



Report of the Long-Range Planning Task Force

This Task Force was established by the current National Council to carry out strategic planning for the future of the Guild. We began the process at the October 2008 National Council meeting in New York. We then engaged a Michigan non-profit consulting firm, Arts Enterprise, to facilitate a brainstorming session with the entire Council at its April 2009 meeting in Ann Arbor. Information gleaned from that session and from private interviews with Councillors was used to create a detailed questionnaire on the goals and priorities of the AGO. This was refined by the Task Force over the fall, then sent out via the online Survey Monkey to a group of national leaders and committee members for "beta testing." The 81 responses to that survey were used to further refine the questionnaire, which was sent out in November through Survey Monkey to all AGO members for whom we had e-mail addresses. A similar questionnaire was e-mailed to a data base of lapsed members a few weeks later.

The Task Force has spent several months compiling and analyzing the results of these three surveys, which represent a gold mine of material relevant to the present and future of the Guild. We were amazed to receive nearly 3,000 replies to the member survey, and we also heard from 417 lapsed members. This report summarizes our findings from those surveys, including action recommendations. Boxes and graphs of the results have been presented to the National Council and are available from Headquarters upon request.

Our recommendations relate not only to the structure of the Guild, but more important, to how we serve our members. To ensure that these proposals are not merely disseminated and then forgotten, we are asking the incoming Council to extend the Task Force for another two-year term or convert it to a standing committee. We would like to serve as a resource for implementation of the actions recommended in the report, both with the National Council and with regional and chapter leaders. To that end, we are also proposing a National Leadership Conference to be held in New York in the fall of 2011.

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General Findings

Responses to the long-range planning survey are listed in order of the questionnaire. For each question, the Summary presents the salient results from all three survey groups: members, lapsed members, and AGO leaders. Conclusions are those drawn from the survey by the Long-Range Planning Task Force. The AGO committees and officials who should be responsible for implementing each set of recommendations are identified, with the primary responsibility denoted in boldface type. The most important action recommendations are summarized after the general findings.

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1. If the AGO were to be started today, what groups should it primarily serve?

Summary:

Church and synagogue organists, organ students, and organ teachers were the top responses among all three groups. Organbuilders and theater and concert hall organists were also identified by a majority of all three groups, but were decidedly in a second tier. Choral conductors and other church and synagogue musicians were well behind.

Conclusions:

After considerable discussion, it was decided that we were, after all, the American Guild of *Organists*, and that is our core membership. Choral conductors have the ACDA, and almost every religious denomination has its own organization, such as the Anglican Association of Musicians or the Presbyterian Association of Musicians. We might work toward strengthening our relationships with these organizations, but our primary goal should be to serve the needs of organists.

Refer to:

Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support, Task Force on the Part-Time Church Musician.

2. What groups of people not listed above should also be targeted for membership in the AGO?

Summary:

Organ enthusiasts and lovers of organ music were the only groups targeted by a sizable majority of each group. Far behind were lovers of classical music, church and synagogue choir members, non-organist classical musicians, members of other musical organizations, and other members of churches and synagogues.

Conclusions:

We already have AMIGOs to target organ enthusiasts and lovers of organ music. The AGO might consider offering joint memberships to clergy and musicians who serve the same organizations. Directors of Worship could be added to this category.

Refer to:

Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support, Committee on Professional Networking and Public Relations.

3. How would you describe the importance to you of the following reasons for belonging to the AGO?

Summary:

"Interest in organs and organ music" was the top response among both members and lapsed members, but was second to "Interaction with colleagues" for AGO leaders. *The American Organist* magazine (TAO) was less important to lapsed members than to current members and leaders. Professional support was also relatively important to all three groups, followed by continuing education and conventions.

4. What is the most important reason for not renewing your membership in the AGO?

Summary:

This question was addressed only to lapsed members. By far the leading answer was "Too expensive," followed by "Haven't gotten around to it."

5. What would make you more likely to renew your membership?

Summary:

Again, this question was addressed to lapsed members. A substantial majority answered "Reduce dues," but more than a third chose "Provide more programs and opportunities for part-time musicians."

Conclusions:

We all felt that it was crucial to develop a culture of hospitality at chapter meetings. We recognize that like-minded members attend chapter meetings, but stress the need to demonstrate an attitude of openness and welcome to all.

Refer to:

Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support, Task Force on the Part-Time Church Musician.

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1. How would you rate the following AGO programs, services, and member benefits in terms of their importance to you?

Summary:

TAO was ranked most important by the members and AGO leaders, but behind job listings by the lapsed members. Chapter programming was ranked second by the members and leaders, but fourth by the lapsed members. Educational resources and

professional education were also highly important to the members and lapsed members, but ranked behind professional networking, conventions, the AGO Web site, and Pipe Organ Encounters among the leaders.

Conclusions:

Portions of TAO should be made available online to appeal to even more potential members. Education, chapter programs, and conventions continue to be appreciated by substantial numbers of members, but job listings are an important recruitment tool for non-members.

Refer to:

Editorial Resources Board, Councillor for Education, Councillor for Professional Development, Councillor for Conventions, Councillor for Competitions and New Music, Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support, Regional Councillors.

2. What programs, services, or member benefits not currently offered would you like to see the AGO implement?

Summary:

Discounts on printed music and recordings were overwhelmingly popular among all three groups. A majority also listed summer conferences for part-time church musicians and online interactive educational programs.

Conclusions:

We explored the possibility of designating a music store for each region that would offer discounts on printed music to AGO members. For example, the Musical Source in Washington DC will offer discounts of 10% on most organ music and 10-20% on choral music for musicians serving religious organizations who identify themselves as AGO members. In addition, there is a significant interest in both in-person and online programs for continuing education of part-time musicians.

Refer to:

Committee on Educational Resources, Committee on Professional Education, Task Force on the Part-Time Church Musician, New Technology Committee, Committee on Professional Networking and Public Relations, Headquarters staff.

3. Should the AGO change the way dues are collected, so that Headquarters would receive dues from all members and remit the chapter portions electronically to each chapter, instead of the current practice whereby chapters collect the dues and remit a portion to the national organization?

Summary:

Most members and lapsed members were unsure or had no opinion, whereas national leaders were almost evenly divided between "no," "not sure," and "yes."

Conclusions:

With substantial uncertainty reflected in the answers to this question, the staff and leadership obviously have an educational task ahead of them if this change is to be

implemented. Nevertheless, we feel it is an essential step if the AGO is to improve its efficiency and service to both members and chapters.

