

ABA Program Committee Chair Succession, Selection, and Leadership Continuity Policy

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Purpose

The American Burn Association is committed to ensuring leadership continuity, transparency, and strategic alignment in the selection and transition of the Program Committee Chair. This policy establishes a structured process for identifying, selecting, and onboarding a Program Chair-Elect who will shadow the sitting Program Chair for one year before assuming the Program Chair role.

The goal is to support continuity in Annual Meeting planning, preserve institutional knowledge, strengthen succession planning, and ensure alignment with ABA's Mission, Vision, Values, Strategic Plan, and multidisciplinary membership.

1. Program Chair

The Program Committee shall be led by a Program Chair selected in accordance with ABA Bylaws and governance policies.

The Program Chair retains overall responsibility for the educational framework, structure, and content direction of the ABA Annual Meeting, as delegated by the Board of Trustees.

The Program Chair works in collaboration with ABA staff, the Program Committee, Associate Directors, Scientific Review Subgroup, and other appropriate ABA leadership to develop a high-quality, multidisciplinary scientific and educational program.

2. Program Chair-Elect

To support continuity of leadership and strategic succession planning, ABA shall maintain a Program Chair-Elect.

The Program Chair-Elect shall serve a one-year shadowing term before assuming the role of Program Chair. During this year, the Program Chair-Elect shall actively participate in Program Committee planning activities to support continuity, institutional knowledge transfer, and alignment with ABA's strategic priorities.

ABA Program Committee Chair Succession, Selection, and Leadership Continuity Policy

The Chair-Elect year is intended to function as a mentored apprenticeship, not a co-leadership arrangement. Final decision-making authority remains with the sitting Program Chair unless specifically delegated.

3. Leadership Cycle

The Program Chair-Elect shall begin service at the close of the ABA Annual Meeting Business Meeting and shall shadow the sitting Program Chair for one full planning cycle.

Role	Duration	Term Begins
Program Chair-Elect	1 year	Close of Annual Meeting Business Meeting
Program Chair, Year 1	1 year	Following Chair-Elect year
Program Chair, Year 2	1 year	Continuation
Program Chair, Year 3	1 year	Final year of Chair service; successor Chair-Elect shadows

4. Chair-Elect Responsibilities

During the shadowing year, the Program Chair-Elect shall:

- Participate in Program Committee planning activities;
- Attend Board of Trustees meetings (in a non-voting capacity);
- Attend required planning sessions, including the Annual Meeting transition meeting and in-person working sessions;
- Observe and assist with proposal review, abstract review, scorecard development, conflict-of-interest resolution, and Board-related interactions;
- Work with ABA staff to understand operational workflows, platform management, deadlines, accreditation requirements, and staff responsibilities;
- Receive orientation to the Board responsibilities associated with the Program Chair role;
- Develop familiarity with the Associate Director structure and Scientific Review Sub-Workgroup;
- Support continuity between planning cycles;
- Refrain from exercising final decision-making authority unless specifically delegated by the sitting Program Chair.

ABA Program Committee Chair Succession, Selection, and Leadership Continuity Policy

5. Eligibility and Preferred Qualifications

The Program Chair role shall be open to qualified ABA members regardless of professional discipline, consistent with ABA's multidisciplinary mission and commitment to inclusive leadership.

Candidates should demonstrate the following qualifications:

- **ABA service and engagement**
Prior service on the Annual Program Committee is strongly preferred but not required. Other meaningful ABA committee, SIG, educational, scientific, or governance service may also be considered.
- **Educational or scientific program experience**
Experience with educational planning, adult learning, abstract review, CME/CE accreditation, scientific programming, or meeting development is strongly preferred.
- **Multidisciplinary credibility**
Candidates should demonstrate the ability to work effectively across the physician, clinical, research, rehabilitation, nursing, psychosocial, fire service, survivor, administrative, and other professional disciplines that make up ABA's membership. Physician experience is preferred but is not required if equivalent qualifications and credibility are demonstrated.
- **Leadership capacity**
Candidates should demonstrate the ability to chair groups, manage competing priorities, make fair and timely decisions, and lead through collaboration and influence.
- **Availability and commitment**
Candidates must be able to commit the time required for the role, including regular planning calls, peak-period review activities, in-person planning meetings, and Board of Trustees participation associated with the Program Chair role.
- **Conflict of interest standards**
Candidates must be free of significant conflicts of interest that would impair their ability to lead the Annual Meeting planning process objectively and in accordance with ABA policies.

