed Agenda Items (PAIs) to allow areas more time to consider items at their Fall assemblies. The committee also requested that TGSCC conduct a survey of delegates to find out the effect EDW has had upon their areas, especially related to the submission deadline and the engagement of members and groups in the group conscience process. Finally, the committee requested that TGSCC consider creating a simple video or other communication that would reinforce the idea that PAIs can be submitted year-round, as well as help the Fellowship better understand the role of PAIs as a document to reflect the outcome of a group conscience rather than a petition or suggestion box.”

PAI deadline:

The current deadline of September 15 allows for the PAIs to be received, formatted, and provided to the applicable trustees committee or board for consideration. This includes a feedback call with the conference committee and the trustees committee chair to help inform the discussion the trustees committee will have at their October meeting.

All proposed agenda items that come in after the September 15 deadline are considered for the subsequent year’s General Service Conference.

Feedback Call:

The feedback call was instituted as part of the EDW pilot. Of significance is that the delegate chairs have traditionally been invited to the January Board weekend because that is when the trustees' committees set the agenda for the upcoming GSC. When setting the Conference agenda moved to the October GSB meeting, the process evolved to be a feedback call with the trustee chair and the whole conference committee. In some cases, delegated responsibility became confused, with some inferring that the conference committee decides which agenda items move forward to the conference agenda. The following is some history concerning the feedback call.

The committee noted the 2016 report suggested that:

“Before the January board weekend, the entire Conference committee could have a conference call with the corresponding trustees’ committee chair and staff secretary to review items submitted as agenda items and to talk about items still being considered by the trustees’ committee. This way, Conference committee members would get a verbal report on the disposition of items submitted to the trustees’ committee and could share regarding those items. This would allow all Conference committee members to offer feedback on proposed Agenda items. Their feedback could be brought to the trustees’ committee meeting as background for the discussion.”

From 2017:

“The committee considered a request to add text to the committee’s Composition, Scope, and Procedure regarding the option to meet by conference call prior to the Annual Meeting (the Annual Meeting happens after the close of the General Service Conference) and took no action.”

From the P&A History and Actions:

“Prior to 2019 the conference committee opportunity for input was limited to the conference committee chair being in attendance at the January GSB weekend where the trustees’ committees made these decisions. Over the years and depending on the chair of the trustees committee this varied from being a silent observer, to having a voice.

The committee noted that this has not happened and requested that the trustees’ committee chairs implement this conference call portion of the plan starting in January 2019.”

Thus began the “January call.” With EDW, this call was moved to October, however the delegate chair attendance continues in January, while the trustees’ committees discuss the agenda in October.

PAI input from Conference Committees:

The PAI feedback calls held prior to the Trustees Committees/Boards determining which items they will forward to the GSC have also been very effective and beneficial. The feedback from the conference committees has helped inform the trustee committee/board decisions and allowed for more input from delegates regarding those items they do or do not wish to see forwarded to the GSC.

While increased delegate input on the GSC agenda is a very positive thing, the evolution of how this input is provided may have created confusion about where, exactly, the authority and responsibility for the decisions made to forward or not forward PAIs for the GSC agenda is held. This is a GSB responsibility, as is responding to any questions or concerns from the fellowship regarding which items were or were not forwarded for the agenda. An unintended consequence of the current practice is that some conference committee chairs have been pressured by A.A. members advocating to get an item onto the agenda. Adding to the confusion is the fact that there are inconsistencies among the trustees committee chairs regarding how much input the conference committee has on this process. All involved would benefit from an orientation tool that briefly summarizes roles and responsibilities in accordance with the Concepts and the Conference Charter.

From memo from Chair of TGSCC:

“Prior to Trustees' Committee meetings at the October GSB, those of you with PAIs to consider will need to meet with your corresponding Conference Committees. This meeting consists of the Chair of the Trustees Committee, the entire Conference Committee, and the Staff Secretary. The purpose is to seek input from the conference committee and help inform the discussion at the trustees' committee Q4 meeting.

It is important to note that the conference committee is not determining if items are forwarded to the conference or not, no voting occurs in these meetings. The decisions are made in your trustees' committee Q4 meeting.

If your trustees' committee does not have any PAIs to review, there is no need under the EDW pilot for you as Chair to meet with the corresponding conference committee prior to the Q4 GSB meeting. However, if the conference committee would like to meet with you anyway, you certainly can do so. I suggest you determine an agenda or topic for this meeting for the clarity of all involved since it would be outside of the EDW process.”

EDW Distribution:

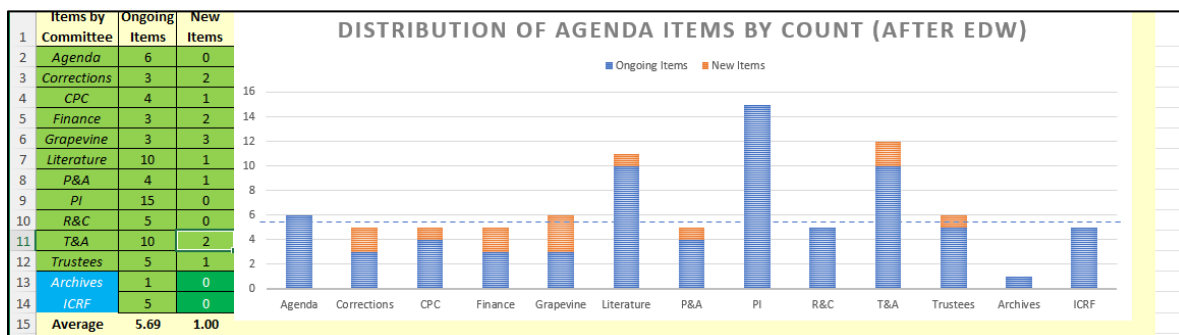
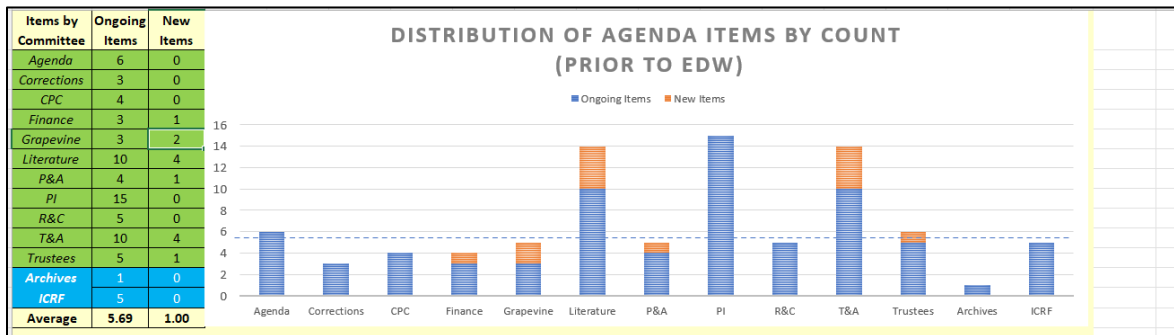
The EDW Subcommittee considers the current workload of each conference committee and what that workload would look like if new agenda items assigned to each committee were not distributed. Trustees' Committees receive all PAIs that pertain to their Composition, Scope, and Procedures (CSP), and then determine which ones are to be forwarded to the GSC.

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It was suggested that each PAI received be accompanied by a “Conference Agenda Item Routing Form” (CAR form). The CAR form is used for a consistent approach to review and routing and will feed into the tracking process. This was implemented in year two to replace the more complex scoring tool that was used in year one of the EDW pilot. Trustees' Committees complete and return the CAR form for each PAI under their consideration to the Conference Coordinator. Trustees Committees have typically completed these forms during their meetings while discussing the PAI, so it is ready to submit immediately after the meeting. The completion of these was inconsistent and some of the Staff Secretaries used alternate methods to note the rationale when items were not forwarded to the GSC. This rationale is required for the response letters to the submitters, and the list of PAIs not forwarded that is to be sent to all conference members. A method that is consistent across the committees is needed to collect and share outcomes of trustee committee reviews of PAIs.

The EDW Subcommittee receives conference agenda items that have been forwarded to the GSC by designated boards and committees. The EDW subcommittee then reviews the number of agenda items assigned to each committee and reassigns agenda items from committees with excessive workloads to those with additional work capacity.

Year three distribution before and after EDW:



Approval of EDW Distribution:

Prior to the January board weekend, the EDW subcommittee will tabulate and then create a final agenda item document detailing the proposed equitable distribution of Agenda Items. The full TCGSC will review and approve the equitable distribution plan and documentation and recommend it to the GSB for approval.

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EDW Survey Highlights (full summary is attached):

The 2023 Policy and Admissions Conference committee requested that TCGSC survey delegates to determine the effect Equitable Distribution of Workload (EDW) has had upon their areas, especially related to the submission deadline and the engagement of members and groups in the group conscience process.

- Most responses suggested that a Group Conscience should be “very heavily” or “heavily” considered when determining if a PAI is to be forwarded to the GSC.
- Most responses agreed that the EDW process should continue.
- One Area moved its Assembly dates to accommodate the September 15 deadline and 34 Areas responded “no” to this question in the survey.

The following communication points have been implemented:

- Chairs of Trustees Committees will meet (virtually) with the Chairs of the corresponding Conference Committee, before and after the July and October Board meetings to discuss proposed agenda items and the progress of work during the year around conference process. It is optional to do so before and after the January Board meeting, and the chair can decide what is needed.
- The Report and Charter Committee and the Policy and Admissions Committee do not have corresponding Trustees Committees. The chair of the TCGSC will meet with them to ensure these committees are not excluded from the communications.
- The Conference Committee chairs will still be encouraged to communicate with their committee both before and after the Board weekend conference calls with their corresponding trustees’ committee chairs.
- As previously recommended during the pilot this report will be provided to all conference members in advance of the 74th GSC and there will be an opportunity for sharing and discussion. At this time, we expect this will occur at the next virtual all conference members meeting.

Some topics noted by the subcommittee for further consideration are:

- Continue discussions on the value of robust group conscience at the local or area level prior to proposing for the GSC.
- Staff Secretaries and Trustee Committee Chairs Evaluate the Conference Agenda Routing (CAR) form for effectiveness and improvements.
- Seek methods to establish consistency with the amount of material included with

each PAI.

- If EDW is adopted to continue beyond the pilot, the processes involved will continue to evolve and continuous improvement sought through the long-standing process of review and action on the conference evaluations.
- There have been very few challenges with conference committees working within and supporting the processes of EDW during the three-year pilot. However, in year two there was an instance of a conference committee unhappy that an item that would typically have been assigned to them being reassigned to another committee; and in year three there was a committee that was assigned an item from another committee and did not want to accept it in their committee even stating that they would not discuss it if it was not moved. While these were only two of the 22 items reassigned during the three-year pilot, it should be noted that the cooperation of the conference committees is essential for the effectiveness of any distribution process.

Recommendation to the Conference Committee on Policy and Admissions for their consideration:

Consider a recommendation to adopt EDW to continue (no longer as a pilot).

Recommendations to the TCGSC for their consideration should EDW be adopted to continue (pending the outcome of the 74th GSC):

- TCGSC to form a standing subcommittee on PAI distribution, with a new CSP.
- TCGSC to ensure that the conference evaluation forms collect feedback on distribution annually and that the standing subcommittee on Improvements addresses concerns and ideas as they arise.
- GSB to consider inviting the Delegate Chairs to the October Board meeting where the discussions on the disposition of the PAIs occur (instead of the January board meeting where these discussions previously took place).
- In consultation with GSO to ensure that all workflow requirements are fully considered, revisit the PAI deadline and advance it to the latest possible date now that three-year trial period has ended.

CONFIDENTIAL: 74th General Service Conference Background

Proposed Agenda Item (PAI) Submission Form for the General Service Conference (GSC)

PAI Submission deadline is pending the outcome of the 2024 General Service Conference.

Warm Greetings from the Conference Assignment at the GSO!

Thank you for taking the time to consider proposing a policy level idea that might be useful for the good of A.A. within our US/Canada service structure.

This is an exciting opportunity for your group's voice to be heard.

All parts of our Fellowship — group meetings, committees, offices, Conferences, and group jobs — share one common purpose: to help the alcoholic who still suffers.

In accordance with our Twelve Traditions, we need a system of communication for finding out how A.A. as a whole feels about its world affairs, and how it wants to operate. The General Service Conference serves as the group conscience for A.A. in the U.S. and Canada.

The resources mentioned below are available in English, Spanish, and French, on the GSO website, www.aa.org. It is all done in the spirit of Love and Service.

Participation in the GSC Process is a year-round cooperative effort. The Conference meets for six days a year, yet the 135 or so Conference members are active in Conference affairs throughout the year. Every A.A. group shares its experience with other groups through its area delegate to the Conference.

Does my PAI rise to the policy level?

For A.A. to run its own affairs, each A.A. group needs to make its voice heard on overall A.A. policies. Proposals are important to the future of Alcoholics Anonymous such as policy decisions or request for changes to Conference-approved literature, and items that might require the collective conscience of the Fellowship. To understand about proposed agenda item submissions in general, please visit the section, "Sources of Agenda Items" in the [A.A. Service Manual](#) on page 42.

Who participates in PAI submissions?

AA Groups, Districts and Areas: To contact your local GSR, District, or Area Committee or Delegate, please visit the link to "[List of General Service Conference Area Websites](#)." These local A.A. trusted servants strive to help you develop PAIs and discuss Conference Background materials and help the delegate prepare for the GSC.

Individual A.A. members: Individual A.A. members can participate in the Conference Process by submitting a PAI.

Sharing on Participation? Thanks to contributions from A.A. members across the U.S. and Canada here is sampling of resources from GSO that include sharing about participating in the Conference Process:

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Read: [“A.A. Service Manual,”](#) [“Circles of Love and Service,”](#) and [“The A.A. Group.”](#)

Watch Video: [“Your General Service Office \(GSO\), the Grapevine and the General Service Structure,](#)

Listen: [“Twelve Traditions Long Form”](#)

When is the PAI Deadline for the 75th GSC?

The submission deadline is pending the outcome of the 2024 General Service Conference.

What happens after a PAI is submitted? Your submission will be forwarded to the trustees’ Committee or Board for discussion. Following the October General Service Board meeting, the committee secretary will contact you to let you know the outcome of the committee’s deliberations.

General Service Conference (GSC) Proposed Agenda Item Submission Form

(1) Submit a clear and concisely worded motion.

(2) What problem does this proposed item address?

(3) What level of group conscience, if any, discussed the proposed agenda item? Make it clear who is submitting the item (an individual, group, district, area, etc.).

Note: While all items are received equally, experience has shown that ideas greatly benefit from the value of a broader group conscience. Consider if and with whom you would like to have a group conscience discussion on the proposed agenda item prior to submitting.