Refer to:

Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support, Treasurer, Regional Councillors, New Technology Committee, Headquarters staff.

4. Should the AGO articulate a policy on the types of instruments (keyboard or other) appropriate for worship?

Summary:

A clear majority of all three groups said "no."

5. Should the AGO articulate a policy on styles of music appropriate for worship?

Summary:

Again, a substantial majority of all three groups responded "no."

6. What should be the relationship between the AGO and organized religion?

Summary:

A sizable majority of each group selected "The AGO should work cordially with, but independently of, organized religion." Lapsed members were somewhat more likely than members or leaders to choose the second-leading response, "The AGO should work closely with organized religion on joint programs wherever possible." Only a few respondents in any group said "The AGO should have no formal relationship with organized religion."

Conclusions:

No action required on these three issues.

Refer to:

Committee on Seminary and Denominational Relations.

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1. How should the AGO best inform and communicate with the general public?

Summary:

All three groups supported use of the AGO Web site, publicizing and supporting chapter programs as well as regional and national conventions, placement of online videos on sites such as YouTube, and press releases sent from Headquarters. Lapsed members were more likely to favor electronic communication, while national officers strongly favored publicity for regional and national conventions and targeted public-relations efforts. Organ Spectacular was highly ranked among the AGO leadership, but not among

the members and lapsed members. Prerecorded public-service announcements and paid advertising fared poorly in all three surveys.

Additional ideas from all three surveys tended to focus upon several themes:

- Becoming a presence on National Public Radio.
- Creating an advertising campaign similar to the United Methodist Church's "Reaching Hearts – Reaching Minds".
- Finding one or more celebrities to highlight the organ on TV.
- Using Twitter and other social-networking programs.
- Networking with sister organizations, particularly seminaries.

Conclusions:

Recommendations for making more use of the AGO Web site and online videos were balanced by a strong desire for greater publicity and support for chapter programs as well as regional and national conventions. Live streaming of selected events at national conventions should be considered.

Refer to:

Councillor for Communication, Committee on Professional Networking and Public Relations, Committees on National and Regional Conventions, Regional Councillors.

2. How should the AGO best communicate and coordinate with other musical and denominational organizations?

Summary:

The clear message from all three survey segments was to support joint programs, conventions, and other projects to be arranged between the AGO and other musical organizations. Likewise, there was strong support for shared advertising in journals of related organizations and the addition of those organizations to the AGO mailing list for press releases. Members favored exhibiting at other organizations' trade shows to a much greater extent than did the national leadership. All three groups displayed a lack of enthusiasm for reciprocal memberships, communication between staff and volunteer leadership of related organizations, and addition of other organizations to the mailing list for TAO. Although the write-in responses in all three surveys supported jointly sponsored conventions between the AGO and other musical organizations, there were comments both for and against potential relationships with denominational organizations.

Conclusions:

Since the strongest membership support was for joint conventions and other shared programming, these opportunities should be considered when planning AGO regional and national conventions. Shared advertising with related organizations should be continued and expanded.

Refer to:

Committees on National and Regional Conventions, Committee on Professional Networking and Public Relations, Editorial Resources Board, Regional Councillors.

3. What kinds of media should the AGO employ to communicate with its membership?

Summary:

There was universal support for providing online content through the AGO Web site, with the strongest support coming from the AGO leadership. Lapsed members favored Web site and E-zine options by a factor of 15-20% greater than TAO, perhaps because they no longer receive TAO. Among the general membership, TAO in its current format held first place, followed closely by online content through the AGO Web site. There were many individual and impassioned suggestions for larger type and easier legibility in TAO, along with a wider spectrum of content to reflect both more scholarly content and practical material for the part-time musician.

Other options such as blogs, social-networking sites, online member forums, and recorded telephone messages scored low among all three categories of respondents. Likewise, there was faint support for a new, revised format for TAO or a new AGO scholarly journal, although there were numerous individual requests and suggestions for improvement of TAO.

Conclusions:

With TAO and the AGO Web site ranking foremost among all three groups of respondents, it behooves the Guild to focus primary and immediate attention on those areas. A full-time staff Director of Communications with IT skills is a necessity.

Refer to:

Councillor for Communication, Editorial Resources Board, New Technology Committee, Personnel Committee, Committee on Professional Networking and Public Relations.

4. How important is it to you that you receive *The American Organist* monthly as opposed to less often?

5. How important is it that you receive *The American Organist* in printed form rather than electronically?

Summary:

Members and AGO leaders registered a strong desire to receive TAO monthly and in printed form. Lapsed members were undecided about the importance of monthly publication; nevertheless, 41.1% of the lapsed members still felt it very important to receive TAO in printed form, compared to 32.1% who felt it was not important.

Conclusions:

The perceived need for a printed format superseded the need for a monthly publication among all three survey groups. If a publication change were required, the membership would be more willing to accommodate less frequent receipt of TAO rather than having to read it online. Still, some departments of TAO could be moved to online publication.

Refer to:

Editorial Resources Board, New Technology Committee.

6. How would you rate the following departments of TAO in terms of their importance to you?**Summary:**

Three departments were rated very important by all three groups: Articles, New Organs, and Positions Available. AGO leaders were the only respondents to rate two other departments, Pippings and Reviews, as very important.

In all three surveys, every department not rated very important was scored as somewhat important. The only exception was that the AGO leaders scored Easy Service Music as not important—in clear contrast to the lapsed members, who rated Easy Service Music as very important.

The following are representative of the 134 additional comments in the member survey:

- More instructional performance practice type information for those who are organists that do not have a master's or higher degree, but play at an advanced level. Also more instructional information on service playing, hymn playing, improvisation, etc.
- What is an article vs. commentary? Haig Mardirosian is always very good.
- Publishing once every two months is fine, especially if you supplement with online material. Try to prioritize what comes in print.
- As a past Dean I was always looking to AGO Chapter News to see what other chapters were doing; this would not need to be published if it were available in some format. The same is true for the Calendar and Recitals. Availability on a set schedule on the website would be equally effective.
- Articles, opinions, and ideas with "meat" in them!
- Need more articles of use to church musicians!
- Positions available out of date—use website instead.

Conclusions:

Most members and lapsed members rate articles, information about new organs, and positions available as the most important features of TAO. In the process of envisioning the future of TAO, these departments should be considered central, but every effort should be expended to advance the other departments to the same level of involved attention.