6. Relationship to Board Officer Succession

ABA Program Committee Chair Succession, Selection, and Leadership Continuity Policy

The Program Chair role shall not be considered an automatic pathway to a Board officer position.

- Service as Program Chair may be considered as part of a member's overall ABA leadership record, but it does not create an assumed or expected succession path to ABA officer roles, including President, President-Elect, Treasurer, or Secretary.
- The ABA Nominating Committee retains responsibility for evaluating candidates for Board and officer positions in accordance with ABA Bylaws and governance policies.

7. Selection Process

Step 1: Call for Nominations

ABA shall issue a call for nominations and self-nominations for Program Chair-Elect in accordance with the regular governance and nominations cycle.

The call shall be open for at least 15 business days and shall include the role description, eligibility criteria, term expectations, time commitment, selection process, and evaluation criteria.

Candidates shall be asked to submit:

- Professional discipline and credentials;
- ABA leadership and service history;
- Statement of interest and leadership vision for the Annual Meeting;
- Relevant educational, scientific, or program planning experience;
- Two references or endorsements.

Step 2: Staff Preparation

ABA staff shall compile candidate materials and prepare a summary grid that includes candidate qualifications, ABA service history, relevant experience, and any other information needed to support review.

ABA Program Committee Chair Succession, Selection, and Leadership Continuity Policy

Step 3: Program Chair Advisory Review

A Program Chair Advisory Review Group may provide input to the Nominating Committee regarding candidate qualifications and readiness.

The advisory review group may include:

Member	Role
Current Program Chair	Provides programmatic perspective and assessment
Immediate Past Program Chair or designee, if available	Provides continuity and historical perspective
Senior Director, Education and Scientific Affairs	Supports process; educational innovations, accreditation guidance, budgetary support, and is a non-voting staff role
CEO or designee	Supports governance and budgetary alignment, non-voting staff role
President Elect	Provides guidance and support for future planning

Members of the advisory review group who are candidates must recuse themselves from candidate discussion and evaluation.

The advisory review group may identify a recommended candidate and alternate for consideration by the Nominating Committee. This recommendation is advisory and does not replace the authority of the Nominating Committee or Board of Trustees.

Step 4: Nominating Committee Review

The Nominating Committee shall review candidate materials, consider input from the advisory review group, and make its recommendation in accordance with ABA Bylaws and governance policies.

Step 5: Board Approval and Membership Vote

The recommended candidate shall be presented through the appropriate governance process, including Board approval and membership vote as required by ABA Bylaws.

Step 6: Announcement and Onboarding

ABA Program Committee Chair Succession, Selection, and Leadership Continuity Policy

The Program Chair-Elect Takes office at the ABA Annual Meeting Business Meeting and shall begin the shadowing year immediately thereafter.

ABA staff shall coordinate formal onboarding, including:

- Role documentation;
- Planning calendar;
- Introduction to Associate Directors and Scientific Review Sub-Workgroup leadership;
- Orientation to Annual Meeting planning workflows;
- Overview of accreditation requirements;
- Board role orientation;
- Review of conflict-of-interest and confidentiality expectations.

8. Selection Timeline

Timing	Activity
9–10 months before Annual Meeting	Candidate identification and call for nominations begins
Mid-August or regular nominations cycle	Program Chair-Elect nominations open with broader governance nominations
6–7 months before Annual Meeting	Candidate review and advisory input provided
Fall	Nominating Committee review and Board consideration
December	Electronic membership vote, as required by Bylaws
December/January	Program Chair-Elect is announced with other newly-elected Board Members
April Annual Meeting	Program Chair-Elect takes office at Business Meeting and begins shadowing

9. Transition and Continuity

The sitting Program Chair, Program Chair-Elect, ABA staff, and relevant Program Committee leaders shall participate in a structured transition process following the Annual Meeting.

The transition should include review of:

- Annual Meeting evaluation results;
- Abstract and session submission trends;
- Program Committee structure;

ABA Program Committee Chair Succession, Selection, and Leadership Continuity Policy

- Associate Director roles;
- Scientific Review Sub-Workgroup performance;
- Accreditation and conflict-of-interest issues;
- Board feedback;
- Staff operational lessons learned;
- Strategic priorities for the next Annual Meeting cycle.

10. Policy Review

This policy should be reviewed periodically by ABA leadership, staff, and the appropriate governance body to ensure it remains aligned with ABA Bylaws, governance policies, Annual Meeting needs, and the strategic direction of the Association.