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| |
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(4) Provide background information that describes and supports the reasoning for the proposal. List background material(s) included with the proposal:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

| |
|---|
| |
| (5) What are the intended/expected outcomes if this proposed item is approved? |
| |
| (6) Provide a primary contact for the submission. |
| |
| (7) Final comments: |
| |

Submit completed forms to the GSO Staff Member on the Conference Desk:

EMAIL: Conference@aa.org

POSTAL MAIL: Attn: Conference Desk
 General Service Office
 P.O. Box 459
 Grand Central Station New
 York, NY 10163

Updated 7/22

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**POLICY/ADMISSIONS
Item C
Doc. 3**

**Conference Agenda Item Routing Form
Input from the Trustees' Committee, Board or Department to inform EDW distribution**

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Proposed Agenda Item Number | |
| Proposed Agenda Item (PAI): | |
| | |
| PAI Submitted by: | |
| Reviewing Body: | |

| The proposed Item is: | Yes/No | Comments (if Any) |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Policy Focused | | |
| Clearly Written | | |
| Specific | | |
| Reflects a Group Conscience | | |
| Has Previously Been Proposed | | |

Trustee Committee Actions:

| | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forward to the General Service Conference | <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to Board, Committee or Department |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take no action | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Additional Comments from the Trustees' Committee, Board or Department:

Conference Agenda Routing Form - September 2022

Equitable Distribution of Workload (EDW) Survey Summary

Background

The 2023 Policy and Admissions Conference committee requested that TCGSC survey delegates to determine the effect Equitable Distribution of Workload (EDW) has had upon their areas, especially related to the submission deadline and the engagement of members and groups in the group conscience process.

The TCGSC forwarded this request to the subcommittee on EDW who developed questions to engage all Conference members in a survey to find out the effect the EDW process has had on their areas, and that the 2024 Conference Committee on Policy and Admissions will receive the results of the survey to discuss as part of the evaluation of the EDW pilot.

Additionally, feedback has been collected about EDW through the Conference Evaluation forms.

Survey Questions

The EDW subcommittee developed the following 10 questions and distributed surveys to Conference Members in English, French, and Spanish for further input to inform the 74th GSC in its consideration to continue with EDW:

1. My participation at the General Service Conference is:
 - A) Delegate B) GSB trustee C) Non-trustee Director D) GSO Staff/GV Staff
2. How heavily should the Group Conscience from a Group, District or Area level be considered when determining if a PAI is to be forwarded to a General Service Conference Agenda?
 - A) Required B) Very heavily C) Heavily D) Somewhat E) Not at all
3. Should the PAI form ask specifically whether the item has been discussed at an area assembly (or other service body) and what the outcome of the vote was? (Write-In)
4. Based on your experience at the 73rd GSC, how effective was using the Joint Meeting to discuss the agenda item that your committee was assigned through EDW?
 - A) Strongly effective B) Somewhat effective C) Neutral D) Somewhat ineffective E) Strongly ineffective
5. If your committee (trustees committee or conference committee) was involved with an agenda item that was reassigned using EDW.

The process, communication, and continuity of the item through the year-round conference process was effective.

A) Strongly agree B) Somewhat agree C) Neutral D) Somewhat disagree E) Strongly disagree F) Not applicable.

6. The EDW process should be incorporated in the future GSC process:

A) Strongly agree B) Somewhat agree C) Neutral D) Somewhat disagree E) Strongly disagree

7. In what ways, pro and con, did the EDW pilot affect your experience of the conference?

Area Delegates Only:

8. Has your Area moved its Assembly dates to accommodate the PAI deadline?

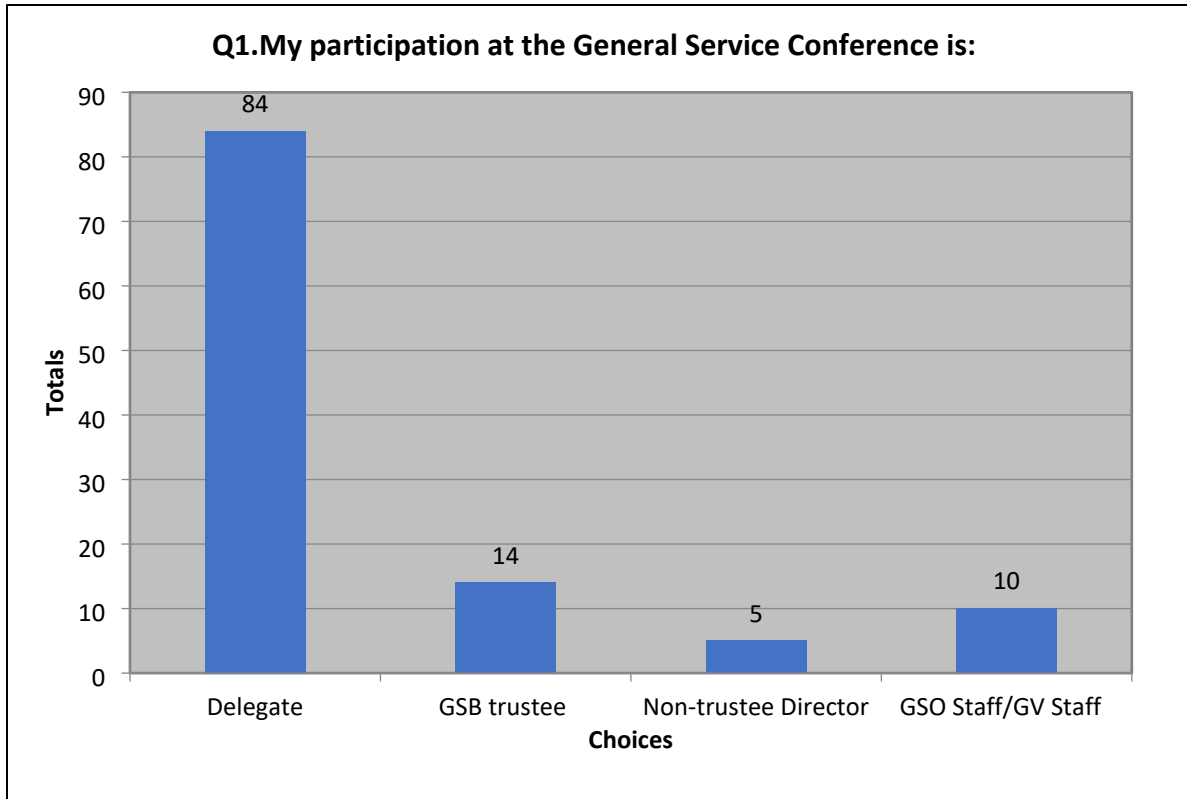
9. How has the result of the earlier submission date affected your Area's ability to review potential PAI's at your Assemblies?

10. Has the three-year EDW pilot had an impact on the Group, District, and/or Assembly Tradition Two process and participation?

Survey results

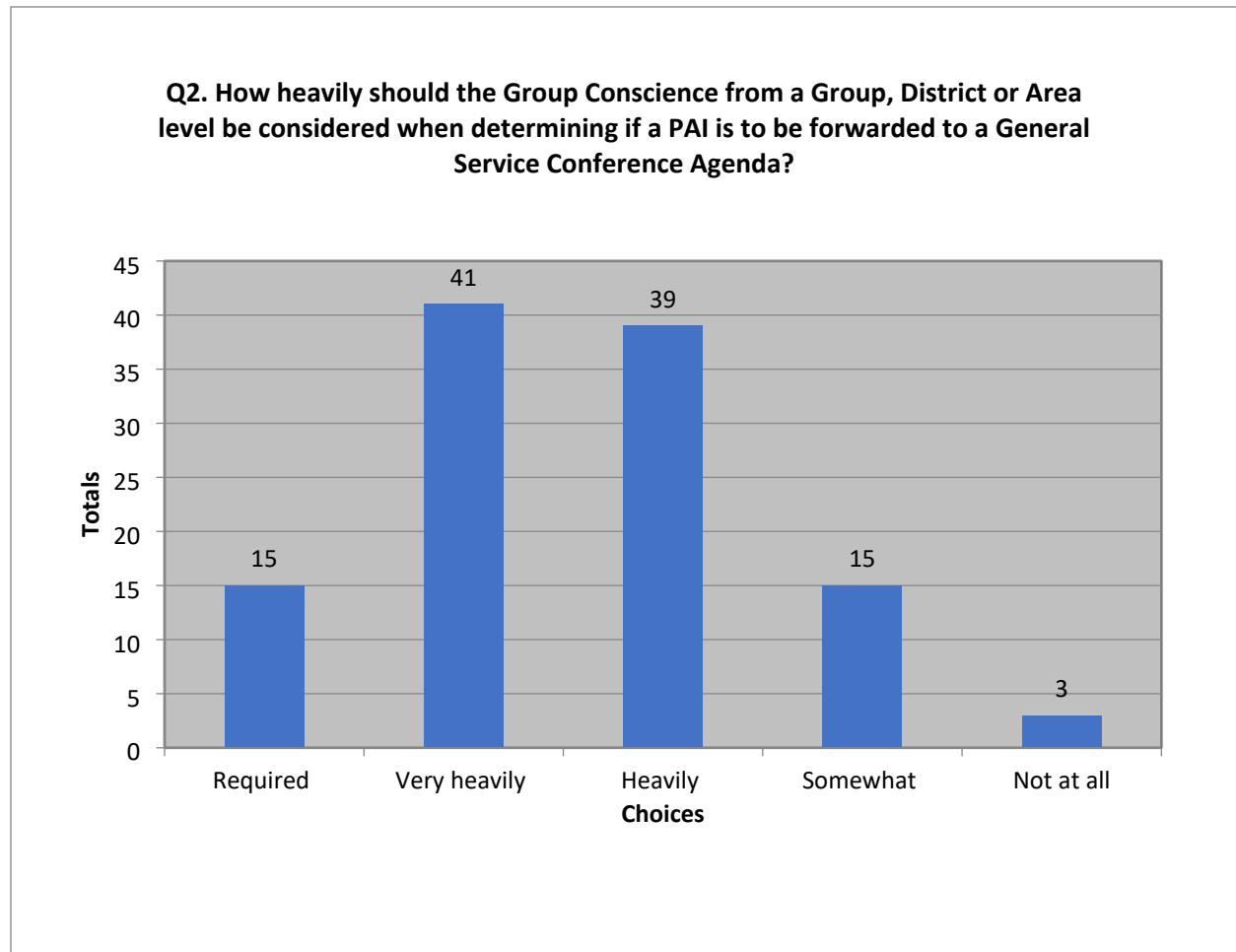
Q1. Responses were received by 113 Conference Members (84% response rate). Most of the Area delegates responded (84 out of 93).

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Q2. The majority of responses suggested that a Group Conscience should be “very heavily” or “heavily” considered when determining if a PAI is to be forwarded to the GSC.



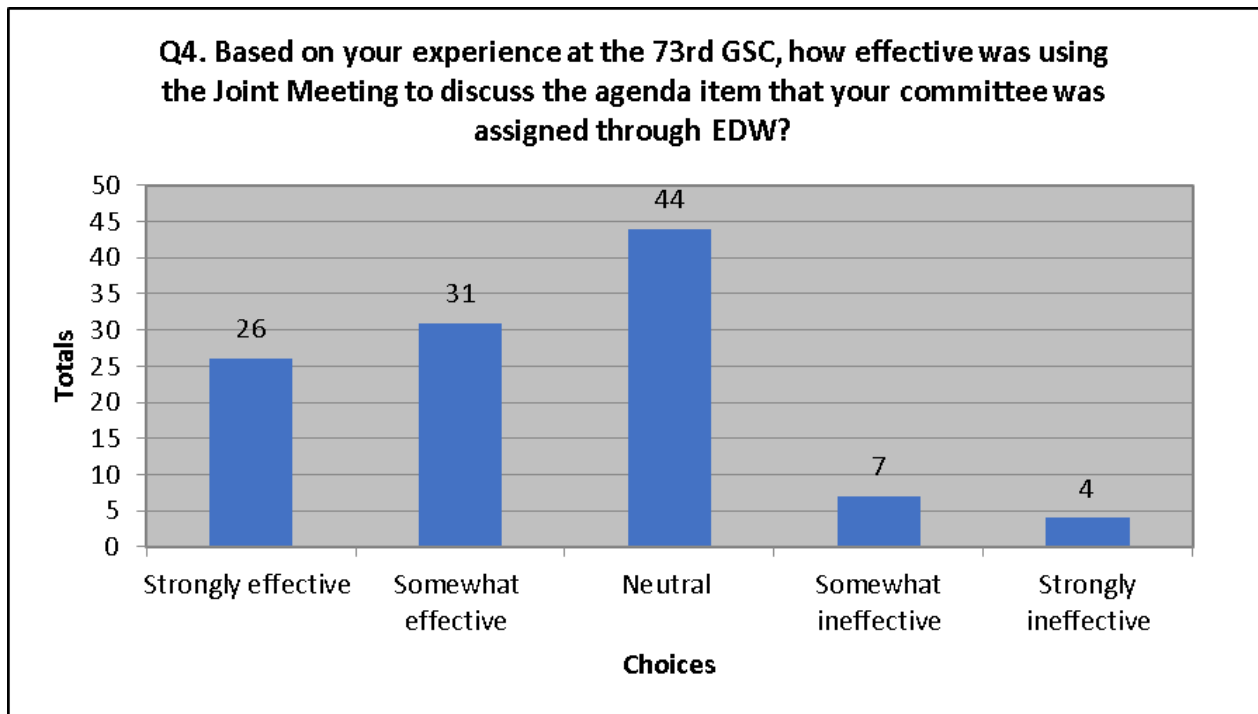
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Q3. Question Three was a write-in on the following question:

“Should the PAI form ask specifically whether the item has been discussed at an area assembly (or other service body) and what the outcome of the vote was?”