Positions Available should be moved online to keep them up to date. Chapter News, Calendar, and Recitals should also be moved online. Pippings should be condensed in the printed TAO, with the full section available online. Content should be added for the part-time organist, including reviews of liturgical publications, anthems, and accessible music; and instructional materials on service playing, organ repertoire, accompanying, conducting, etc.

Refer to:

Editorial Resources Board, Councillor for Education, New Technology Committee, Task Force on the Part-Time Church Musician.

1. How important to you is the location of Headquarters?

Summary:

An overwhelming majority of all three groups felt the location of Headquarters was unimportant. A sample comment: "Location is not 'unimportant' but is less important than it used to be when most of the organ schools were in the East.

2. Are your needs being well served by having a headquarters in New York City?

Summary:

Members and lapsed members obviously did not have sufficient information to answer this question: members registered 57.8% unsure, and lapsed members 65.9% unsure. In contrast, the national leaders voted almost equally in the affirmative (30.9%), the negative (30.9%), and the uncertain (38.3%). Therefore, the responses to the subsequent question might better indicate the sentiments of the membership.

3. Whether Headquarters remains in New York City or not, what criteria should govern the selection of the best location?

Summary:

All three survey groups selected the same top four responses: cost of office space and equipment, cost of staff salaries and benefits, cost of transportation and housing for meetings, and cost of living. National leaders selected these answers with higher frequency than the members, who in turn chose the same answers with higher frequency than the lapsed members.

Some representative comments:

- Why not move just across the river? You would probably save a bundle.
- Speaking candidly as a Midwesterner, New York has much to commend it, but it is overrated. The ACDA for example is HQ'd in Oklahoma, which to my mind makes it an organization for Everyman. AGO HQ seems like a subsidiary of the New York Chapter, and seems not very concerned with music-making anywhere else.
- New Yorkers think it's the center of the universe; it's not. Back when founded, most of the AGO members were either New Yorkers or Easterners. Now they're superseded by members from the rest of our *large* U.S. Perceived dominance by Eastern Elite may hamper membership expansion. [a Californian]
- The expenses need to be brought down because it's costing too much to be a member.
- One should look at the costs of NYC—not reasonable plus it is not centrally located. Many other companies have relocated into cheaper areas. We need to be aware of our costs.
- For those that need to travel to headquarters a full service airport is a must—thus, avoid those airports that only have one or two airlines and no competition: too expensive. Good support staff is available everywhere; so is good office

space and equipment, and our membership is throughout the entire country. High marks for asking this question.

- In this national organization, Headquarters should be situated in an area reflecting median American cost/value relationship.
- ACDA is thriving and they are located in OK; come on now—make the move!
- For the health of the Guild nationally, I feel a central location is essential. Costs would be cut tremendously (if near an excellent airport such as Dallas) and those monies saved could be channeled to more significant needs.

Conclusions:

While the national membership was uncertain and national leaders were divided about whether their needs were being well served by Headquarters' location in New York City, the respondents uniformly identified the same four criteria to govern the selection of the best location for a headquarters. Although this is not a high priority for the membership, cost being the primary concern, we recommend that once every 10 years a Task Force be appointed to analyze relative costs for headquarters operations in representative American cities and to prepare a recommendation to Council.

Refer to:

Long-Range Planning Committee, Budget Committee, Personnel Committee.

4. How often do you attend chapter meetings or events?

Summary:

As would be anticipated, AGO leaders reported the most frequent attendance at chapter meetings and events, with none reporting rare or no attendance. It is perhaps surprising that 35.7% of lapsed members reported some level of attendance at chapter meetings. Among the general membership, nearly twice as many members reported attending six or more chapter events per year (32.2%) as reported rare or no attendance (17.0%). The greatest percentage of members (50.9%) reported attending chapter functions between one and five times per year.

Conclusions:

Approximately one-third of the membership is deeply connected to chapter programming, while another half are moderately committed. A smaller number appear to have little or no relationship to chapter life. Cross-referencing shows a strong correlation between those who attend chapter meetings frequently and those who are active in other Guild activities such as conventions and certification.

Refer to:

Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support, Regional Councillors.

5. How can the AGO improve chapter vitality and the ability of chapters to engage the general public?

Summary:

The two overarching foci of this category both concerned the search for new members, with a slight bias toward part-time musicians. AGO leaders favored national project grants for chapters as a close rival to the two leading categories. Many individual comments contained pleas for increased chapter programming focusing upon the skill and repertoire needs of the part-time organist. There were also many written comments pleading for a more hospitable culture to welcome part-time organists, those who play digital instruments, and those who have not taken advanced organ study. Chapter programming was mentioned frequently, with requests for greater quality and variety, as well as inclusion of relevant material for the part-time organist. There were requests for chapter programming suggestions from National, perhaps posted on the AGO Web site.

Some representative additional comments:

- Develop collegiality, friendliness, support—human things. I am a member because I want these things; will probably be less of a member because they are not there.
- Increase quality of programming.
- Recognize that many of us are part-time organists who play at small churches.
- This means we do not play pipe organs, but it does *not* mean that we can't.
- Think about attracting the many talented, effective musicians who serve small congregations ably and dependably.
- Different rates for full-time vs. part-time musicians.
- I think the biggest problem with the Guild at the moment is at the chapter level. How do individual chapters reinvent the “program wheel” every year to attract chapter members to events? Then, after reinventing that wheel, how do we publicize our events to get our chapter members there? If we can re-energize five “stagnant members” in every chapter, nationally, we will see a *huge* pickup in Guild interest and convention attendance. It is at the chapter level we must work.
- Brainstorming idea lists for local chapter programs; have a chapter operations “manual” online.
- Potential is infinite.

Conclusions:

Members identified the need to develop a culture of welcome or “radical hospitality” throughout the AGO, including chapters and at conventions. Assistance with creative ideas for chapter programming and publicity scored consistently within the second tier of responses among all three survey groups. Our recommendation is to develop an annual list of creative program ideas, culled from chapter reports and credited to those chapters, and distribute this list annually to chapter deans and program directors/sub-deans and/or post on the AGO Web site.

Refer to:

Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support, Committee on Educational Resources, Councillor for Communication, Committee on Professional Networking and Public Relations, Task Force on the Part-Time Church Musician, Regional Councillors, Development Committee.

6. How can the AGO make membership more appealing (or irresistible) to people born *since* 1980?

Summary:

This question obviously resonated with many members, as evidenced by the number and length of individual comments. There was unanimous support among all three survey groups for the goals of scholarships for organ study, discounts on printed music and recordings, mentoring programs, online interactive educational programs, and online social networking. AGO leaders did not share the strong support of lapsed members and many members for more affordable membership dues.

