

REPORT OF THE 2010-2012 DISTRICT 4 BY-LAWS COMMITTEE

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS OF ZONTA INTERNATIONAL AND
RULES OF PROCEDURE OF ZONTA INTERNATIONAL**

PROPOSED PROCESS

Zonta International Governing document, Article XIX Amendment to Bylaws, Section 2. "Process for Club/District Amendment Proposals.", states: "A member of a Zonta club may recommend to the club for approval proposed changes in Zonta International Bylaws or Rules of Procedure. After club approval, the club may submit the proposal to the district board. If the district board determines that the proposal does not require further study, it shall publish the proposal to all other clubs in that district at least sixty (60) days before district conference and shall submit the proposal to delegates at the conference. The district board may also submit a proposal to the district conference in the same manner. If a majority of voting members and proxies at district conference adopts the proposal, the district secretary shall submit the proposal to the Zonta International Bylaws and Resolutions Committee within thirty (30) days after the conference."

The District 4 By-laws Committee recommends that the Board use the same "majority of voting members" structure for the following proposals. That is, if more than 50% of the board voting members approve Items #1 – 3, then the proposal will be sent to the Clubs for consideration at the District conference. For Item #4, if more than 50% of the board voting members recommend that it does not need further study, then this motion will be sent to the clubs for consideration at the District conference. This follows the process outlined in Article XIX, Section 2.

The following are the relevant provisions of the current documents with the words to be deleted or substituted ~~crossed out~~ on the left hand side and the proposed changes and/or additions underlined on the right hand side. The rationale for each amendment is provided by the proposer.

Item #1: Proposed by the District 4 By-laws committee

**REVISED BYLAW MOTION (to align with the membership definition change)
Article IV Members, Section 2. Clubs (b) Diversity of Classifications**

Current Wording	Proposed Wording
(1) Each club shall have members actively engaged in a variety of classifications. The minimum number of classifications shall equal one-fourth (1/4) the total number of members in the club. No club shall be required to have members actively engaged in more than twenty-five (25) classifications.	(1) Each club shall have members actively engaged in or <u>with experience in</u> a variety of classifications. The minimum number of classifications shall equal one-fourth (1/4) the total number of members in the club. No club shall be required to have members actively engaged in or <u>have experience in</u> more than twenty-five (25) classifications.

Rationale:

In 2008, the membership voted to change the experience requirement for Classified members in **Article XIV, Clubs, Section 2. Members. (b) Classified Member** from "shall be actively engaged in" to "shall be actively engaged in or have

experience in". **Article IV Members, Section 2. Clubs (b) Diversity of Classifications** refers to the experience requirement but was not up-dated in 2008 to be consistent with the experience requirement as defined in Article XIV, Section 2. This by-law change will correct this discrepancy.

Item #2: Proposed by the District 4 By-laws committee

**NEW BY-LAW MOTION: to address re-visiting new & amended by-laws
 Article XIX, Amendment to Bylaws SECTION 1. Amendment. New Section (e)
 or: NEW SECTION 6: Amendments to Amendments**

Current Wording	Proposed Wording
NONE	Once a by-law is amended by the membership through due process at a Zonta International Convention, no proposal to reverse that amended by-law to its previous form may be brought forward for at least 2 bienniums (4 years), unless significant evidence of harm to the objects and future of Zonta International can be objectively proven. In such cases, it will be the responsibility of the Zonta International By-laws and Nominations Committee to assess the provided evidence and to decide whether or not to present the reversal amendment to the Convention.