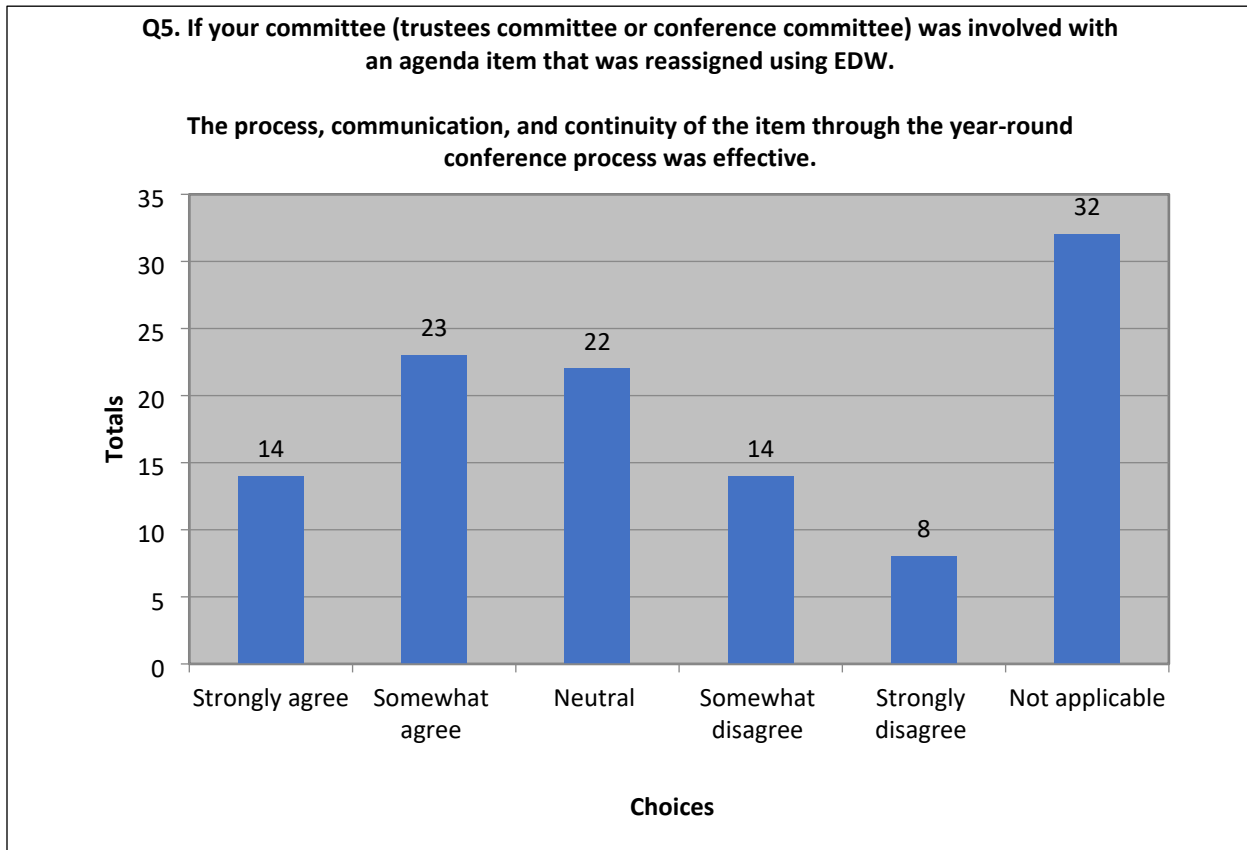
A total of 113 responded. Within 31 responses, “yes” was provided, and three responses included “no.” Conference members also shared that to include a general sense of the group conscience, but not the numerical vote, would be a useful piece of information. Others felt that asking specifically could encourage the discussion of PAI’s at area assemblies. Other conference members felt that when a PAI came directly from a group and not the district, they should provide information about their group conscience.

Q4. Regarding the effectiveness of discussing EDW items during the Joint committee meetings held by videoconference, three conference committees received EDW items at the 73rd GSC.



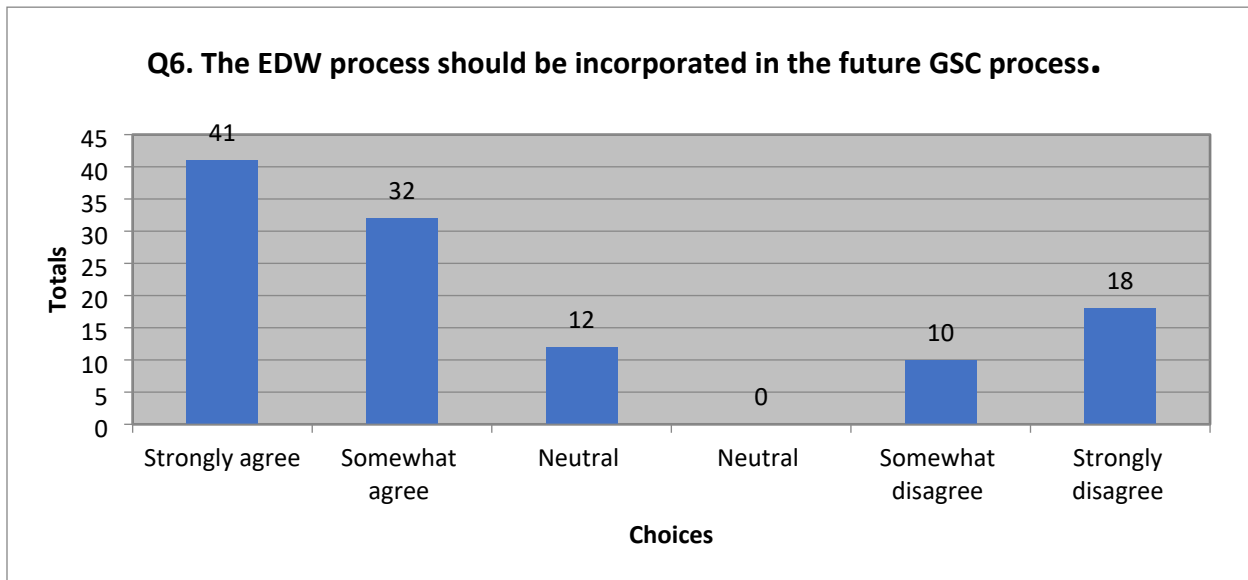
CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as Web sites available to the public, may breach the confidentiality of the material and the anonymity of members, since it may contain members' full names and addresses.

Q5. Conference Members who were involved with an EDW item indicated a broader mixture of experiences on the effectiveness, continuity, process, and communication was for their EDW item(s).



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Q6. Regarding future GSC Conferences, an Equitable Distribution of Workload, to some degree, be incorporated, although about a quarter of Conference members felt otherwise.



Q7. Question Seven was a write-in on the following question:

“In what ways, pro and con, did the EDW pilot affect your experience of the conference?”

The following are a sampling of responses:

“I feel that there are challenges to some of the items when they require more than a quick look and the committee is unfamiliar with some of the details. I have witnessed some items go to conference when they are not fully discussed because the committee wasn’t sure what to do or the entire background is not reviewed and causes items to get lost in the shuffle.”

CONFIDENTIAL: 74th General Service Conference Background

"I served on corrections and was happy to have an edw item. I felt inclusion in the process."

"Not at all"

"It was positive. Gave my committee an opportunity to look at something outside of our scope."

"EDW did improve workload distribution and that is positive to a certain degree. However, at some point, it doesn't matter how effectively workload is distributed, there is just far too much work on the Conference agenda in general. Workload distribution is only part of the problem."

"No pros, only cons. Moving the deadline forward to Sept 15 has been disastrous in terms of accountability to the Fellowship and the Fellowship's ability to participate in the Conference. Many Areas cannot have Assemblies in time for the Sept 15 deadline because they meet in October. The notion that Areas can simply "move" their assemblies at will to meet an earlier deadline is arrogant. The EDW has contributed to the current lack of trust we are dealing with."

Write-in Answers by Area Delegates only

The following questions were write-in only and focused on experiences within Areas and Delegates only were requested to respond.

Q8. "Has your Area moved its Assembly dates to accommodate the PAI deadline?"

There was one response denoting "yes" and 34 responses denoting "no."

Sampling of other responses:

"We have not. Our pre-conference assembly where we would vote on any proposals to go to the GSC was Sept. 10th. That gave 5 days to submit. In scheduling in the future it is imperative to consider that Sept 15th deadline."

"Yes and it has been a positive reception because we wanted to align our events with the conference agenda items."

"NO. Just need to Inform Area the previous year."

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“No. Whenever assembly dates or number of assemblies per year came up informally in my area, informal conversations indicated it would probably be best to wait and see if EDW continued beyond the 3-year trial to have that discussion.”

Q9. “How has the result of the earlier submission date affected your area’s ability to review potential PAI’s at your Assemblies?” Some of the replies included:

“The Area Assembly does not get to review PAI’s because of the early submission date.”

“Our area historically hasn’t submitted many proposed agenda items but if it had been brought in September it would have been chaotic.”

“The submission date it prior to our Assembly”

“Yes, my Area is unable to involve groups in discussion of PAIs because there isn’t an opportunity to carry the discussion back to the groups for input before an Area vote.”

Q10. “Has the 3-year EDW pilot had an impact on the Group, District, and/or Assembly Tradition Two process and participation?” There were 14 “no” and two “yes” in responses. Other replies included:

“Not as it relates to T2.”

“You have taken the right and responsibility of the fellowship and minimized it to your own benefit. Other solutions need to be sought that do not take the time required for Tradition Two to effectively be reached and shared.”

“The Delegate needs a little time to decompress after the GSC, then put a report together to give to the groups. Traveling to the Districts takes time and now the groups have a very short time to decide if a PAI comes out of the GSC post report. Then to discuss a PAI first at the group level then the district level then at the Area you are talking about a one-to-two-month span between each to discuss the PAI. It is short cutting the Service structure.”

“Only to the extent it impacted the Delegate’s workload.”

“I still see a lot of confusion regarding the agenda item’s location when they are referred to a non-related committee.”

CONFIDENTIAL: 74th General Service Conference Background

“Yes, the time is too short if you want a wide base for an informed group conscience. If you want an individual or single group as the group conscience this is fine. The Delegate needs a little time to decompress after the GSC, then put a report together to give to the groups. Traveling to the Districts takes time and now the groups have a very short time to decide if a PAI comes out of the GSC post report. Then to discuss a PSI first at the group level then the district level then at the Area you are talking about a one-to-two-month span between each to discuss the PAI. It is short cutting the Service structure.”

###

2022 Trustees General Service Conference Committee
Subcommittee on Equitable Distribution of Work (EDW)
Progress Report: January 12, 2023

Subcommittee: Carolyn W. Chair; Francis G., Mike L., and Diana L., secretary

This report summarizes year two of the Three-year EDW Pilot and includes the committee's updates from October 2022 and December 2022.

From the 2021 Advisory Action:

“The Equitable Distribution of Workload Process, as detailed in the Report from the 2020 trustees’ General Service Conference Committee, be implemented for the 72nd General Service Conference (GSC) on a three-year trial basis, with a progress report to be brought to the Conference Committee on Policy and Admissions after each year of the trial.”

To implement the 2021 advisory action, an EDW sub-committee was re-formed at the 2022 July General Service Board (GSB) meeting to deliver the 2nd year of this three-year pilot.

The subcommittee was appointed by the trustees’ GSCC at their July 2022 meeting and has met eight times since. Additionally, the subcommittee chair participated in a meeting with the GM GSO, AAWS Chair, and TCGSC Chair regarding translation timelines and processes to ensure that EDW processes are aligned with translation timelines.

SECTION 1 – FOLLOW-UP ON TOPICS FROM THE YEAR ONE REPORT

A: Impact of Advanced Timeline:

In year two, there was an increase in multiple Proposed Agenda Items (PAIs) submissions on similar topics submitted by A.A. individuals, groups, and entities. Some PAI submissions stated that discussion at the Area level was not possible due to the advanced timeline. In other cases, some PAIs received were discussed at an Area level but were not supported by a group conscience and were not submitted by a delegate. While submitting PAIs through an Area’s group conscience is not a requirement, the number of PAIs that have not gone through this process has significantly increased during the two years of the pilot.

Several Areas adjusted their assembly scheduling to accommodate the advanced timeline and to facilitate an opportunity to gain the broader group conscience of the Area prior to submission. Other Areas have utilized Spring and Summer Assemblies to facilitate discussion.

Two PAIs that were submitted to extend the timeline were not forwarded to the GSC, to allow time for the completion of the 2021 Advisory Action three-year pilot and recommendations prior to making any further changes.

The committee considered effective ways align with the 2022 Advisory Action, “The compilation of all Conference committee background be made available simultaneously in English, French, and Spanish.” The committee noted that the Conference Coordinator and the Chair of the Trustees’ General Service Conference Committee have not reported any delays to the translation process due to the EDW pilot.

A) Document workflows, tracking and functionality

Year two experienced the following challenges and successes in the EDW processes and workflows; some that are discussed in more detail in the report:

Challenges:

- Seven out of the 184 PAIs were not included to the October/Q4 GSB agendas but were discussed for forwarding at subsequent meetings. This did not affect whether they will be included on the agenda for the 73rd GSC or not.
- Fillable PAI PDF form is cumbersome to use during the overall process. The committee encourages GSO staff to explore and implement an alternative format that streamlines the overall PAI process, including submission, disposition, consideration, and possible translation as Conference background.
- The Conference Agenda Item Routing (CAR) Form is cumbersome to process or use to populate the EDW sandbox tool, which employs the use of a spreadsheet.
- The interpretation of the timing of the Feedback Call between the Conference Committee and the trustees Committee chairperson. It currently occurs in October but some trustees’ committees expressed concern that it does not occur in January.
- Interpretation of the input received by delegate committees on the GSC agenda. The subcommittee suggested that a brief summary of roles and responsibilities in accordance with the Concepts and the Conference Charter could be useful.

Successes:

- 96% of submitted PAIs were expeditiously processed by September 30th and addressed at the Q4 GSB meeting.
- Three committees (Grapevine, Corrections, and Finance) will participate more fully

in the Conference process than they would have otherwise.

- Enhanced ability of five Conference committees to achieve the desired depth and substance of its policy-level discussions by more even allocation of agenda items.
- The committee noted that the current processes in place identified all PAIs, and encouraged Staff Secretaries to continue exploring effective ways to develop a tracking system and verify PAIs.
- The committee noted significant improvements to the overall process timelines compared to year one.

B) Coordination of Communications/Meetings of Trustees' and Conference Committees at and between Annual Meetings of the General Service Conference

Overall processes and communications improved in year two of the pilot, due to the experiences, lessons-learned, and feedback.

Joint Meeting: A significant issue in year one was the shared joint meeting for the committees with items assigned via EDW. Feedback forms from the General Service Conference made clear that the year one approach left some room for improvement. Please review the EDW Subcommittee Interim Report October 2022 for the detailed analysis and EDW subcommittee recommendations.

The use of technology has made it easy for Trustees Committee Chairs to maintain regular contact with their corresponding Conference Committee Chairs and Alternate Chairs throughout the year. While this is very beneficial, further review regarding scheduling, time commitments, and consistent communication regarding what to expect (and what is expected) from these meetings may be needed.

PAI input from Delegate Committees: The PAI feedback calls held prior to the Trustees committees/Boards determining which items they will forward to the GSC have also been very effective and beneficial. The feedback from the conference committees has helped inform the trustee committee/board decisions and allowed for more input from delegates regarding those items they do or do not wish to see forwarded to the GSC.

While increased delegate input on the GSC agenda is a very positive thing, the evolution of how this input is provided may have created confusion about where, exactly, the authority and responsibility for the decisions made is held to forward or not forward PAIs for the GSC agenda is held. This is a GSB responsibility, as is responding to any questions or concerns from the fellowship regarding which items were or were not forwarded for the agenda. An unintended consequence of the current practice is that

some conference committee chairs have been pressured by AA members advocating to get an item onto the agenda. Adding to the confusion is the fact that there are inconsistencies among the trustees committee chairs in regard to how much input the conference committee has on this process. All involved would benefit from an orientation tool that briefly summarizes roles and responsibilities in accordance with the Concepts and the Conference Charter.

C) Simplification of the scoring system

Year two of the EDW pilot saw the implementation of a Conference Agenda items Routing form (CAR form) to consolidate input from the Trustees' Committee, Board or Department and to inform EDW distribution. This form replaces the scoring tool from year one.

The reasons for this change were to simplify the process considering feedback that the year one scoring tool was time consuming to complete and EDW subcommittee feedback that the time estimates were not as useful as initially expected.