Some representative additional comments:

- Reduced costs for students at conventions.
- Dues are huge—it is a rather large investment compared to other organ-based organizations.
- Engage all membership in facing the future of religion and its music in a realistic and insightful way.
- More interaction with and programs for seminary professors and students.
- Collaboration with high school and university music departments.
- This is an issue that I believe is directly related to the problems churches and other volunteer organizations have these days—shrinking audiences, volunteers, congregations. How are churches dealing with this change? How are other arts organizations? The one thing that I think is a bad approach is to cheapen our mission in order to increase membership. I'd rather see a smaller, poorer, but solid-minded AGO than a "Facebook group"—a social badge that people wear and never do anything about.
- As a member born in 1983, the biggest draw for me is the love of the organ and the musical integrity of each chapter and its members. The key is to approach those who truly love the organ, i.e. students from colleges with organ programs.
- If the AGO could set up discounts with main publishing firms it would be a great way to attract serious organ students and professionals to the AGO.
- Learn to be friendly and invite young people to events.
- YouTube, showing young people playing organ.
- Continue to offer a free year of membership after attending a POE. Chapters should be encouraged to reach out to these new members—make contact with them, welcome them! I am an organist in my 20s (been in the AGO for almost 10 years now), just joined a larger-sized chapter in a major city, and haven't been officially "welcomed" by anyone! A younger person (younger than me, in their teens) is not going to feel their membership is valued unless someone tells them it is! The TAO could have a section that targets younger organists. The AGO should offer scholarships or subsidize organ studies for qualified need-based students. Just the other day, I heard from a young musician that they could not continue their organ lessons because they were too expensive.
- Have student representation on National Council.

Conclusions:

Every segment of the AGO should study carefully these responses. Among many actions, the Guild should address these matters:

- Work to establish online interactive educational programs.

- Develop agreements with publishers and distributors of printed music and recordings for discounts to AGO members.
- Foster a mentoring program through every chapter.
- Publicize chapters that offer scholarships.
- Add a student member (voice without vote) to National Council.
- Make a comparative study of dues rates in related organizations such as OHS and ATOS.
- Study the possibility of installment payments for dues.
- Consider multiple-year discounts for general membership dues.

Refer to:

Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support, Councillor for Education, Committee on Educational Resources, Councillor for Communication, Task Force on the Part-Time Church Musician, Budget Committee, Development Committee, Regional Councillors, National Nominating Committee.

7. How can the AGO make membership more appealing (or irresistible) to people born in 1980 or before?

Summary:

The three survey groups identified the same top three priorities—discounts on printed music and recordings, more affordable membership dues, and online interactive educational programs—but in a different order. Members and lapsed members were more likely than AGO leaders to focus on the affordability of dues.

The following list represents the many additional comments:

- More chapter programming aimed at helping the part-time, less-trained organist grow in his/her skills.
- Change dynamics of chapters (difficult to do). Same people do the same things consistently; do not feel welcome in the clique.
- Membership dues are necessary, but maintaining an affordable level is important.
- Help them face the future and not be afraid of the changes coming to religion.
- OK, how about tiered membership dues? First 5 years, 100% expense; 6-10 years membership= 10% discount; 11-20 years = 15% discount; 21+ years 25% off?
- A superactive Web site.
- Support for "small church" musicians, some of whom need mentoring, some of whom just need encouragement.
- Redesign TAO. It looks extremely dated compared to other journals and magazines.
- Members of local chapters *must* be more friendly to *all* who are involved in sacred music, including praise band members, part-time organists who don't have degrees from Eastman or Oberlin, etc., or who don't play on historically oriented trackers or 100+ rank Austins and Schoensteins.
- More and more widespread POEs directed toward adults.
- More true professional/scholarly focus.
- Focus the Guild on typical church musicians, rather than on professional organists in big churches, with huge pipe organs, and choirs with paid members.

Conclusions:

While the additional comments indicate a wide range of concerns, respondents focused on financial considerations. The AGO should consider the steps listed under Question 6 above, with an emphasis on developing agreements with publishers and distributors of printed music and recordings for discounts to AGO members.

Refer to:

Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support, Budget Committee, Committee on Educational Resources, Task Force on the Part-Time Church Musician, Regional Councillors.

8. How can the AGO more actively engage and serve church musicians in part-time employment?**Summary:**

The universal leading response among all survey groups was "Support of chapter programs focusing on skills and career needs of part-time musicians," followed closely by "TAO articles focusing on skills and career needs of part-time musicians."

This question elicited a large number of individual responses, which covered a wide range of occasionally conflicting ideas and perceptions:

- The AGO needs to enforce general kindness guidelines of current AGO members toward new, young, or these "part-time" musicians; we're not doing ourselves any favors by treating these people unfavorably, or in some cases with contempt.
- Most church musicians and organists are part-time. However, the AGO seems to focus on the few "elite" professional type of musicians, both glorifying them and catering to them. There is a high level of "snobbiness" in the AGO. I am a professional with a doctoral degree as a physician. In my profession and its professional organization, there is much less "snobbiness" than in the AGO. I am also a college-trained musician who plays organ weekly in a large Anglican church.
- Encourage full-time church musicians to recognize difficulties in doing this part-time and maintaining any standards and balance with the other employment which is necessary to support the part-time church job.
- Could the local chapters assign certain members to be "introducers" at every chapter function? Wouldn't it be nice to attend your first chapter meeting, and walk away having met 20 new friends?
- Health column.
- Please find a way to tell local chapter personnel that part-time musicians serving small congregations are quite capable, although we do not play pipe organs. The snob factor, unfortunately, is alive, well, and quite subtle, and this mars interactions among colleagues. Thank you for asking the question! What about providing support for the LPM program (Leadership Program for Musicians Serving Small Congregations)?
- Active relations with denominational leaders and seminaries.
- Any sort of get-together for part-timers would be the best thing out there.
- Online ear training, or links (some already exist).

