

WSBC 2021: Report to Triangle Intergroup

The 2021 WSBC was held virtually from Saturday, April 17 through Saturday April 24, not including trustee meetings before and after these dates. There were 248 eligible voters in attendance from all 10 geographic regions and the virtual region. They were drawn from 20 countries—Australia, Brazil, Canada, Columbia, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Iran, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Russia, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom (England, Scotland) and the United States. On the East Coast of the US, the main business meetings were scheduled from noon to 4:00 PM with brief hourly breaks.

Elections

Although all of the nominated trustees were running unopposed, the delegates were thoroughly briefed on their qualifications. Before the conference we were provided with the applications of all the nominees and given a link to brief speeches by each of them. In addition, Sunday's meeting was dedicated to an interactive session in which delegates could ask questions of each of the nominees. All nominees were elected by large majorities though there were a small number of "no" votes and some abstentions for each.

- Region 3 Trustee (representing Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah): Neva S. from Arizona
- Region 6 Trustee (representing Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Bermuda): Elizabeth Ann B. from Massachusetts
- Virtual Region Trustee: Dora P. from Brazil
- 2 General Service Trustees: Judy H. from California and CJ M from Illinois

Business Motions—Presented in the Order They Were Addressed by WSBC

- Only two of the items from the agenda questionnaire that we voted on in February were defeated/prevented from coming to the floor. Those were the two on removing pronouns from the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, each of which received only 46% "yes" votes, with 50% required to come to the floor.
- The Consent Agenda, which passed, contained the following items: New Business Motion G (changing the name from Young Persons' Conference Committee to Young People's Conference Committee) Proposal Item 4 (refining language about the geographic and virtual region and providing that language service boards that span more than one region can affiliate with any one region, subject to permission) Proposal Item 6 (Allowing Trustees to call for Virtual WSBC meetings "in the event of an emergency") and Proposal Item 7 (clarifying that the region sets the priorities for regional delegates for WSBC).
- Three revised pieces of literature received the Conference Seal of Approval "The Tools of Recovery"; "A New Plan of Eating: A Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual Journey"; and *Voices of Recovery*. The revision to *Voices of Recovery* was limited to updating the page numbers for quotations, when updates to other literature such as the 12 & 12 meant that the page number was incorrect. In a very few cases, the passage quoted was no longer in the literature, in which case it was replaced with a quotation that met the intent of the original as closely as possible. It also implemented the 2007 decision to use lower case for all pronouns

referring to God or Higher Power. This was extremely controversial, but the revision still received the 2/3 vote necessary to be adopted.

- Motion I—that hybrid meetings would be registered as one meeting and have one meeting number but be listed with both the face-to-face and virtual meetings—was adopted.
- Motion E—an amended motion to revise the preamble—was defeated.
- Motion H was adopted, giving us this revised Unity with Diversity Policy:

“Unity with Diversity” Policy

THE FELLOWSHIP of Overeaters Anonymous encourages and promotes acceptance and inclusivity. All are welcome to join OA and are not excluded because of race, creed, nationality, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other attribute. We welcome all who share our compulsion. Everyone with the desire to stop eating compulsively is welcome in Overeaters Anonymous.

THE FELLOWSHIP recognizes the existence of individual approaches and different structured concepts to working our Twelve Step program of recovery; that the Fellowship is united by our disease and our common purpose; and that individual differences in approach(es) to recovery within our Fellowship need not divide us.

THE FELLOWSHIP respects the rights of members, groups, and service bodies to follow a particular concept of recovery within Overeaters Anonymous and encourages each member, group, and service body to respect those rights as they extend the hand of fellowship to those who still suffer.

THE FELLOWSHIP encourages each duly registered group and service body to affirm and maintain the Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous by allowing any member to share his or her experience, strength, and hope in meetings regardless of the individual approach or specific concept that member may follow. Duly registered is defined as being in full compliance with Bylaws, Subpart B, Article V.

- Motion D was amended to reflect a 3-day weekend (Friday through Sunday to reflect cultures for which Friday is the holy day) as the “first weekend” for purposes of setting the dates for OA holidays.
- Motion F, to encourage greater diversity among members whose stories were told in future literature was adapted, though several people expressed that they thought the newest literature showed that is already the practice in creating new literature.
- Motions A and C, both of which proposed some modification in the definition of abstinence, were referred to the reference committee. They proposed a compromise wording to the group, which removed the definition of recovery so that it is similar to, but not exactly like, the most recent definition before 2019. The new definition reads:

“Abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight.”

Spiritual, emotional, and physical recovery is the result of living and working the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve Step program on a daily basis.”

- Motion B, which proposed to limit how frequently the definition of abstinence could be changed to every 10 years (years ending in 0), was defeated.
- Bylaws amendment proposal 16 was adopted. It combined all of the types of service body into one article so that if changes occur in the future, only one amendment will be necessary. It also created special interest service boards. FYI, the special interest service boards are limited to the same pre-approved areas as defined for special focus meetings (100 Pounders, Anorexic/Bulimic, Bariatric Surgery, Black, Health Issues, LGBT, Men, Women, Young Persons). In accordance with the 3rd tradition, no one can be prevented for attending or being active in a special focus meeting if they do not, themselves, fall into the special focus category. They can affiliate with any one region that accepts them, but members may participate in other regions if the region permits it.
- Bylaws amendment proposal 2, to place a 8 year life-time term limit on Trustees failed. Therefore, service remains limited to a maximum of 8 consecutive years, but has no lifetime maximum.
- The only Emergency New Business Motion was defeated. It moved “to plan for and provide real-time language translation, including ASL interpretation, potentially via assistive technology, as needed for the entirety of the World Service Business Conference business meetings and committee meetings in time for the 2022 Conference.” In this delegate’s personal opinion, people of other languages heard what minority groups always hear when there is a move toward greater inclusivity—“We already have a committee studying it. If they were rushed to have it in place by next year, they might not find the most cost-effective or economical technology. We’re all for being more inclusive, but we have to be practical, and we can’t be rushed.”

[Most Eye-Opening Insight at the Conference](#)

Although it was not part of the business agenda, there were two references during the conference, from two different people, to a problem for people of color in OA. When they shared about how national events such as police killings of unarmed young Black men were affecting their emotions and threatening their abstinence, they were told not to share because that was an outside issue. Editorial comment: If we don’t want to continue being a group of older, white, middle class women, we need to balance sensitivity and inclusivity with an over-strict interpretation of the traditions.

Submitted by Mary Anne Salmon
May 13, 2021