SECTION 2 – LESSONS FROM YEAR TWO – NEW CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

A) PAI forms/processes

It was previously noted in this report that the use of the current PDF document formats is problematic, creating additional work for staff not well suited to compiling and tracking data. GSO staff are encouraged to explore and implement an alternative format that eliminates the need to convert or recreate documents. Options that facilitate tracking, and foster consistency in the PAI submissions are encouraged.

It appears that the earlier submission deadline has resulted in some groups and members not fully engaging in group conscience process at the district or Area level prior to forwarding PAIs. While this is not a requirement, our experience has taught us that PAIs greatly benefit from the input of a cross section of AA members.

It also appears that some members have used the PAI form as more of a “suggestion box” or petition than as a document to reflect the outcome of a group conscience or a tool to submit a proposal for consideration by the GSC. There have always been ideas submitted by individuals and groups without the input of a further group conscience, this is not in itself a problem.

Rather, the current issues are the sheer volume of these items forwarded for consideration of the GSC that is time limited and must focus on matters affecting AA as a whole, and the missed opportunity to seek input and group conscience prior to moving an item forward to the GSC. If an Area does not agree that a matter should be forwarded to the GSC it may

not be the best use of GSC resources to consider it. An informed group conscience requires hearing varied points of view, ensuring a right of participation of those we serve and those who serve us, and ensuring that the minority voice is heard and given careful consideration.

One action by the trustees' committees and boards in response to the receipt of large volumes of PAIs on a particular topic has been to move the topic forward to the GSC for discussion rather than forwarding (or not forwarding) any individual PAIs. The conference committee can then review the subject overall and determine if they have any Considerations to offer or wish to make any Recommendations. While this is very effective from an agenda perspective, it does not address the administrative workload of receiving, processing, and translating the high volume of individual items.

It was noted that the majority of PAIs were submitted at the deadline, creating a workflow crush that may be avoidable. It is suggested that all conference members be reminded that September 15th is the submission deadline, but submissions may be submitted prior to that date. It is hoped that if more PAIs are moved to their respective area for consideration and benefiting the group conscience and also staggering the submissions based on assembly dates.

Another factor in the late submissions may be the misunderstanding that the final conference report is required prior to submitting any PAIs. The final conference report is an excellent tool and an important resource, but it is also important to note that the outcomes of the GSC (advisory actions, recommendations that did not carry and committee considerations) are made available shortly after the GSC.

B) EDW Pilot processes and roles

In year two the EDW Subcommittee began by reviewing the pilot outline and discussing the best approach to accomplish the work. It was agreed that we would implement process improvements where possible, but that we would also adhere to the substance of the pilot plan as approved by the 71st GSC.

The Conference Coordinator created slides for EDW review and orientation for GSO Staff and employees. This was adapted by the EDW subcommittee and included in our Interim Report October 2022 for use as a quick summary and an easy reference tool for the Trustees.

There were differing views among the trustee committee chairs regarding whether the trustees committee had the options to direct PAIs to a specific committee. Review of the EDW pilot plan affirmed that all PAIs forwarded for the GSC agenda would be distributed through EDW. The proposed distribution is subject to the approval of the TCGSC, and final acceptance of the GSB.

The distribution was shared in the EDW Addendum Final of December 2022. The EDW subcommittee further noted that there were both quantitative and qualitative benefits to the distribution.

Quantitative Benefits of Distributing Conference Agenda Items: As a result of distributing agenda items to three committees (Grapevine, Corrections, and Finance), the EDW for year two enhanced the ability for 31 voting members to more fully participate in the Conference process than they would have otherwise. Furthermore, by redistributing the workload from two committees (Literature and Policy & Admissions), the EDW for year two similarly improved the Conference experience of another 22 voting members since they can apportion more time to their remaining agenda items.

Qualitative Benefits of EDW: The EDW subcommittee is confident that allocating agenda items, as suggested, will enhance the five Conference committees' (both distributing and receiving) ability to achieve the desired depth and substance of its policy-level discussions. In addition, by balancing the workload, our valued Staff Secretaries will experience similar benefits when performing their behind-the-scenes activities.

C) Translation processes and timelines

While this is not part of the EDW pilot, it was imperative that the year two EDW subcommittee considered translation requirements, processes and timelines for conference background material and make every possible effort to ensure that the EDW pilot did not cause any avoidable delays. The committee noted the new role of Document Translations Manger was filled, and that a Language Services Department was established in October 2022.

Simultaneous Translation of Conference Background: As requested at their July 2022 meeting, we received a progress report from the GSO General Manager who noted the Office's process changes to identify all Conference documents requiring translation early and the development of a visibility tool to track progress.

The General Manager noted the adjustments to deadlines to receive materials sooner and expanded on the recent onboarding of a Document Translation Manager to support efforts to distribute Conference Background simultaneous in English, French, and Spanish.

The General Manager noted all the internal coordination received and support provided by the Conference Coordinator including holding "office hours" with Conference committee secretaries, setting clear timelines, and creating a visibility tool that clarifies the entire workflow that tracks every document of Conference background.

Additional Items, Developed to Aid/Assist in the Translation Timeline:

- “Volunteering” Alternate Chairs of Trustees’ Committees to oversee the extent of background material,
- Ensuring that Conference Background material is concise – yet comprehensive – will reduce volume while increasing usefulness,
- Enforcing timelines and deadlines to receive Area highlights from Panel 73 Delegates that will require translation,
- Developing line-item budgeting to document the cost of translation effort (see Translation Costs, below), and
- Utilizing the “Eyes Only” designation to exempt translation effort for Background items that do not have French- or Spanish-speaking Delegates.

Translations Costs: To increase translation capacity, we developed an in-house Language Services Department composed of a translation manager and two translators. This department is expected to have significant savings by reducing the use of outsourced translators.

SECTION 3 – THOUGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YEAR THREE

- Work toward greater clarity and consistency across the trustees’ committees regarding points of contact with the conference committee and/or conference committee chairs.
- What meetings occur and when? Who should attend each meeting? What the roles and responsibilities of the participants? Can the scheduling be done further in advance?
- GSO Staff to consider what the best options are for PAI submission (fillable forms, online forms, or?) and look for opportunities to align new processes with the CAR forms that are completed by the Trustees Committees.
- Consider possible methods to inform and support those submitting PAIs: Video resources? Webinar?
- Shared experience on the value of robust group conscience at the local or area level prior to proposing for the GSC?
- Is there a need for temporary help to compile the PAIs at the deadline?

SECTION 4 – QUESTIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON POLICY AND ADMISSIONS REGARDING PAI FORMS

- How and from who should members gain access to the PAI form?
- What is the role of delegates? Is there a need to prevent PAI forms being used as petitions/suggestion box forms? If so, how might this be achieved?
- What can be done to encourage submission prior to the deadline to prevent everything coming in at once?
- Consider character limits per field, and maximum attachment sizes to ease document management and translation and foster similarity in the amount of content attached.
- Should the PAI form ask specifically whether the idea has been discussed at an area assembly and what the outcome of the vote was?
- How heavily should whether the PAI was supported by group conscience factor into decisions to move items onto the GSC agenda or not?

Trustees' General Service Conference Committee

2021-22 Subcommittee on Equitable Distribution of Workload EDW Progress Report

Year One Of A Three-Year Pilot
January 29, 2022

Based on the 2021 advisory action, "The Equitable Distribution of Workload Process, as detailed in the Report from the 2020 Trustees' General Service Conference Committee, be implemented for the 72nd General Service Conference (GSC) on a three-year trial basis, with a progress report to be brought to the Conference Committee on Policy and Admissions after each year of the trial", a sub-committee for the Equitable Distribution of Workload (EDW) was formed to deliver this new approach for the 72nd GSC as the first year of a three-year pilot to test this process. The following is a report on the process, results and findings identified in Year One.

Overall, the plan delivered the intended results, with twelve new items being distributed across six Conference Committees that would not have received new agenda items therefore allowing for fifty more Delegates to participate more equitably in the Conference Committee process than would have otherwise. Primarily these were new agenda items that were slated for the Literature Committee and redistributed as outlined in the 2021-22 Subcommittee on Equitable Distribution of Workload EDW Progress Report. This distribution allows for an increased amount of Committee time spent on each item. Another positive outcome of the process was the Proposed Agenda Item (PAI) implementation of the agenda item form itself as it related to the processing of agenda items in the office and within the Trustee committees. We look forward to hearing more from the Fellowship about how effective these forms were in the submission process.

The Conference process is not a single process but rather a year around series of cascading processes starting and ending at the group level. Implementing the EDW process immediately without first fully reviewing and planning for the impact of the advanced timeline on the many facets of work required to support the Conference process at the G.S.O. and GV offices posed significant challenges. Being complex itself, the EDW process demanded a great amount of attention and has strained every aspect of the Conference assignment which supports the annual meeting. With Year One's process approaching the Conference, every attempt will be made for well-informed visioning to support implementation going forward. Hopefully this summary report is a key piece in that puzzle to more fully explore and discuss the process for Year Two of the trial period. The EDW approach uncovered some new process questions that may not have been fully explored and discussed by the Conference that we will attempt to summarize below for further consideration. These items fell into a few key themes:

Impact of Advanced Timeline 2
Tracking documents and ownership of these items 4
Coordination of Communications/Meetings of Trustees' and Conference Committees at
and between Annual Meetings of the General Service Conference 5
Simplification of the scoring system and aggregation of these inputs 8

Impact of Advanced Timeline

The timeline for the submission of agenda items was advanced under the EDW process in order to provide the Delegate Chairs a full understanding of the agenda items coming to their committee prior to attending the January General Service Board (GSB) meeting. Additionally, if the Delegate Chairs are aware of any additional agenda items coming to their committee prior to the January GSB, that may allow them the opportunity to sit in on the January Trustee Committee meetings during Board Weekend that are the source of any additional agenda items coming to their committee. This is important because, at the trustee committee level, all Conference agenda items and their background remain within the 'native' committee.

In order to deliver this understanding of the full list of agenda items to the Delegate Chairs prior to the January GSB meeting, the potential agenda items would need to have gone through the following steps prior to January:

1. Submitted from the fellowship to the Office/Conference Desk
2. Assigned to a Trustee Committee or Corporate Board for review
3. Reviewed and Discussed between the Trustee Chair and the Conference Committee
4. Reviewed by Trustee Committee and forwarded to Conference (must happen at a GSB Meeting)
5. Reviewed by the EDW Subcommittee for potential redistribution

Since the fourth step in this process is required to take place in a GSB meeting prior to the January GSB meeting, this step was designated to take place in October, a full three months earlier than when Conference items are normally selected. Advancing the fourth step in this process by three months demands that the first three process steps be advanced by three months as well.

The following is a description of opportunities and challenges identified by the Fellowship and Conference Members (Delegates, Staff and Trustees) related to advanced timing of the first three steps related to the new EDW process.

Process Step 1 - Advancing the deadline for submissions (from December 15th to September 15th)

The initial thinking related to the advanced timeline was that the impact would be felt in the initial year but after that, the related calendars for the Area, Conference and Trustees could accommodate the new submission timeline. The following is a brief listing of opportunities and challenges related to the advanced timeline:

Challenges

- The deadline for receipt of potential agenda items is scheduled before most areas can meet in their Fall assembly.
 - This could reduce the opportunity to discuss topics more broadly at the Area level before submitting them to the office (at least in the initial year of the pilot)
 - Is it possible that conversations that occurred this last fall could provide agenda items submitted next September?
 - Does this create too long of a timeline before a proposal is heard by the GSC?
- Reduced amount of time for areas to digest the Final Conference Report; discuss and consider new or related Conference items for the following Conference.
- Areas discussing potential new agenda items in the same time frame where some Delegates are still reporting out on the results of the last Conference.
- Multiple potential agenda items for similar topics were submitted for GSO and Grapevine office to process nearly doubling the typical number of items agenda items.

Opportunities

- Additional time for gathering and translating background prior to Conference since the agenda items will be known three months in advance.

Process Step 2 - Assigned to a Trustee Committee for review

The current approach for receiving and processing potential agenda items was overwhelmed by the sheer number of potential agenda items submitted this year. The number of multiple potential agenda items for similar topics further complicated the process adding an additional step in order to assign the items appropriately. On a positive note, the new forms for agenda item submissions added clarity to the processing of submissions by clearly stating what problem the proposed agenda item is intending to address.

Process Step 3 - Reviewed and Discussed between the Trustee Chair and the Conference Committee

Prior to the EDW process, the Chair of the Trustees Committee would meet with the upcoming Conference Committee in January to review and discuss the newly submitted potential Conference Agenda items coming before the Trustee Committee at the end of January. The discussion in this meeting was an important component for the Trustees' committees in determining which items will move forward to the following Conference.

With the advanced timing related to EDW these meetings were scheduled in October instead of January and included the Conference Committee membership from the previous Conference, rather than the Conference Committee members attending the upcoming Conference that will discuss these items.

This impact may be worthy of further conversation as to whether or not there are any unintended consequences of a different Conference Committee composition involved in the initial discussion regarding the potential item versus the membership of the Committee that will handle the item as Conference business.

Tracking documents and responsibility for these items

For purposes of illustration, consider a theoretical example of a request to develop a new Literature pamphlet. The pamphlet will take at least two years to complete.

Suppose **Committee D** is a committee from which items are distributed, and **Committee R** the committee(s) that receives it/them.

DAI = Distributed Agenda Item

The EDW subcommittee distributes the request to the Conference Corrections Committee (**Committee R**), which recommends development of the pamphlet. The GSC concurs and approves an advisory action to develop the pamphlet. Is this a Corrections or Literature advisory action? Where does it appear in the Final Conference Report? Where is it memorialized for archival purposes i.e., the 'History of Advisory Actions'? We look forward to hearing more on this from the Archives department. For archival purposes the sub-committee discussed the importance that it be listed with its 'native' committee.

Which Conference Committee – Literature or Corrections – oversees development of the pamphlet in the following year(s)? The EDW Subcommittee envisioned leaving it with Corrections for continuity.

A consideration for the GSB is which trustees' committee reviews drafts or quarterly progress reports for the pamphlet, Literature or Corrections? (EDW recommends that this item return to the Trustees Committee of origin in this case Literature Committee for work between Conferences.) The Staff members for Committee D (Literature) and Committee R (Corrections) should stay engaged on the specific items throughout the year in order to drive a smoother transition at Conference.

Additional factors that affected the distribution of workload in Year One include staff availability and experience. With pandemic-related office closures, staff shortages, a remote work environment, and existing workload staff secretaries to the Conference Committees had challenges taking on additional agenda items. There are questions that

merit further consideration such as: Are recently onboarded staff secretaries familiar with Conference Committee processes and procedures? Do staff secretaries need/have time for training/orientation on background material for items distributed from another committee? How will they receive this orientation and who provides it -Joint meeting of Literature Staff secretary and secretaries of all committees receiving literature items? One-on-one meetings?

Then there is the question of Archives - how/where should the body of work related to development of the pamphlet – progress reports, background, drafts, related materials be filed/housed/archived. We will look forward to hearing from our Archives Department with their suggestions after Year One.