- Articles, information on library of anthems or organ music you should (must) have.
- More basic-level information in TAO and other publications.
- More review of accessible new organ music.
- The AGO needs to be careful that it does not convey an attitude that it is better and can show the way to part-time musicians.
- Regional conventions in particular need to keep the part-time church musician in mind when planning workshops and organ recitals. With the vast amount of repertoire available, why do recitalists have to play pieces that are above most part-time church musicians' heads? How about sharing music both in recital and in workshops that will aid the part-time church musician—not frighten them.
- The first and the last points are the winners! We do not do very well in helping hiring organizations or each other promote the national guidelines and/or use them effectively. We cannot dictate but we certainly can teach. Often our placement service is really a listing service; we must talk with the hiring institution, not just "cut and paste." The same is true with each other every time we hire a supply organist. You certainly are asking the right questions.
- Work with denominations to promote part-time positions as professional positions, not just hobbies.
- There are never part-time musicians; there are only part-time work positions.
- Scholarships for study with a qualified organ instructor. The instructor should be paid—not have to donate lessons for the "cause," even if the part-timer is getting paid.
- Starting in the spring, I will be teaching a class at a local college on wedding and funeral music in which the school is specifically targeting part-time church musicians; the first semester will be taught on campus, then all subsequent semesters I'll teach it online. I only mention not as a way of self-promotion, but as a way to demonstrate that education, reference works, and music (scores, MP3s, videos, etc.) could be presented in an organized fashion harnessed by the variety of tools available online.
- If you are going to have chapters outside large metropolitan areas, you are going to have 90+% part-time, avocational, and enthusiast organists.

Conclusions:

It is obvious that the AGO must pay careful and focused attention to the breadth of responses to this question in coming years, as increasingly more church-music positions become defined as part-time. Chapter programming and TAO articles focusing upon skills and career needs of part-time musicians are of paramount importance, joined by the need for an improved culture of welcome throughout all facets of Guild life, online interactive educational opportunities, and local weekend or summer conferences for part-time musicians. Chapters should consider adding "Greeters/Welcomers" as appointed positions.

Refer to:

Task Force on the Part-Time Church Musician, Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support, Editorial Resources Board, Councillor for Education, Committee on Educational Resources, Committees on National and Regional

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1. About how many AGO conventions have you attended?

Summary:

Of the AGO members, 33.2% had attended no regional conventions and 44.8% had attended no national conventions; only about 5% each had attended more than 10 regionals or 10 nationals. Of the lapsed members, 54.8% had attended no regionals and 65.2% had attended no nationals; only 2.4% had attended more than 10 regionals and 1.2% had attended more than 10 nationals. On the other hand, among the AGO leadership, 2.5% had attended no regionals and 9.0% had attended no nationals; about 23% each had attended more than 10 regionals or 10 nationals.

2. How could AGO conventions be improved?

Summary:

Among all AGO members, the most common suggestions for improving conventions were to offer more low-cost housing options, reduce costs of registration and transportation, focus more workshops on the skills and career needs of part-time musicians, offer workshop tracks based on skill level, present more repertoire master classes, and include more meals in registration fees. For lapsed members, the most common responses were to reduce costs of registration and transportation, offer more low-cost housing options, focus more workshops on the skills and career needs of part-time musicians, offer workshop tracks based on skill level, present more repertoire master classes, and include more meals in registration fees. Responses of the national leadership were similar to those of the entire membership in the top three—offer more low-cost housing options, reduce costs of registration and transportation, focus more workshops on the skills and career needs of part-time musicians—but diverged thereafter: build in more free time for meals and other activities, combine regional conventions whenever possible, combine conventions with opportunities for tourism, place more emphasis on choral skills and performances, and include more meals in registration fees.

Among AGO members who had attended no regional or national conventions, the suggestions for improving conventions were similar to those of the lapsed members: reduce costs of registration and transportation, offer more low-cost housing options, focus more workshops on the skills and career needs of part-time musicians, offer workshop tracks based on skill level, and include more meals in registration fees. On the other hand, 298 of the 673 possible respondents skipped this question. Responses of frequent national convention attendees (more than 10 attended) were similar to those of the national leadership: offer more low-cost housing options, focus more workshops on the skills and career needs of part-time musicians, build in more free time for meals and other activities, combine regional conventions whenever possible, offer workshop tracks based on skill level, reduce costs of registration and transportation, present more

repertoire master classes, place more emphasis on choral skills and performance, and include more meals in registration fees.

The least popular suggestions among AGO members were to make conventions longer, offer fewer worship options, place more emphasis on the performance and improvisation competitions, and present regional conventions less frequently. Among the write-in responses, many were enthusiastic, but others reflected a lack of understanding about what really happens at conventions. A number complained about high costs, and there were quite a few comments that the July 4 weekend is an inconvenient time for conventions. Comments about related musical and denominational conferences were mainly concerned with avoiding scheduling conflicts, although a few mentioned the benefits of combining a regional convention with, say, an OHS convention.

Conclusions:

AGO conventions serve a minority of the membership. That doesn't mean they should be curtailed; only 15.9% of the members surveyed said conventions were "not important" reasons for belonging to the AGO (Page 1, Question 3), although 26.2% of those who had never attended a national convention said conventions were unimportant. Other than some complaints about being held over holiday weekends, all groups of respondents—including members, lapsed members, national leaders, non-convention-goers, and frequent convention-goers—were fairly pleased with the current convention structure.

While conventions are an important source of revenue for the Guild, the most common suggestions for how conventions could be improved centered around the cost to the attendees. Responses from lapsed members and non-attendees indicate that some of them could be enticed to attend conventions if lower-cost options were made available. The National Council may want to consider a conscious decision to reduce revenue from national conventions in exchange for lower registration fees. Short of that, other possibilities for encouraging new attendees and improving the experience for current attendees include: offering scholarships to members for convention attendance, subsidized by sponsors or past convention surpluses; increasing discounts for seniors and students; promoting a shared-room option at the convention hotel; and offering more low-cost alternative housing. The other frequent suggestion that should be strongly considered by future conventions is to offer specific workshop tracks based on skill level, which might be attractive to part-time musicians and encourage more convention attendance. These tracks could be tied to preparation for Guild certification.

Refer to:

Committees on National and Regional Conventions, Committee on Professional Education, Budget Committee.

3. Which of the following AGO educational services have you personally used?

Summary:

About 45% of the AGO members had used regional or chapter educational programs, but fewer than 30% had used each of the national services listed, and 31.6% had not used any of the educational services. Only 29.5% of the lapsed members had used regional or chapter programs, while 45.3% had not used any AGO educational services. Usage figures were much higher among national leaders, as might be expected: 68.4%

had used regional or chapter programs, and 61.8% had used national educational resources.

4. Which AGO certification examinations have you taken?

Summary:

About 20% of the AGO members responding had taken at least one of the certification exams, with Service Playing leading at 10.8%. Of the lapsed members, only about 15% had taken any exams, with Service Playing again the most popular at 8.8%. Fully half of the national leadership had taken at least one of the certification exams.