Rationale

As by-law changes to a current by-law are not undertaken lightly, reversing them to the original version shortly after being revised should be avoided where feasible. This by-law proposal would require an amended by-law to be in place for a set period of 2 bienniums (4 years) after being changed, before any proposal to reverse the changed by-law to its original version could be considered. Clubs need to be encouraged to invest in the effort to implement by-law changes without uncertainty as to the longevity of a by-law change. Once the membership democratically decides to amend a by-law, it may take a matter of a few months for the change to be fully communicated and a number of years for the change to be implemented fully and its impact understood and measured. This by-law change would require an amended by-law to be in place for a minimum of 2 bienniums (4 years) before a motion could be considered to reverse it to its original form. This means, for instance, if a by-law is amended at the Zonta International Convention in 2012, a motion to reverse it could not be considered until after the 2016 convention

However, we must also recognize that unforeseen negative consequences of a by-law change could develop. If these should create a serious risk or significant harm to ZI, a change could be proposed sooner than the 2 biennium limit. It would be up to the proposing District or International Board to gather and present the evidence of this harm. Such evidence would be assessed by the ZI By-Laws and Resolution Committee, to determine whether or not the amendment should be brought forward sooner than the 2 biennium time frame.

Item #3: Proposed by the District 4 By-laws committee

NEW GLOSSARY DEFINITION - MOTION

Have experience in

Current Wording	Proposed Wording
none	Member was Actively Engaged in a Classification, by working at least 50 percent of a normal work week in the business or profession represented by that classification, but is currently not working at the "at least 50 percent" level.

Rationale:

In 2008, the membership voted to change the experience requirement for Classified members in **Article XIV, Clubs, Section 2. Members. (b) Classified Member** from "shall be actively engaged in" to "shall be actively engaged in or have experience in". The Glossary did not define "have experience in". As noted at the 2008 convention, the intent was to allow membership to individuals who at one time were actively engaged as per the Zonta International definition, but are currently not working that amount of time per week, for one of many reasons. Specifying this intent in the Glossary will formalize the interpretation and retain flexibility for Clubs to apply this definition to best reflect the circumstances in their geographic area.

Item #4: Proposed by the Zonta Club of Kitchener-Waterloo

Moved and Carried by more than the required 2/3rd of the members of the Zonta Club of Kitchener-Waterloo on February 16, 2011: Motion: To submit to District 4, a proposal to change the glossary Reference from "Chairman" to "Chair", in the Zonta International Governing Documents Rules of Procedure, as presented.

The Glossary Reference (page 51) to **Chairman** shall be changed to:

Current Wording for Chairman	Proposed Wording
Chairman One who presides over an assembly, meeting, committee or board. Proper to use and has no sexist connotation. (Chairperson is not recommended and should not be used unless and organization's bylaws specify this term).	<u>Chair</u> One who presides over an assembly, meeting, committee or board <u>shall be called the chair.</u> <u>All references in Zonta International Governing Documents shall be adjusted to reflect this definition.</u>

Rationale:

As an international organization whose mission is to advance the status of women worldwide, we have the responsibility to show leadership and seek every opportunity to model non-sexist language and processes. As stated by Michelle Bachelet, Executive director of UN Women, "Gender Equality must become a lived reality". One way to support this, is to be attentive to the words we use. While the current

Zonta International Governing Document glossary says the word chairman "has no sexist connotation", in many English-speaking countries that is not the case. Often the assumption when the word chairman is used, is that the person is male. It is a form of discrimination that an organization with our values and mission should work towards eliminating.

At the previous Convention, the definition in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 10th Edition (2000) (RONR) was used as the reason for keeping the term "chairman" throughout our ZI by-laws. In that version, Robert's Rules stated that that "chair is the official place or station of the presiding officer" (RONR p. 21) and the chairman is an individual. At that Convention, Zonta International also stated that "we want to continue to make this distinction". Given our values, that should not be true. In addition, the 21st Century Robert's Rules of Order that we have consulted uses only the word chair, not chairman, and states in the glossary "Chair - Presiding officer of an organization, usually the same as the president. The chair may also be called president or presiding officer depending on the will of the majority of people in an organization."

Regardless of the version of Robert's Rules being used, we should also remember that our by-laws take first precedence in our Parliamentary Authority, with *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 10th Edition (2000) taking third precedence. Consequently, Robert's Rules should not be the driving guide for our Governing Documents when our values differ from the Robert's Rules guidance.

Given that the Zonta International Governing Documents are electronically based and are re-printed every biennium, the time and cost of this change is not significant relative to the benefit and impact of clearly using gender-neutral language in English, the official language of Zonta International.