Coordination of Communications/Meetings of Trustees' and Conference Committees at, and between, Annual Meetings of the General Service Conference

The EDW plan as approved in 2021 offers direction for the handling of agenda items from their arrival at GSO, through the EDW Subcommittee process, Trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference (TCGSC) approval of the Conference Week workload, and distribution of the final Conference Schedule and background. Five sets of meetings are affected:

1. Ongoing communications between the Trustee and Delegate Chairs before and after each quarterly GSB meetings
2. The October meeting between Trustee Chair and the Conference Committee
3. January call between Trustee Chair and Conference Committee
4. January GSB Board meetings (avoid conflict between meeting times of main CCs and their receiving committees)
5. Joint meetings held the week of Conference

In considering how agenda items are handled once they are distributed by the EDW team to Conference Committees, the EDW Subcommittee identified the following issues (matters of policy and process) that require additional guidance/ consideration /actions:

1. Ongoing communications between the Trustee and Conference Chairs before and after each quarterly GSB meetings

There are regular meetings between the Chair of the Trustee Committee and the Delegate Chair of the corresponding Conference Committee. These meetings occur prior to each quarterly GSB meeting in order to go over the upcoming agenda and provide a verbal update on the status of ongoing items. There is typically a meeting held after each GSB meeting as well to review any notable outcomes and next steps.

Using the example from above where a Literature item will enter its second year we made the recommendation that the Trustee Literature Committee should conduct the work between Conferences but the Delegate Chair for Corrections should hear updates on the

progress of the item since the Corrections Conference Committee will be receiving the item again at the next Conference. Who then provides these quarterly updates to the Delegate Chair for Corrections regarding the Literature item?

OPTION 1 – The Trustee *Committee D* Chair reaches out to each of the Conference *Committee R* Chairs that have agenda items from *Committee D* and provides each Delegate Chair an update on their specific items. In the scenario mentioned above the Literature Chair would reach out to the Delegate Chair of Conference Corrections in addition to the Delegate Chair of Conference Literature to provide regular updates.

OPTION 2 – The Trustee Chairs connected to the Conference *Committee R* Chairs capture the pertinent information for the specific items related to their corresponding Conference *Committee R* and provide an update based on the report out from the Trustee Committee D at each Board weekend. In the scenario mentioned above the Trustee Corrections Chair would capture all the pertinent information from the Trustees Literature Chair at the quarterly GSB meeting and bring that information to the Delegate Chair of Conference Corrections as a part of their regular standing meeting.

The OPTION 2 may be more feasible as this year we sent Literature items to six different Conference Committees which would create a total of seven additional meetings for the Trustee Chair for Literature per quarter.

2. The October meeting between Trustee Chair and the Conference Committee

This meeting is in place to provide feedback from the Conference Committee as to which proposed agenda items, they would like to see moved forward to Conference through the Trustee Committees. In the past this meeting took place in January prior to the January GSB meeting and it included the Delegates assigned to this committee from previous panel and the newly elected panel. With the advanced timeline related to EDW this meeting now takes place in October prior to the new panel coming onboard. There was some concern expressed about conducting this meeting in October with half of the Conference Committee rotating off and the new panel not yet arrived. However, it was also noted that the rotating Delegates are still in fact Delegates and Conference members and their input here was needed. The newly onboarded members will not have input on the proposed items for their initial Conference, but they will have input for the next two Conferences.

3. January call between Trustee Chair and Conference Committee

The Equitable Distribution of Workload (EDW) process impacted the annual “January Conference Call” between Trustee Committee Chairs and Delegate Conference Committee members. In 2021, *October* Conference Calls described above allowed Area Delegates the opportunity to share perspective on proposed agenda items for the 2022 General Service Conference.

In 2022 January Conference Calls will take place with Panel 71 and 72 delegates and trustee committee chairs with an adjusted purpose to possibly include: introductions and sharing on year-round communications between the GSB and area delegate conference members and committees. Calls may also include committee housekeeping discussions

on topics such as: ordering of agenda items, approaches to discussion of topics, voting practices, chair and alternate chair elections, and breaks.

The business needs for this meeting should be rather light now that the input for proposed Conference items is being conducted in October. That being said, the general housekeeping items and introductions can take place in this meeting. At the Delegate Chair Orientation meeting, the Chair of TGSC can report out the new agenda items that were distributed through the EDW process and the receiving Conference Committees for each.

At the point when the conversation changes to housekeeping the trustee committee chairs will log out.

4. January GSB Board Trustee Committee meeting scheduling to avoid conflict for meeting times

At the January GSB meeting the Delegate Chairs attend their corresponding Committee meeting and with EDW they will be advised to also attend any Trustee Committee meetings that are forwarding new items to their committee. In the example above the Conference Chair of Corrections would likely want to attend the Literature Committee as well since they are receiving a Literature item as well.

The January Trustees' Committee meeting schedule may require adjustment, so that Delegate Chairs of committees receiving DAIs may attend both Committee D and Committee R Trustees' Committee meetings. This is because during the GSB weekend there are two trustee committee meetings scheduled per time slot.

5. Joint meeting held the week of Conference

Trustees' Committees and their corresponding Conference Committees participate in a Joint Meeting prior to their committee meetings during the Conference week. The purpose of the meeting is to review the CSP of the committee and the work completed between the last Conference and the current one, with the main intention of assisting the Conference committee in clarifying and focusing on the work ahead.

To allow full participation by all Conference members, including those whose workload includes DAIs, the EDW subcommittee considered the following options:

- a) The Joint Meeting of Trustees' Committee D and Conference Committee D includes members of Trustees' and Conference Committee(s) R. All Committees with EDWAls attend one large meeting.
- b) A separate Joint Meeting is held for members (possibly only the Trustee Chair) of *Trustee Committee D* and members of *Conference Committee(s) R*. All members whose work includes the EDWAI attend.

Either of these options would require adjustment to the current schedule and format of Joint Meetings. Given that there are a finite number of scheduling options available, additional review may limit the number of potential Conference Committees that can receive DAIs from a given Trustee Committee. In the interim it may be most feasible to

move forward with the second option (b) and hold a separate Joint meeting between the Trustee *Committee D* and members of *Conference Committee(s) R*. For example, this year the Trustee Committee for Literature is sending items to six different Conference Committees in addition to the Conference Committee for Literature. Having all six additional committees sit in on the Joint meeting may take away from the discussion of ongoing Literature items.

It was also noted in the EDW subcommittee that understanding of the applicable CSP is a critical element for supporting the Conference Committees. The EDW Subcommittee recognizes that Conference Committee CSPs and Joint Meetings of Trustees' and Conference Committees are beyond its scope and requests that the TCGSC consider a recommendation to include a review of the CSPs related to the corresponding DAIs in a joint meeting between the Trustee Committee D and the Conference Committees R. In the example provided above the Conference Corrections Committee will review the CSP for Literature in a separate joint meeting with the Chair and possibly the whole Trustee Committee for Literature. For Year One reviews for proposed changes to the CSP will remain the purview of the aligned Conference Committee (ie: literature committee for literature CSP).

For future consideration, Composition, Scope and Procedures (CSP) of Conference Committees:

- Does the CSP of Committee D need to be amended for Committee D to transfer oversight of a DAI (work within its existing scope) to Committee R?
- Does the CSP of Committee R need to be amended to allow it to address a DAI (work outside its existing scope) from Committee D?
- Committees review and amend CSPs related to their work. Assuming Committee R reviews Committee D's CSP, may Committee R make or propose amendments to Committee D's CSP?
- How will Committee D's CSP be distributed to Committee R.
 - Provide all CSPs to all committees? (Post on Dashboard, include in Conference Notebook, distribute via trustees?)

Simplification of the scoring system and aggregation of these inputs

Direction provided by the EDW plan includes a Scoring Tool Form that Trustees' Committees use to estimate the time an agenda item will require for Conference Committee discussion. Trustees' Committees complete the form and send it to the EDW subcommittee.

GSO Staff Conference Coordinator compiles a spreadsheet of new and ongoing agenda items. The EDW subcommittee reviews spreadsheet and graphs, looking for committees with higher-than average workload. The subcommittee distributes new agenda items to committees with lower-than-average workload.

Discussion time for agenda items was estimated by Trustees' committees at their 4th Quarterly meetings. Background information was not yet available and so was not factored into time estimates. (Items with more background may require more discussion time.) Trustees' committees did not have historical information on past Conference committee discussion times, agenda items per committee, or time per agenda item. Without such information, and in the first year of the EDW process, discussion time estimates may not be reliable.

Estimating the time required to discuss items thoughtfully and carefully is difficult at best and can be driven by a number of considerations not always known when the estimates need to be conducted. It is clear that not all items demand the same amount of time, so a simple count of items is not sufficient in determining workload either. The task of considering the varying complexities of each agenda item was taken seriously by the EDW committee but the time estimate provided by the Trustee Committees was only a small portion of that consideration. Moving forward we may want to consider the amount of effort that goes into those time estimates and balance these with the impact they may actually have in the distribution of items. We recommend that the EDW subcommittee continue to study this further in Year Two for a better understanding of what goes into these estimates and how they are being applied.

One final element for logging and tracking the new items would be to find a more streamlined administrative process for capturing each of the items and their time estimates if any. The current process is based on Word documents converted to PDF files for each Trustee Committee and then extracted/hand entered from the PDFs of each committee into a final data document for EDW to review. This process is labor intensive and creates multiple opportunities for mistakes. The EDW Subcommittee suggests that we manage this information for each committee using a structured data table (i.e. prepared Excel file) for each committee so that a final list can be more readily consolidated and analyzed.

General Summary

In summary the EDW process completed the intended goal in just the first year but not without some additional workload and complexities for us to consider and improve upon as a Conference body. In addition to the specific items above the EDW Subcommittee suggests we also consider the following:

- As this is only the Year One of a three-year pilot that impacts so many facets of the year around Conference process designed to carry out the group conscience of our fellowship we can ask if in the future this process must be updated or if the connected processes at the Area, GSO, Grapevine and GSB levels must adapt to allow for this new year around Conference process.
- If this approach were to find a successful path forward would there still be a continued need for the Secondary Conference Committees (Archives and International Conventions/Regional Forums) or could these topics be addressed in other Committees through EDW?

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- To best assess the impact of the EDW and resulting processes, we encourage making plenty of room for discussion on this topic at the Conference following Year Three. Perhaps a Conference sharing session or Workshop to discuss this pilot, the resulting process and the overall impact of these. Further, we recommend a survey related to these processes to be completed by (1) the Fellowship submitting the agenda items, (2) All Conference Members (Delegates, Trustees, Staff, Directors) Year Two to collect more focused sharing for the 74th General Service Conference to include in their debate about whether to continue this approach for a more equitable distribution of workload for Conference committees.