5. Which AGO certificates do you hold?

Summary:

Results were similar to the previous question, but at lower frequencies. About 18% of the members responding held Guild certificates, with 9.7% having earned the Service Playing Certificate. Only 12% of the lapsed members held AGO certificates, including 7.5% with Service Playing. Nearly half of the national leaders held at least one certificate, with Colleague and Associate tied at 20.3%.

6. If you have not taken an AGO certification examination, what is your primary reason?

Summary:

Respondents were allowed to check only one answer. The clear choice among all three groups was "My academic degree qualifications are adequate." Among the members, 36.4% selected that answer, followed by "Certification doesn't apply to my situation," "Certification has little or no relevance on the job market," and "I haven't had time to prepare adequately." The lapsed members echoed these responses, although 12.3% said "I feel unqualified to pass an examination." National leaders were even more likely to choose "My academic degree qualifications are adequate" (56.5%), followed distantly by "Certification has little or no relevance on the job market" and "Certification doesn't apply to my situation."

Write-in responses generally echoed the survey choices, but some respondents blamed their own lack of motivation or said they were not organists. One suggested that the Guild use the marketing approach, "Save up to \$300K in degrees and get yourself certified with the AGO exam. It carries the same weight without the headache of paying Ole Sam Back!"

7. How could the AGO education and certification programs be improved?

Summary:

A majority of all three groups chose "Increase the awareness of AGO certificates among clergy, congregations, and the general public." "Offer online or printed certification study guides" was an even more popular suggestion among the lapsed members and was cited by more than 50% of the membership and of the leaders. Other popular responses were "Offer more resource materials for part-time musicians" and "Offer online interactive educational programs."

When only members who said they had taken a certification exam were considered, their responses were similar to those of the AGO leadership for "Increase the awareness of AGO certificates among clergy, congregations, and the general public" (68.9%), "Offer online or printed certification study guides" (58.9%), and "Offer online interactive educational programs" (44.5%). These exam takers, however, were more likely than the other groups to mention "Increase the prestige of AGO certification within the membership" (44.5%), "Offer more training materials and workshops on certification" (44.3%), and "Make the certification examinations more relevant to today's church musician" (42.5%).

Many of the write-in answers pointed to specific requirements that the respondents felt were outdated. Several suggested allowing universities to administer the tests. A few said the exams should not be "dumbed down," but others recommended scrapping the program altogether. Many respondents thought the exams were fine as they are.

Conclusions:

Regional and chapter educational programs reach nearly half of the membership, but national programs only about one-third. Only about one-fifth of the general membership have taken AGO certification exams, but that figure jumps to about one-half of the national leadership. Among AGO members, 31.5% felt the certification program was "not important" (Page 1, Question 3), but when only those who had taken exams were included, 56.1% thought the certification program was "very important."

Most of those who had not sought certification either felt that their academic qualifications were adequate or that the certificates were not relevant in today's job market. The greatest challenge facing the AGO education department is obviously selling the public and the membership on the relevance of certification. Updating the exams in terms of the skills required of today's organists and choir directors is an ongoing process, but that doesn't go far enough in terms of educating employers and colleagues. Aside from public relations, many respondents focused on the availability of online resources. Since a majority of the membership has not taken advantage of national education programs, the creation of online, interactive study guides could considerably broaden the base of participation, especially among part-time musicians. Both relevance and participation could also be enhanced by involving denominational organizations and universities more closely in the examination process (to include designing the exams).

Refer to:

Councillor for Education, New Technology Committee (for online learning), Task Force on the Part-Time Church Musician.

Page 6

1. In which of the following AGO competitions have you participated as a competitor, coordinator, or judge?

Summary:

More than 80% of the members had not participated in any competitions. Of those who had participated, the most (17%) had been involved in Regional Competitions for Young Organists. About 45% of the AGO leaders polled had participated in competitions in

some way, with 84% of those involved in RCYO. Only about 10% of the lapsed members had participated in any competitions.

2. How could AGO competitions be improved?

Summary:

A majority of all three groups recommended "Improve publicity for competitions." Next among members and lapsed members, but far behind, was "Present more performance competitions for new and young organists." Nearly two-thirds of the members skipped this question.

A typical response was that "competitions are great; just not an area of interest for me." Several members wrote that young organists should be encouraged to perform in more non-competitive venues. In general, the write-in remarks had little substance; some respondents thought competitions should be eliminated ("playing the organ is not a competitive sport"), but most had no opinion.

3. How could the AGO improve its procedures for commissioning new music?

Summary:

The leading response for all three groups was "Commission more music suitable for worship services." A strong second, especially among the leadership was "Encourage subsequent performances of commissioned works." Other common responses were "Commission pieces for performance outside of conventions," "Commission more music suitable for beginning organists," and "Improve publicity for performances of commissions and new music."

While several respondents commented that new music should not be "dumbed down" or that "major composers" should be sought out, many asked for more "usable" or "tonal" music that could be performed outside conventions. One respondent requested that the AGO "commission more music for the average or below average church choir."

Conclusions:

Fully 42.3% of the AGO members surveyed thought competitions were "not important" (Page 1, Question 3), and competitions also ranked near the bottom of reasons for belonging to the AGO among national leaders. Among members who had attended at least 10 national conventions, however, only 22.8% thought competitions were "not important." While competitions and new music obviously serve a small minority of the membership, they can be important vehicles for encouraging young organists and stimulating public interest in organ music.

There were few recommendations for changing the structure of AGO competitions or adding new levels. A high-school-level competition might be considered, perhaps as a separate track within the RCYO competition. The best advice of survey respondents seemed to be that the Guild should improve its publicity efforts for competitions and arrange more performance opportunities for the winners.

Every group of respondents thought more music suitable for worship services should be commissioned. National and convention new-music committees might want to consider publishing more of the "organ books" of service music that have been commissioned by some recent national and regional conventions, without stooping to simple but undistinguished music. Another frequent comment, especially among national leaders

and frequent convention-goers (62.3%), was that subsequent performances should be encouraged. The national New Music Committee has done some work on compiling a data base of AGO commissions; that project should be completed and made available to regions and chapters. Past commissions could be a gold mine for program committees.

Refer to:

Councillor for Competitions and New Music, Committee on New Music Competitions and Commissions.

4. Which of the following social-networking utilities do you use?

Summary:

Although nearly half of the members used none of the listed programs, 47.5% said they used Facebook. National leaders were not given "None" as an option, but showed a similar profile, with about half of the respondents indicating they used Facebook. Lapsed members were more active in social networks, with 57.2% using Facebook and only 37.0% responding "None."