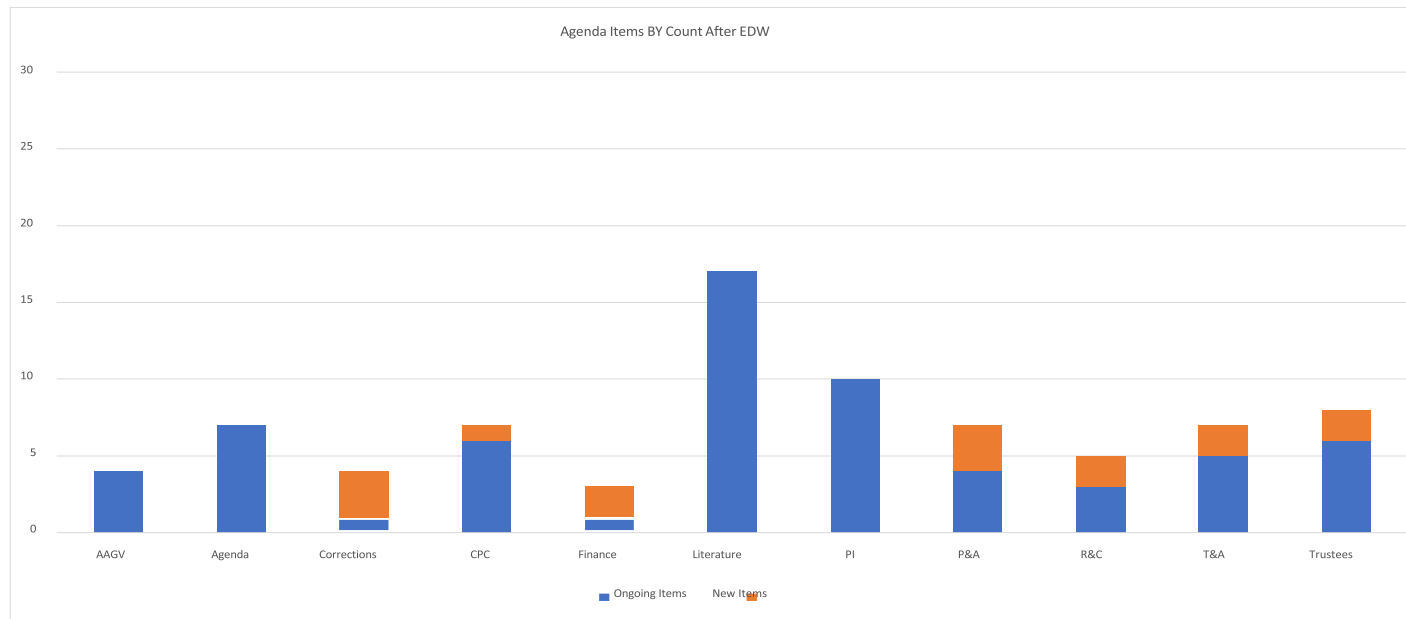
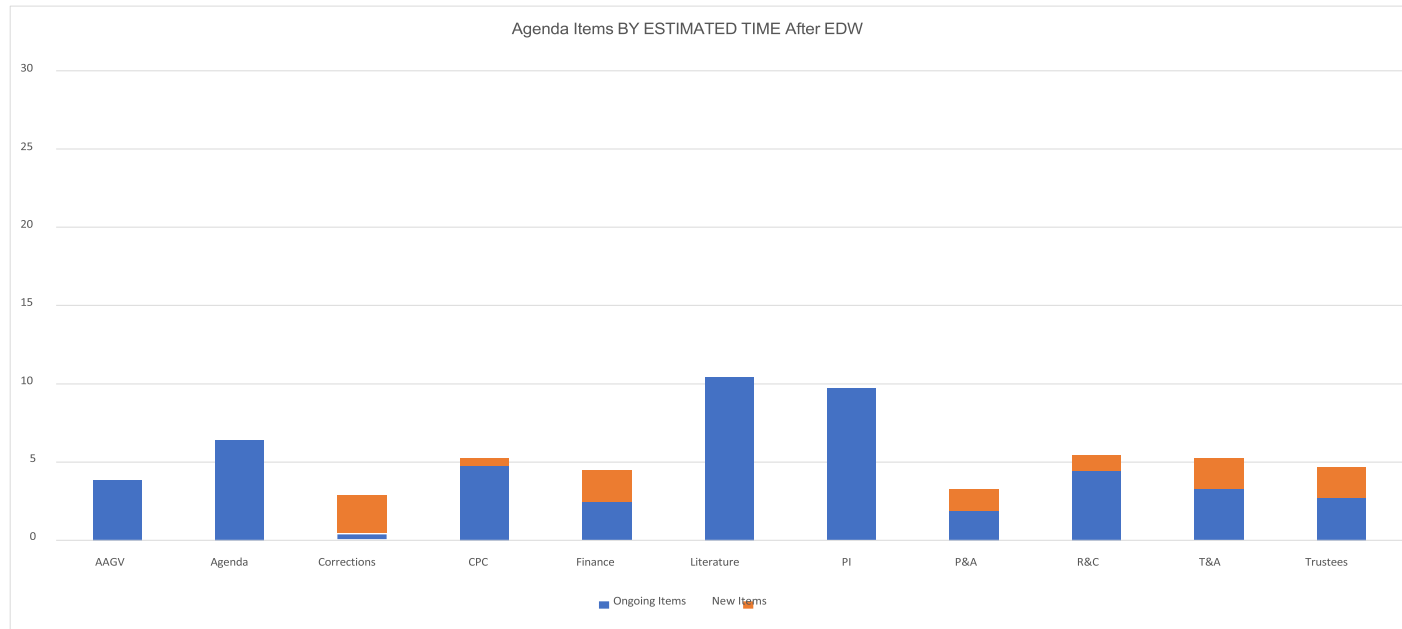
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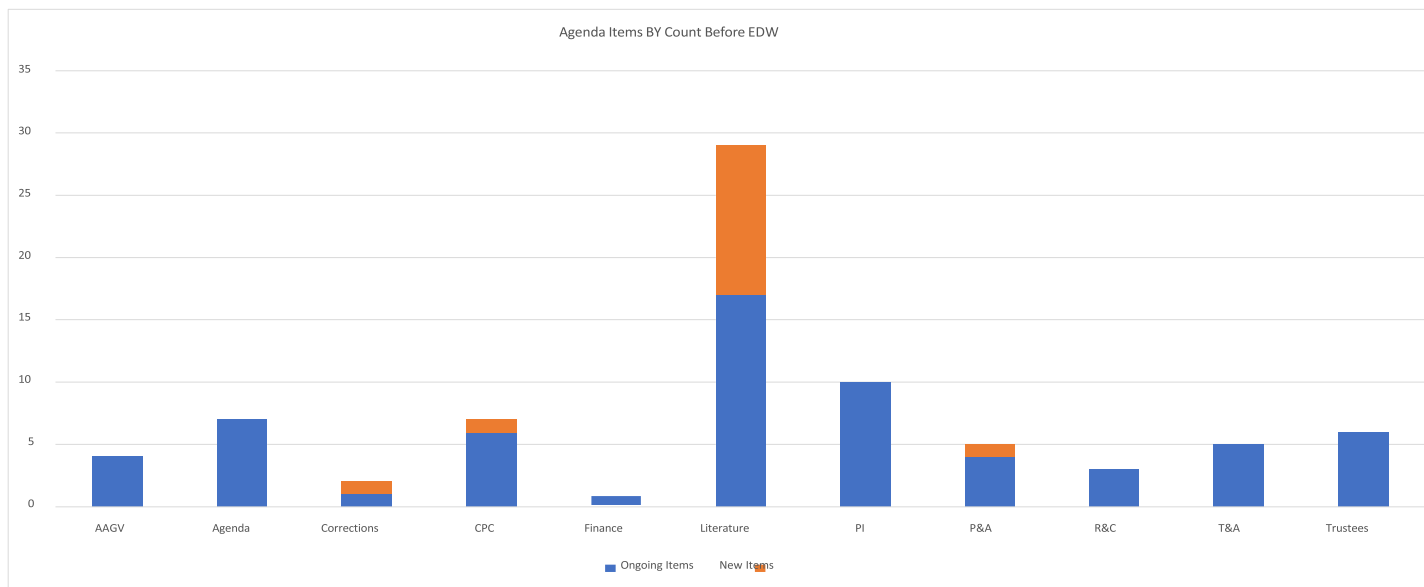
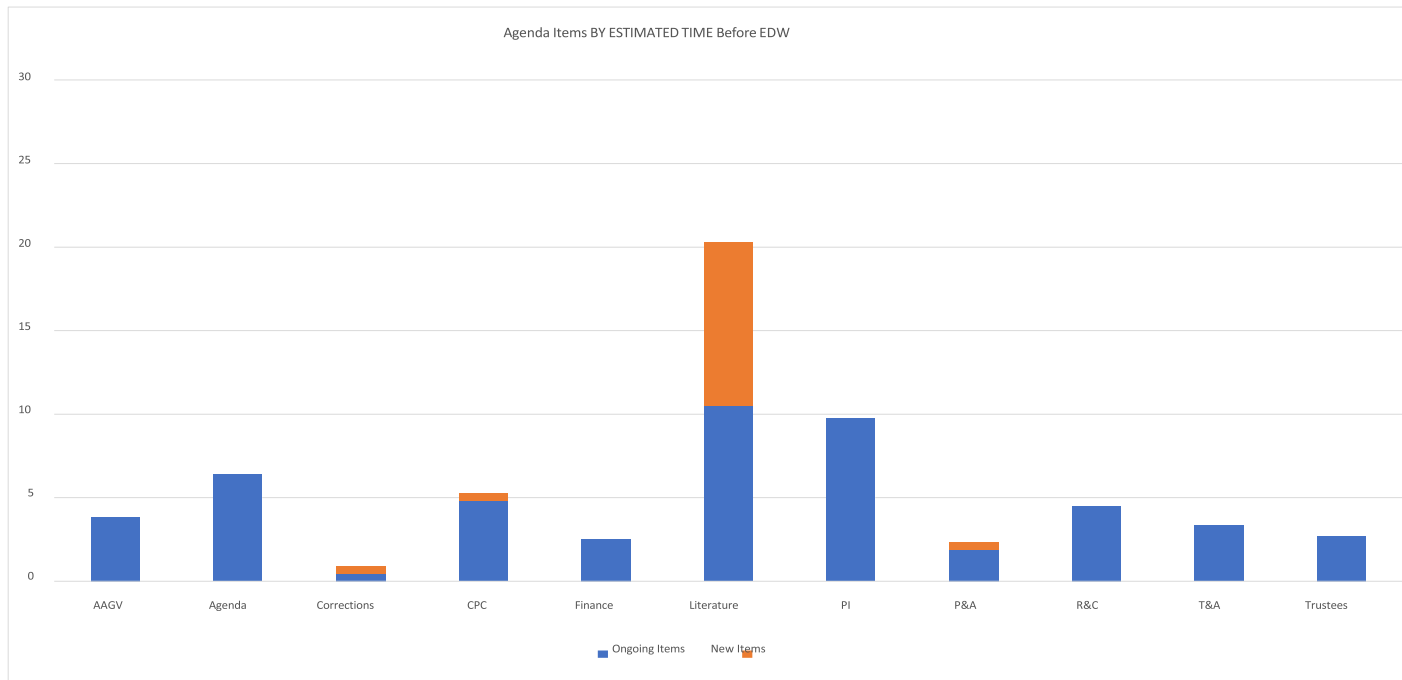
EDW Subcommittee Detailed Final Results

| Committee | EDW Recommended | PAI #s | Agenda Item Submissions | Time Estimation | Time Applied | Count |
|---|---|---------------------|--|------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Policy and Admissions | Policy and Admissions | PAI 57 | Discuss approval process for observers to the Conference from other General Service structures. | Average (.5 hour to .45 mins) | 0.45 | 1 |
| Cooperation with the Professional Community | Cooperation with the Professional Community | PAI 78 | Consider creating a new pamphlet designed to help C.P.C. committees to reach as many doctors as possible. | Average (.5 hour to .45 mins) | 0.45 | 1 |
| Corrections | Corrections | PAI 91 | Reconsider use of the term "person in custody" in A.A. literature. | Average (.5 hour to .45 mins) | 0.45 | 1 |
| Literature | Report and Charter | PAI 22 | Consider request to include a G.S.R. preamble in the pamphlet "G.S.R.: Your Group's Link to A.A. as a Whole." | Average (.5 hour to .45 mins) | 0.45 | 1 |
| Literature | Policy and Admissions | PAI 23 | Consider request to revise the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" to reflect shared experience on service sponsorship. | Average (.5 hour to .45 mins) | 0.45 | 1 |
| Literature | Treatment/Accessibilities /Remote | PAI 21 | Consider request to revise the pamphlet "The A.A. Group" to reflect the importance of the group as a "spiritual entity" as stated in the Long Form of Tradition Five | More than average (1 to 1.5 hours) | 1.5 | 1 |
| Literature | Trustees | PAI 24 | Consider revising text highlighting service roles at the group level in the pamphlet "The A.A. Group." | More than average (1 to 1.5 hours) | 1.5 | 1 |
| Literature | Report and Charter | PAI 52 AND PAI 55 | Consider requests that the chapter titled "The Doctor's Opinion" be returned to page one, as it was in the First Edition. | Low (less than .5 hour) | 0.5 | 1 |
| Literature | Treatment/Accessibilities /Remote | PAI 59 | Consider request to revise text in the chapter "Getting plenty of rest" in the booklet Living Sober. | Low (less than .5 hour) | 0.5 | 1 |
| Literature | Trustees | PAI 89 | Consider request to revise the pamphlet "Do you think you are different?" to include stories reflecting greater diversity. | Average (.5 hour to .45 mins) | 0.45 | 1 |
| Literature | Finance | PAI 76 | Consider request to add a historical disclaimer to the front of the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. | Low (less than .5 hour) | 0.5 | 1 |
| Literature | Policy and Admissions | PAI 71 | Consider request to restore a paragraph in the story "Freedom from Bondage" in the book Alcoholics Anonymous. | Low (less than .5 hour) | 0.5 | 1 |
| Literature | Finance | PAI 80 | Consider request that all proposed changes to the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions be handled in footnotes. | More than average (1 to 1.5 hours) | 1.5 | 1 |
| Literature | Corrections | PAI 137 and PAI 177 | Consider requests to limit changes to the book Alcoholics Anonymous. | More than average (1 to 1.5 hours) | 1.5 | 1 |
| Literature | Corrections | PAI 63 | Discuss request to make A.A. literature changes slowly and with A.A.'s primary purpose in mind. | Average (.5 hour to .45 mins) | 0.45 | 1 |

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2024 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions

ITEM D: Review report of the GSB Ad-Hoc Committee on Participation of Online Groups in the U.S./Canada Service Structure.

Background notes:

2023 Committee Consideration of the Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions

The committee reviewed the “Report of the GSB Ad Hoc Committee on Participation of Online Groups in the U.S./Canada Service Structure” and expressed appreciation for the report, particularly the results of the survey to delegates. The committee agreed that an important next step would be for delegates to find out more about the online groups in their areas and requested that the ad-hoc committee provide them with sample questions they may use in that inquiry. The committee looks forward to the next iteration of the ad hoc committee and the continued exploration of the possibilities for the participation of online groups in the U.S./Canada General Service Structure.

2021 Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference

The U.S./Canada General Service Structure recognize online groups and encourage their participation by listing groups who request to be listed in Fellowship Connection according to the group’s preferred district and area, with the default option being the location of the group’s primary contact. This replaces the 1997 Advisory Action that designated online groups as “International Correspondence Meetings.”

The General Service Board form a committee to explore future possibilities for the participation of online groups in the U.S./Canada General Service Structure.

Background:

1. Report of the GSB Ad Hoc Committee on Participation of Online Groups in the U.S./Canada Service Structure.

General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous
Trustees' Ad Hoc Committee on
Participation of Online Groups in the U.S./Canada General Service Structure
2023 Progress Report

1. Introduction

The genesis of the ad hoc committee's work began immediately post COVID with multiple requests coming from the Fellowship to the office, to the Group Services desk, and through the Conference, seeking some clear direction from the General Service Board in terms of how we are going to facilitate participation of online groups.

Below is an excerpt from the committee's Composition, Scope, and Procedure to highlight the scope of work:

- 1. This General Service Board ad hoc committee will explore future possibilities for the participation of online groups in the U.S./Canada General Service structure.*
- 2. This committee will review aspects of service to online/virtual A.A. groups and will make recommendations for changes and improvements when through careful deliberation it is deemed necessary.*
- 3. The committee recognizes this entire scope will need to be drawn upon and be enhanced by the shared experience of individuals and online/virtual groups.*

In order to facilitate the access to information on this topic to inform the group conscience, the committee has compiled a timeline of the ad hoc committee's work, a summary of year-by-year online group and district participation, a list of the Proposed Agenda Items on the topic of Participation of Online Groups from 2020-2023, the 2023 survey results, and the committee's recommendations at this time, for the consideration of the General Service Conference.

2. Timeline of Ad Hoc Committee work

2021/71st GSC

- Two advisory actions
- Composition, Scope, and Procedure

2022/72nd GSC

- Agenda items not forwarded.

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- Formation of virtual Areas
- GSO working group main points of interest:
 - o New Group Listing form revised to also be considered service material.
 - o The question of geographic service structure with non-geographic groups
 - o From an international perspective, the office received inquiries from members from other countries wanting to weigh in on our Conference and list with us.
 - o The working group has also frequently been asked about how to allow an international member to be a GSR.
 - o The biggest challenge the working group has come across is an advisory action that gives direction but also asks the GSO to list groups in districts and areas we have not even had the chance to communicate in detail with or they themselves are just starting to have conversations about.
- Communication with OIAA and other 12 Step Fellowships to understand development of online meetings prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and different approaches to the question of integrating online groups.
- International experience was also collected through the European Service Meeting (ESM) and REDELA (Meeting of the Americas)
- Questions asked at the time:
 - o What discussions regarding participation of virtual groups in your area/districts have taken place?
 - o Are your area/districts welcoming participation of virtual groups?
 - o What motions around this subject have been made/passed?
 - o What is your area doing as far as participation at district meetings and area assemblies for virtual groups? Hybrid?
 - o What is the cost to facilitate virtual group participation?
 - o Does your area have virtual districts?

2023/73rd GSC

- Committee chair gives a presentation and report, which includes the survey results, at the 73rd General Service Conference, followed by discussion.
- Policy/Admissions committee consideration
 - o Suggested questions are prepared and sent out to Delegates to confer with their Areas on the current landscape of participation of online groups in the U.S./Canada General Service Structure.

3. Year by year participation

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2021

- 595 active virtual groups
- 300 have a GSR.
- 10 have an Alt GSR.

2022

- 883 active virtual groups
- 587 have a GSR.

Virtual Districts:

Area 48 – NENY, District 20
Area 72 – Western Washington, District 25

2023

- 1168 active virtual groups
- 752 have a GSR.

Increase midyear to:

- 1236 active virtual groups
- 797 have a GSR.

Virtual Districts:

Area 14 – North Florida, District 2
Area 45 – Southern New Jersey, District 42
Area 48 – NENY, District 20
Area 58 – Oregon, District 33
Area 72 – Western Washington, District 25

4. List of Proposed Agenda Items about Participation of Online Groups from 2020-2023

The following Proposed Agenda Items were submitted for the General Service Conference. For 2022-2024, these items were not forwarded as in 2021 the creation of the Ad Hoc Committee...