Most of the write-in respondents indicated that they used only e-mail, but some said social networks were a "waste of time." A few mentioned YouTube or more specialized programs.

5. About how many hours per week do you spend online using these social utilities?

Summary:

At least a plurality of all three groups spent less than an hour a week on social networks. When responses to this question were cross-tabulated to eliminate nonusers, however, the typical social networker (ranging from 44.6% of Twitter users to 49.3% of LinkedIn users) was more likely to spend 1-5 hours a week.

6. Would you be interested in joining a "virtual" AGO chapter in addition to your local chapter?

Summary:

Opinions were divided on this question: about a third of the members, lapsed members, and AGO leaders said "yes," but an equivalent percentage checked "not sure/no opinion." Lapsed members were more likely than the others to be interested in joining virtual chapters. When only the actual users of social networks were included in the member responses, the results were much more positive: a majority of every social-networking group said they would be interested in joining a virtual chapter, ranging from 53.1% of Facebook users to 69.0% of Twitter users.

7. What potential benefits of a virtual chapter would be important to you?

Summary:

"Access to printed music" was the most popular potential benefit for members and lapsed members, but lagged behind among AGO leaders, who were more likely to be attracted by networking opportunities and discussion forums. Other popular responses

among AGO members were "Ability to associate with other organists without having to travel to meetings," "Online workshops/courses," "Discussion forums," "Sharing of educational resources," and "Networking opportunities." When only social-networking users were included, their responses were similar, with "Access to printed music" leading among users of MySpace (78.5%) and Facebook (71.2%) and "Discussion forums" among users of LinkedIn (73.3%) and Twitter (71.8%). Several write-in respondents welcomed the opportunity to interact with other members online, but many could see no benefit to a virtual chapter.

Conclusions:

Social networking may represent an opportunity to bring lapsed members back into the fold. Other parts of the survey show that lapsed members are likely to be part-time musicians who haven't taken advantage of many AGO services or attended many chapter meetings. A virtual chapter might be attractive to these organists, especially if it involved access to printed music. The AGO Web site could actually be expanded to accommodate many of these suggestions.

Refer to:

Councillor for Communication, New Technology Committee, Headquarters staff, Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support.

Page 7

1. What is your age?

Summary:

Of the 2,513 members who answered this question, an overwhelming majority (75.2%) were older than 50. Only 10.5% of the respondents were 30 or younger. It is obvious that the Guild will need to attract younger people to increase its membership base. Of the lapsed members who answered the question, 32% were older than 65, compared with only 20.6% of current members. This may correlate with the financial reasons given for not renewing their membership.

2. What is your sex?

Summary:

The same gender ratio was reported among both current and lapsed members. It is somewhat surprising that the gender balance was not more evenly divided.

3. Which of the following categories best describe your current employment as a musician?

Summary:

The survey results supported the long-held belief that the majority of our members are employed as musicians in churches and synagogues. The numbers were different for the lapsed members, however: 58.4% were currently employed as organists at churches or synagogues, compared with 70.6% of current members; 16.2% of the lapsed members

were not currently employed as musicians—almost twice as high a percentage as among current members (7.6%).

4. Which of the following categories best describes the amount of time you spend per week in your current musical employment (total of all positions)?

Summary:

Of the 2,228 members who answered this question, 71.2% worked less than 40 hours a week in their current musical employment. Among the current members, 28.8% were employed full-time, compared with 24.9% of the lapsed members. On the other hand, 25.5% of the current members were employed less than one-quarter time, compared with 33.8% of the lapsed members. This may be an indication that the Guild has not done a good job in retaining its most part-time musicians.

5. If you are currently employed in a church or synagogue, what denomination(s) do you currently serve?

Summary:

Of the 2,162 members who responded to this question, 22.1% were Episcopal. Lutheran, Methodist, Roman Catholic, and Presbyterian followed at 15.9-17.8%. There were 134 write-in responses, but these answers would not have significantly affected the breakdowns.

The highest percentage of respondents to the lapsed-member survey were Lutheran (23.9%). Percentages for “Not currently employed” were similar in each survey. Nondenominational was the ninth largest category for the lapsed members (2.9%), but only 1% of the current members were employed by nondenominational churches. This might be expected, considering the trend of instruments other than the organ being used for worship at many of these churches.

Page 8

1. In which AGO region do you reside?

Summary:

This question was not included in the initial survey sent to AGO leaders.

Among the members, the regions ranked in the following order in number of respondents: V, IV, III, VI, VII, I, XI, II, VIII, Outside U.S.

The order changed among lapsed members: V, VI, III, IV, II, I, VII, IX, VIII. The higher percentage of lapsed members in Region VI could be explained by the geographical distance between chapters. It was clear from the written responses of lapsed members that many live far from chapters and are not aware of the category of Independent Membership.

2. For how many years have you been a member (or were you a member) of the AGO?

Summary:

About 72% of the 2,507 respondents had been members of the AGO for more than 10 years.

3. What is your category of membership (or what was your most recent category of membership)?**Summary:**

The overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that they were Regular Chapter members. The percentage of Special Members did not seem to match with the age distribution shown above. In fact, respondents seemed unsure of the definitions of the membership categories. It is also interesting that Independent Membership remains a small category, even though it offers a viable alternative for people who are geographically isolated from a chapter.

How long has it been since you belonged to the AGO?**Summary:**

Significantly, the majority (52.2%) of the lapsed members who responded had been "lapsed" for less than two years. Many of the written responses indicated that they had received no communication about their lapsed membership. Some comments also indicated financial reasons for not renewing:

- My primary reason for leaving was the cost of membership.
- My work collapsed. My finances have not allowed me to maintain membership, which I miss sorely.
- Right now things are a bit tough for me financially, but once I get back on my feet a bit, I will definitely renew.
- More affordable dues, rates, and fees for those just establishing themselves professionally would be encouraging.
- Many rural churches do not have the funds to hire organists or choir directors and consequently use volunteers. It would be nice if the AGO had a membership category with reduced dues for these people.
- Each chapter should have something like an assimilation committee to personally invite and encourage new/prospective members to attend chapter functions, and make sure they are made to feel welcome if and when they do attend.
- No one made much of an effort to greet me.
- I haven't renewed since I misplaced the notice and haven't gotten another one.
- We have such sporadic communication in our area that I didn't even realize I'm a "lapsed member." Given some contact in the area, I would probably continue to be a member.
- When I did not renew my membership, it did not seem to matter to them, so it lapsed.
- I wasn't aware that my membership was about to lapse. How was I supposed to have been notified? Perhaps I just missed the reminder.