2021 (71st GSC)

1. PAI 30: Consider a request from a local district that recognizes “Online Groups” as voting members of the district and asks that the Conference take action to grant “Online A.A. Groups” the same privileges as “Brick and Mortar Groups.”
2. PAI 34: Adapt the General Service Structure to recognize online-only groups as official groups. Without that recognition, members have no voice and are denied access to service opportunities.
3. PAI 37: Consider allowing Virtual or Online Groups to register under their respective district and area instead of the Online Intergroup.
4. PAI 45: Consider holding a discussion about how to give online only (virtual) meetings a voice and a vote in the General Service Structure and access to General Service Offices (GSO) services.

2022 (72nd GSC)

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1. PAI 18: Consider adding an agenda item to discuss online meetings and whether they are upholding or violating our traditions during the 72nd General Service Conference.
2. PAI 43: Consider creating a virtual Area for virtual groups in the United States/Canada General Service Conference Structure.
3. PAI 45: Establish and test virtual Area(s) for the U.S. and Canada online groups utilizing time zones rather than geographical locations.
4. PAI 46: Consider a request to recognize the Online International Groups (OIGs) and welcome these groups in the General Service Structure as outlined by a proposed diagram of this new structure.
5. PAI 61: That GSO consider adding a new Area to the service structure as a virtual only Area for those groups that have no affiliate Area. This Area could include all virtual-only meetings/groups that would like to remain/become active in the General Service Structure. This new Area would function completely as a virtual-only Area, having groups organized virtually. This new Area could elect a Delegate who is willing and able to attend GSO events and fulfill the responsibilities of an Area Delegate. After this proposal passes, this new virtual-only Area will have a vote at the General Service level. Once they are formed within the operating structure, the decision of this area will be left to this Area.
6. PAI 79: Consider creating two new non-Geographic Areas — one for the United States, and one for Canada — for the purpose of, but not limited to, the election of a Delegate by the GSRs from virtual meetings or groups in each of the new Areas to represent those meetings and groups at the General Service Conference and within the A.A. service structure as a whole.
7. PAI 83: Rescind the 71st General Service Conference Advisory Action #33 which states: “The General Service Board form a committee to explore future possibilities for the participation of online groups in the U.S./Canada General Service Structure.”

2023 (73rd GSC)

1. PAI 83: That Zoom or hybrid groups not be included in the structure of Alcoholics Anonymous.
2. PAI 181: Consider the approval of an Additional Delegate Area for Online Groups.

2024 (74th GSC)

1. PAI 19: I move that we expand Area boundaries to include languages and overlay time zones on top of Areas. Currently, only geographical boundaries are recognized. This is for integrating online meetings into the formal A.A. service

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structure, both nationally and potentially, globally. Currently, virtual meetings are not represented. As formal A.A. meetings, they would be entitled to full representation at the conference. They would have their own Delegates, DCMs, and GSRs.

To do this as soon as possible, two pilot websites would be set up to collect and verify the group's info, then pass it on.

Based on population density and for A/B testing, I propose one pilot on the East Coast and the other on the West. In addition to websites, 1 Area and 3 Districts should be initialized in each pilot zone as part of the pilots. This is to remove the roadblocks of getting new Districts and Areas approved. Without them, groups have nowhere to go. Registering a new group should be no harder than registering for an in-person meeting.

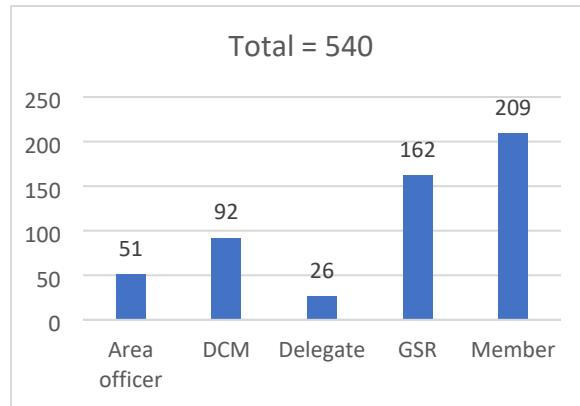
2. PAI 69: Add online areas to each region.
3. PAI 88: I propose that GSC take into consideration creating an additional Area — Area 94 covering online groups. The Regions could be the Districts.

5. 2023 Conference Committee survey results

In 2023, the Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions put forward the following committee consideration:

“The committee reviewed the “Report of the GSB Ad Hoc Committee on Participation of Online Groups in the U.S./Canada Service Structure” and expressed appreciation for the report, particularly the results of the survey to delegates. The committee agreed that an important next step would be for delegates to find out more about the online groups in their areas and requested that the ad-hoc committee provide them with sample questions they may use in that inquiry. The committee looks forward to the next iteration of the ad hoc committee and the continued exploration of the possibilities for the participation of online groups in the U.S./Canada general service structure.”

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The Trustees' Ad Hoc Committee on Participation of Online Groups met four times this year to review and implement this committee consideration. A survey was sent out in August to the Area Delegates, with a list of suggested questions for their local members. The survey form was also included as a link to facilitate distribution, and a deadline was given for October. The committee reviewed the results of the survey, which is provided below.

There were a total number of 540 responses, of which 518 were in English, 19 in French, and three in Spanish. The committee reviewed the responses and felt overall that there was not a strong sentiment for a particular action. It can be noted that of those that responded, most welcomed virtual groups and are ready to integrate them into the structure, while maintaining the autonomy of how to do so at the local level.

Virtual districts have gained traction as effective points of connection for online groups wishing to be a part of the service structure, resulting in a variety of perspectives on how online districts and groups can then be integrated into the Area structure. Some Areas have adopted hybrid formats for assemblies, while others feel the costs involved at present outweigh the expressed need for their service structure.

The survey questions 8 and 9 were included to organize feedback and are redacted here to keep participation by Area anonymous. Of those that responded, 74 Areas were

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represented, and 28 responses did not specify membership to an Area. Participants were also asked to confirm their level of representation, which is illustrated below:

Answers for the rest of the questions have been summarized below in figures where possible, and as a narrative where additional context is considered helpful.

Question 1: Are the online groups in your area participating in their districts? At the area level?

| Responses | Tally |
|----------------------|--------------|
| District | 118 |
| Area | 43 |
| Both | 270 |
| None | 99 |
| Area, District, None | 10 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>540</i> |

The vast majority of those who responded replied they were participating in both the area and district levels. All in all, the committee felt that these percentages supersede historic in-person participation in local assemblies, even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Question 2: Is this participation at in-person meetings, online via hybrid meetings, and/or fully online only meetings?

| Responses | Tally |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| In person | 85 |
| Online via hybrid meetings | 177 |
| Fully online only | 116 |
| No participation | 60 |
| Other | 102 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>540</i> |

In the case of those that provided a response for “Other” it was noted that there was a combination of formats depending on the needs of the groups, with some GSRs and DCMs offering to provide reporting to online groups where there were no hybrid options, for instance. There was also the idea of the hybrid format serving as an option for

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attending, so in many cases members would attend meetings sometimes virtually and sometimes in person. In this case, the respondents saw the hybrid format as less of a tool exclusively for “online groups” and more as a resource for all participants.

Question 3: Are members of your online groups active at the district and/or the area level as chairs/members of committees or officers?

| Responses | Tally |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Area | 26 |
| District | 142 |
| Area committees | 12 |
| Combination of the three | 198 |
| Other | 136 |
| Not sure | 26 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>540</i> |

There were a variety of responses, with over 69% showing that members are actively engaged in the service structure as representatives of online groups. Below is a selection of responses to illustrate some of the sentiments and perspectives:

- 1) *“No, they do not because they want to retain a virtual cyberspace area without a tie to a location. We can participate in OIAA with an IGR, but OIAA is also not recognized by GSO USA/Canada.”*
- 2) *“Since our AA group supports both in person and on-line, to date participation at the district level has been limited to those members who attend in-person meetings.”*
- 3) *“No, requires in-person participation.”*
- 4) *“Only one online group comes to our district meeting, but they do not vote.”*
- 5) *“When I think of “online groups,” I think “online only.” If they are hybrid, many have just one or 2 meetings online, so I don't really think of them as “online” since they still have brick & mortar space. Therefore, the online-only groups in my district DO NOT participate in District, Area, or Area committees. There is one online-only group that I know of in my and a member of that group is an Area Committee Chair. Their GSR has attended Assemblies in-person before.”*

Question 4: How are the voices of online groups heard at the area level?

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| Responses | Tally |
|---|------------|
| Through the service structure | 318 |
| Communication (outside service structure) | 55 |
| Not connected | 67 |
| Unknown | 45 |
| Other | 55 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>540</i> |

Of those that responded, there were six key points that stood out for ways that online groups are presently connected:

- The Delegates, DCMs & GSRs are informing members.
- Online districts
- Online groups send GSRs to assemblies.
- Same as any groups
- Hybrid either online or in person
- Through their own district

In general, local participation has adapted mostly positively to the inclusion of online groups. Respondents described many of the initial (and ongoing) challenges with budgeting, logistics, and technological knowledge, and local discussions show a group conscience that considers the real expressed need of the membership; in some cases, there is no benefit to the costs, and the membership is fine with in-person participation. The development of hybrid formats, despite the technical requirements they entail, has shown to be an excellent way of maintaining greater involvement, while letting the groups choose their way. On the other hand, the costs can be prohibitive in some Districts and Areas. Below is a selection of responses to highlight some effective methods and viewpoints:

- 1) *"We have our GSR represent us. Also, there have been online meeting "Meet and Greet" sharing sessions, just informal, to share tips and ask for help or ideas."*

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- 2) *“At our quarterlies through the DCM and also GSRs who attend the Assembly. We now provide hybrid at all of our business meetings.”*
- 3) *“Voting is available for eligible Area, Group and District members online.”*
- 4) *“The same as any other groups. There's no difference between a group that meets in a church, online, or in the local park.”*
- 5) *“We created a district for online groups and are trying to get them involved.”*
- 6) *“Must be present in person.”*
- 7) *“The information flows up and down the service structure as it always has. The DCM meets with GRSs at District meetings, DCMs represent the groups at the Area Committee meetings. We have online only Area Committee meetings, so there is no change at all in how information is communicated.”*
- 8) *“All of area meeting are Hybrid. We also have an online district.”*
- 9) *“Voting is available for eligible Area, Group and District members online.”*
- 10) *“We have to continue having a hybrid set-up to ensure online groups to participate.”*

Question 5: How have your districts and area coped with purchase, maintenance, and transportation of equipment, as required for online and/or hybrid meetings?

| Responses | Tally |
|--|--------------|
| Budgeted | 184 |
| Not budgeted | 52 |
| Personal equipment | 53 |
| Unknown | 73 |
| Group autonomy | 82 |
| Mixed (help of IGCOs, reimbursed, partial, etc.) * | 96 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>540</i> |

The feedback suggested that while most groups, Districts and Areas used their Seventh Tradition funds to purchase equipment, there were concerns about the use of contributions and financial viability in the long term. In one instance a member shared that there was a question by some old timers about whether groups should own assets,

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and that once it was recognized as an important tool to help the suffering alcoholic, that was able to change some people's minds.

There was a widespread need for technologically savvy members to assist in the selection and set up of equipment, as well as encountering additional expenses around maintenance and transportation. These areas of service are sometimes challenging to fill, along with the current challenge of filling service positions in general in the Fellowship. Many Areas included the costs in their budget, while at the group and district level, in many cases members lent or donated their own personal equipment.

The timing of the pandemic not only created the need for online meetings and the questions that came with it, but also resulted in the excess funds that made investing in needed equipment possible. The committee noted whether contributions (Seventh tradition) will keep pace with the ongoing expenses incurred by the equipment.

Below are some of the responses to this question that highlight some of the main perspectives:

- 1) *"Each meeting of AA persons has taken responsibility for the purchase, maintenance, and transport of equipment required for their online meeting."*
- 2) *"Our members donate to cover our zoom expenses."*
- 3) *"Area pays for service. Transportation and maintenance is performed by the person performing area service."*
- 4) *"Our Area spent upwards of \$30,000 to create our initial hybrid set up. The first few years of hybrid Assemblies, we hired an outside firm to help facilitate our Area business meeting. Last year Area created a technology steering committee designed to coordinate and facilitate the hybrid needs for our business meeting. We have recently purchased a storage unit to store our equipment."*
- 5) *"We just use someone's zoom account and reimburse that member."*
- 6) *"Area has purchased their own equipment and taken care of maintenance and transportation of equipment as required for Hybrid meetings except for one exception where our assembly will meet only online. Our District and Groups are being responsible for their own equipment, maintenance, and transportation."*
- 7) *"It has become part of the budget."*
- 8) *"We invested \$5k initially and created a technology steering committee."*

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- 9) *“The groups in my district have been able to afford refurbished equipment. [...] There have also been donations. Otherwise, people use their personal equipment.”*
- 10) *“Using excess funds accumulated during the COVID pandemic.”*
- 11) *“The Area has hybrid equipment. It seems important to point out though: hybrid equipment and ensuring participation from online groups is not necessarily the same thing. We have members of online groups that attend Area assemblies in person, and we have members of in-person groups who attend online.”*

Question 6: What option does your area (inclusive of online groups) prefer:

| Responses | Tally |
|---|--------------|
| No change: online groups are listed based on geography and areas are autonomous regarding if they need or want a virtual district and other efforts to facilitate participation | 301 |
| The implementation of an online area for US/Canada. The area would be autonomous regarding membership and structure; HOWEVER, delegates would need to be from the US or Canada | 112 |
| Other | 127 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>540</i> |

Based on the feedback for these options, in relation to previous years, it appears that the push for an online area has subsided. Some reasons expressed are that members have learned how to interact with virtual meetings in all forms and feel that the decision and the methods should remain autonomous at the local level. One example was: *“We find some merits with both options listed above. Online groups being listed based on geography and areas being autonomous in regard to becoming a virtual district and other efforts to facilitate participation. We also believe that delegates need to be from the US or Canada.”*

However, there were a significant number of responses that were undecided, as shown by the amount of “unknown” and “don’t know” responses. Some factors are that there is not a strong preference, members feel that what they have at the local level is working (such as hybrid assemblies), uncertainty about how the international membership would factor in, as well as a clear group conscience for how to decide what Area the group/District is connected to.

Below are some responses to highlight some of the main perspectives on this question:

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- 1) *“Both. Offer the choice. The A.A. online Intergroup could be a powerful force at on online Area. Online groups currently registered and active at local levels should be given the choice to remain.”*
- 2) *“It is difficult for a lot of members in the Area who are not part of online groups to fully understand the issues, so I am not sure that our Area (which consists mostly of in-person groups) is in a position to state a preference as an Area. However, some members of online groups in our Area feel very strongly that an online Area is needed.”*
- 3) *“In our meeting most members felt that it should be no change and based on geography. Several members commented that newcomers would be able to connect to a specific area to find an in-person sponsor. However, if a meeting was online only and covered attendees in a large geographical area, they would have the option to determine whether there should be an online are option.”*
- 4) *“We do not have a formal preferential option in our group. But our practice underlines the notion of no change. Among other things, online allows people who have had to leave the area to continue to participate with home group members, a very strong reason in our view to continue to maintain both options. We also have online participants who attend from Europe principally, and we welcome them, as well as former in person group members who have gone abroad and continue to participate online. We see all this implicitly as a continuation of A.A. unity.”*
- 5) *“Online groups be registered in the District and Area in which they are located. Treat online as a location. GSRs must occupy that Area and District in which they are located.”*
- 6) *“Summary: From listening during the breakouts, secretary report backs, and reading the compiled notes, it seems there continues to be more questions than answers. Pros and Cons of all options were raised. Responses varied as to which option was better. A few themes across groups included:*
 - *“More time and discussion is needed to figure out the best course forward. There are still many questions.”*

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- *“It is important for online groups to have a voice in this decision and determine what is best for them.”*
- *“Online groups should have autonomy to participate however is best for them.”*

Question 7: How have the online groups in your area used their expertise to help district and area service committees to:

- Bring online meetings to treatment facilities, correctional facilities, nursing homes, and rehabilitation centers.
- Reach out and connect with remote communities.
- Help members who are homebound or have mobility issues.
- Offer more options for members with accessibility challenges, such as: hard of hearing, blind and/or deaf.
- Use simultaneous interpretation to offer meetings in more languages.
- Provide meetings for immunocompromised members.
- Offer meetings 24/7 for A.A.s who are shift workers, new parents, or caregivers.
- Make meetings accessible to those who have lost their driving privileges.

Of the varied answers, 35 indicated “all of the above” to the suggestions, 44 expressed that they did not know how to answer. Many responses selected multiple options, of which the specific instances were the following:

| Responses that included the suggested options: | # |
|---|----|
| a. Bring online meetings to treatment facilities, correctional facilities, nursing homes, and rehabilitation centers. | 8 |
| b. Reach out and connect with remote communities. | 6 |
| c. Help members who are homebound or have mobility issues. | 68 |
| d. Offer more options for members with accessibility challenges, such as: hard of hearing, blind and/or deaf. | 33 |
| e. Use simultaneous interpretation to offer meetings in more languages. | 8 |
| f. Provide meetings for immunocompromised members. | 48 |

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| | |
|---|----|
| g. Offer meetings 24/7 for A.A.s who are shift workers, new parents, or caregivers. | 17 |
| h. Make meetings accessible to those who have lost their driving privileges. | 33 |

Below are some detailed responses that give further depth to the consideration that was given to responding to this question:

- 1) *"My online homegroup particularly attracts seniors! We use Closed-Captioning to aid understanding. Our open speaker meeting, and a split speaker discussion meeting attract newcomers, while long-timers flock to our Step/Tradition discussion meetings. Some of our members serve accessibilities committees. Online access is essential for most of our members."*
- 2) *"Our group is actively seeking a facility that would like an online meeting brought to them--the District Treatment Chair is working with us on this project. We have several members who are immunocompromised and attend our meetings regularly. They have said that this online meeting saved them so much worry, especially during Covid. We are 7 years old as a group but could not find an Area to accept us. Finally, we found our home in Area 72 and we are ready, willing and able to get busy!"*
- 3) *"OIAA has service committees similar to GSO, and at our group we are sponsoring a couple of women in nursing homes via Zoom. Remote community connection is inherent with OIAA. Zoom provides an opportunity to be of service to homebound and immunocompromised members. Signing and translation is available on-line and there are meetings at any time of the day for shift workers, parents, etc."*
- 4) *"Not sure what my district's efforts are for offering accessibility to online groups however my autonomous online home group has its own website our meeting is listed on aa-intergroup.org. We are a diverse cultural group. Our homegroup offers literature, does inventories, offers training for safety, group commitments, sponsorship, group conscience and literature studies. We practice the 36 spiritual principles of AA all online. Since Our group members (approx. 40+) are spread out across the country our Unity committee plans a live in person group anniversary*

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once a year. We also have live meet ups at various AA conferences and events throughout the year. Our GSR participates on their geo area level but as we rotate going forward this it is presenting a hardship for members to take this commitment due to remote locations and limited time and travel for the trusted servant participation. Our group philosophy is "Technology is the New Coffee Pot". We love AA and we will be here when you get here."

- 5) *"Our Online Group creates ad-Hoc teams to address Unity, Service and Recovery where we can connect to service commitments. Most members participate online only."*
- 6) *"My district has had no participation from our one online group. I suspect a lot of online groups are underrepresented because of the fact that districts are created by physical boundaries, so an online area would be wonderful."*

6. Ad Hoc Committee observations

- a. The committee noted with appreciation the diligent work of the local Area and District committees in exploring technological modalities that include online groups and benefit all members in general.
- b. The feedback from the survey was informative and highlighted these ongoing questions:
 - i. What differentiates an online meeting from an online group?
 - ii. How can online groups benefit from participating in the service structure?
- c. The committee affirmed that online groups and meetings reserve their right to remain autonomous, while encouraging ongoing communication with the rest of the Fellowship to foster unity and collaboration where merited.

7. Ad Hoc Committee recommendations

Within the framework of the committee's scope of work, the following are the recommendations it is prepared to make at this time:

- a. The committee feels that at this time there is no clearly expressed need for the creation of an additional Area for virtual groups. However, it feels that it might be helpful for local sharing to be compiled by the General Service

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Office, and that the Group Services desk consider the creation of an A.A. Guideline to encourage participation and provide shared experience for technological and logistical learned efficiencies.

2024 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions

ITEM E: Discuss revising procedures for electing the Delegate chairperson, the Conference Committee chairpersons, and their alternates.

Background notes:

2023 Advisory Action Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions

To foster unity, trust, and transparency in the Fellowship, the members of the General Service Conference meet outside of the annual meeting for general sharing sessions at least two times per year utilizing virtual meeting technology. The General Service Board Chair and Delegate Chair will set the date and time as well as determine what issues currently facing the Fellowship would be chosen as topics.

72nd General Service Conference Delegate Chair Procedures

1. Who is eligible? All Panel 72 Delegates who have not been elected as Conference *Committee Chair*.
 2. Each Region caucus and elects one candidate per region by ballot, leaving off Chairs and Alternates.
 3. The 8 Region candidates are put in a hat.
 4. The first name drawn is the Delegate Chair.
 5. The second name drawn is the Alternate Delegate Chair.
-

Background:

1. Proposed Agenda Item (PAI) Submission Form - PAI 10
2. Electing delegate chairpersons, history and practices

**A General Service Conference (GSC)
Proposed Agenda Item Submission Form**

(1) Submit a clear and concisely worded motion.

Beginning with the 2025 General Service Conference (GSC), the delegate chair and alternate delegate chair for the following year’s GSC, will be elected in the Conference session scheduled immediately following completion of all committee reports and completion of the discussion of, and voting on, floor actions (if any). Following the election of the delegate chair and alternate delegate chair for the following year’s GSC, each primary Conference committee will convene and elect their own committee chair and alternate committee chair for the following year’s GSC, according to each Conference Committee’s own Composition, Scope and Procedure, with the newly elected delegate chair and alternate delegate chair ineligible to stand for primary or secondary Conference Committee chair or alternate chair. Following the election of the primary committees’ committee chair and alternate committee chair, each secondary Conference committee will convene and elect their own committee chair and alternate committee chair for the following year’s GSC, according to each committee’s own Composition, Scope and Procedure, with the newly elected delegate chair, alternate delegate chair, and committee chairs ineligible for secondary committee chair or alternate chair. At the Conference session immediately following the election of all Conference Committee chairpersons and alternate chairpersons, the newly elected chairpersons and alternate chairpersons will be announced to the full GSC.

The process for selecting the delegate chair and the alternate delegate chair for the following year’s GSC is recommended to be:

1. The first and second-year delegates from a region will nominate one candidate from among the willing 1st year delegates of their region by ballot, utilizing the Third Legacy procedure. A first-year delegate may decline to be considered as a nominee for election for delegate chair or alternate delegate chair, but should state so prior to the first ballot of the Third Legacy procedure.
2. From the nominees (one per region), two of the nominee names will be selected by lot, i.e. by “going to the hat.”
3. From the two names selected by lot, the delegate chair for the following year’s GSC will be elected by third legacy procedure, with each region casting one ballot per a decision process of that region’s own choosing. The candidate elected/selected by the regions in the Third Legacy procedure will serve as the delegate chair for the following year’s GSC, beginning at the close of the current GSC. The second candidate will serve as the alternate delegate chair for the following year’s GSC, beginning at the close of the current GSC.

(2) What problem does this proposed item address?

While a search of past advisory actions indicates only that the delegate chair be selected by lot, the Advisory Action of the 73rd GSC (below), increases the authority and responsibility of the delegate chair, as did other Advisory Actions.

Advisory Action of the 73rd GSC:

To foster unity, trust, and transparency in the Fellowship, the members of the General Service Conference meet outside of the annual meeting for general sharing sessions at least two times per year utilizing virtual meeting technology. The General Service Board Chair and Delegate Chair will set the date and time as well as determine what issues currently facing the Fellowship would be chosen as topics.

While a search of the GSC Advisory Actions does not indicate any mandated Conference time for electing

the delegate chair and alternate delegate chair, or any order for electing either with regard to Conference committee chairs, it does historically indicate that the selection of the delegate chair is by lot. Further, it appears that (1) there is a precedent that does not give preference to the service position of delegate chair and (2) there have been other advisory actions passed that increase the authority and responsibility of the delegate chair, prior to the above Advisory Action.

Details are:

(1) The current custom based on the conference agenda currently reflects that the delegate chair, and alternate delegate chair are elected/selected in the delegates only meeting (understood as area delegates only) on Tuesday of conference week, after the conference committee chairs and alternates for the following GSC are elected in their respective committees, but before and conference committee reports are delivered to the full conference. Regions may randomly select a name from the eligible first year delegates in their region.

(2) In addition to the above Advisory Action, the following has increased the responsibility and authority of the delegate chair:

1992-Delegates who become chairpersons of Conference committees, and the delegate chairperson, continue to be invited to attend the quarterly board weekend/General Service Board meeting prior to the General Service Conference.

2010- The Alternate Delegate Chair served on the GSC Inventory Planning Committee (due to service position)

2011- The procedure for the submission of Concept V minority appeals to the General Service Conference be established...The minority should announce, in writing, to the chair of the General Service Board, the General Service Conference delegate chair and to the General Service Office Conference coordinator that it intends to appeal under Concept V to the General Service Conference

In addition, we know that there is a spiritual obligation to participate at each level in the upside-down spiritual triangle to participate, and to have the best participation possible. This includes the area delegates and the delegate chair as a partner to the GSB chair.

(3) What level of group conscience, if any, discussed the proposed agenda item? Make it clear who is submitting the item (an individual, group, district, area, etc.).

Note: While all items are received equally, experience has shown that ideas greatly benefit from the value of a broader group conscience. Consider if and with whom you would like to have a group conscience discussion on the proposed agenda item prior to submitting.

The Area Committee of Area 50 unanimously supported this agenda item in a vote at the 8/21/23 Area Committee Meeting. As our Assembly is not until September 16, 2023, a full area vote was not available. In addition, the Panel 70 immediate past delegate of Area 50, while not a voting member of the area committee, did express support of this PAI, as having attended two GSC's and being part of the selection of the Delegate Chair at each.

(4) Provide background information that describes and supports the reasoning for the proposal. List background material(s) included with the proposal:

In addition to information in #2 above:

Introduction to the Concepts for World Service (page C2 of 2021-2023 Edition of The AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service):

In other chapters great emphasis is laid on the need for a high order of personal leadership, on the desirability of careful induction methods for all incoming personnel, and upon the necessity for the best

possible personal relations between those who work in our services.

CONCEPT XI

While the Trustees hold final responsibility for A.A.'s world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Therefore, the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.

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| (5) What are the intended/expected outcomes if this proposed item is approved? |
| The delegate chair and alternate delegate chair will be elected/selected prior to the election of the Conference committee chairs and alternate chairs. This is a positive response to the Advisory Action of the 73rd GSC (below) and allows for the best possible trusted servants, and for greatest unitive path forward for AA, which is our responsibility at all levels in the upside down triangle: To foster unity, trust, and transparency in the Fellowship, the members of the General Service Conference meet outside of the annual meeting for general sharing sessions at least two times per year utilizing virtual meeting technology. The General Service Board Chair and Delegate Chair will set the date and time as well as determine what issues currently facing the Fellowship would be chosen as topics. |
| (6) Provide a primary contact for the submission. |
| Denise M. A50 P72 Delegate |
| (7) Final comments: |
| The Area 50 delegate supported the proposed amendment that the Conference Agenda Committee and the trustees' GSC Committee set the agenda for the new GSC sharing sessions (minimum 2 per year) as proposed by Deb K., Trustee. Because the conscience of the GSC was that the Delegate Chair and the GSB Chair set the agenda (2 people rather than committees as we typically decide things in the Conference structure), this PAI is being proposed. Thank you for your consideration. |

Submit completed forms to the GSO Staff Member on the Conference

Desk: EMAIL: Conference@aa.org

POSTAL MAIL: Attn: Conference
 Desk General
 Service Office
 P.O. Box 459
 Grand Central Station New
 York, NY 10163

Electing delegate chairpersons, History and Practices

73rd General Service Conference Delegate Chair Procedures

1. Who is eligible? All Panel 73 Delegates who have not been elected as Conference Committee Chair.
2. Each Region caucus and elects one candidate per Region by ballot, leaving off Chairs and Alternates.
3. The eight Region candidates are put in a hat.
4. The first name drawn is the Delegate Chair.
5. The second name drawn is the Alternate Delegate Chair.

General Service Conference Committee chairperson and Alt Chairperson elections:

1952 Advisory Action – Policy/Admissions:

Conference Committee Chairmen should be elected from new members of the Conference.

1956 Advisory Action – Policy/Admissions:

Each year all Conference Committee Chairmen should be elected from second-year delegates on the Conference Committee since their previous experience will give continuity of service.

1973 Advisory Action – Policy/Admissions:

An Alternate area delegate chairman should be elected; the runner-up to the area chairman could be the alternate chairman.

Staff note: Based upon research provided by GSO Archives, prior to the 1970s there was no set procedure to voting for committee chairpersons beyond the guideposts of the above advisory actions. Wording to voting practices and procedures were mildly inconsistent. In the 1970s, it appears that other staff secretaries began to unify with the wording that (non-alcoholic) committee secretary, and GSO archivist, Nell Wing had

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developed. It is in this time frame, in the 1970s, in which the practice became the consistent wording as it is outlined to this day on each Conference Committee's Tuesday agendas.

*Election of chairperson

1. All Panel 74 members are eligible.
2. All committee members vote by written ballot (no verbal nominations).
3. Election by plurality. Second place becomes alternate chairperson.
4. New chairperson serves one year beginning at the close of the Conference.

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