Conclusions:

Our retention rate has historically been strong. The question is: will younger generations have the same long-term commitment to the organization as did the older generations?

It is a bit alarming that 64.2% of the lapsed members had been members of the AGO for longer than five years. Why would someone pay dues regularly year after year, and then not renew? Some of the respondents did not know they were lapsed. Several others indicated that they could not renew right now for financial reasons, but wanted to stay connected to the Guild somehow. From many of the written responses, it is clear that some of the dissatisfaction was at the local level; examples included not being made to feel welcome, programming that they felt wasn't relevant to them, and other issues. If these lapsed members took the time to respond to this survey, there is probably a good chance that they would respond to communications from their former chapters about renewing, or at least to a communication about renewing as an Independent Member.

Refer to:

Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support, Budget Committee, Regional Councillors, Task Force on the Part-Time Church Musician.

Key to Committee References

National Nominating Committee

Secondary Responsibility: P4Q6

Personnel Committee

Secondary Responsibility: P3Q3, P4Q1, P4Q2, P4Q3

Editorial Resources Board

Primary Responsibility: P2Q1, P3Q3, P3Q4, P3Q5, P3Q6

Secondary Responsibility: P3Q2, P4Q8

Long-Range Planning Committee

Primary Responsibility: P4Q1, P4Q2, P4Q3

Task Force on the Part-Time Church Musician

Primary Responsibility: P2Q2, P4Q8

Secondary Responsibility: P1Q1, P1Q5, P5Q6, P5Q7

Committee on Professional Networking and Public Relations

Primary Responsibility: P3Q1, P3Q2

Secondary Responsibility: P2Q2, P3Q3, P4Q5

Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support

Primary Responsibility: P1Q1, P1Q2, P1Q5, P2Q3, P4Q4, P4Q5, P4Q6, P4Q7, P8Q3

Secondary Responsibility: P2Q1, P4Q8, P6Q4, P6Q5, P6Q6, P6Q7

Treasurer

Primary Responsibility: P2Q3

Budget Committee

Primary Responsibility: P4Q1, P4Q2, P4Q3

Secondary Responsibility: P4Q6, P4Q7, P5Q1, P5Q2, P8Q3

Development Committee

Secondary Responsibility: P4Q5, P4Q6

Councillor for Education

Primary Responsibility: P5Q3, P5Q4, P5Q5, P5Q6, P5Q7

Secondary Responsibility: P2Q1, P3Q6, P4Q6, P4Q8

Committee on Educational Resources

Primary Responsibility: P2Q2

Secondary Responsibility: P4Q5, P4Q6, P4Q7, P4Q8

Committee on Professional Education

Primary Responsibility: P2Q2

Secondary Responsibility: P5Q2

Councillor for Professional Development
Secondary Responsibility: P2Q1

Committee on Seminary and Denominational Relations
Primary Responsibility: P2Q6
Secondary Responsibility: P4Q8

Councillor for Conventions
Secondary Responsibility: P2Q1

Committees on National and Regional Conventions
Primary Responsibility: P3Q2, P5Q1, P5Q2
Secondary Responsibility: P3Q1, P4Q8

Councillor for Competitions and New Music
Primary Responsibility: P6Q1, P6Q2, P6Q3
Secondary Responsibility: P2Q1

Committee on New Music Competitions and Commissions
Primary Responsibility: P6Q1, P6Q2, P6Q3

Councillor for Communication
Primary Responsibility: P3Q1, P3Q3, P6Q4, P6Q5, P6Q6, P6Q7
Secondary Responsibility: P4Q5, P4Q6

New Technology Committee
Primary Responsibility: P2Q2, P6Q4, P6Q5, P6Q6, P6Q7
Secondary Responsibility: P2Q3, P3Q3, P3Q4, P3Q5, P3Q6, P5Q7

Regional Councillors
Primary Responsibility: P2Q3
Secondary Responsibility: P2Q1, P3Q1, P3Q2, P4Q4, P4Q5, P4Q6, P4Q7, P4Q8, P8Q3

Headquarters staff
Secondary Responsibility: P2Q2, P2Q3, P6Q4, P6Q5, P6Q6, P6Q7

Action Recommendations

1. Rearrange the AGO mission statement to put member services first:
 - a. Foster collegial and professional support among members.
 - b. Encourage excellence in performance of organ and choral music through communications, resources, education, and certification.
 - c. Promote the organ in its historic and evolving roles.(Revise or eliminate the "Purposes of the Guild" to reflect the mission statement.)
2. Add a Councillor for Communication (see recommended National Council structure below) with portfolio including a revamped Professional Networking and Public Relations Committee, the Editorial Resources Board, and a New Technology Committee. For support, add a full-time staff member with expertise in communications and IT, responsible for maintaining the AGO Web site; overseeing technology such as Impak, blogs, and social networking; helping with the envisioned interactive educational videos and the portions of TAO that we recommend placing online; and providing national publicity on new technology and advice and assistance to chapters on Web site and technology matters.
3. Move as expeditiously as possible to national collection of dues with online collection capability and electronic funds distribution to chapters.
4. Make the staff development director a full-time position to help raise funds for the new projects that are being recommended.
5. Reduce the number of regions from nine to eight to avoid increasing the size of the National Council. Details of this redistricting should be proposed by the Regional Councillors in close collaboration with the chapters. General provisions should include: no splitting of states between regions, logical geographic affiliations, and approximately equal representation of the membership on the Council.
6. Add a student representative to the National Council, with voice but no vote.
7. Focus more on developing relationships with other musical and denominational organizations—especially joint conventions and programs, but also joint memberships and communication among the respective leadership.
8. Focus more on musicians in part-time employment, to include convention workshops, TAO content, online content, and chapter programming. Expand the scope of the Committee on Professional Certification, Committee on Professional Education, and Committee on Educational Resources to better meet the needs of part-time organists. Make the Task Force on the Part-Time Church Musician a standing committee within the Education portfolio.
9. Arrange for AGO member discounts on printed music and online access to free music.
10. Develop a culture of hospitality, including designated chapter welcomers or greeters, with slogans such as "Be kind to an organist" or "Each one greet one." The Committee

on Membership Development and Chapter Support should disseminate effective ideas developed by chapters around the country.

11. Schedule (and fund) a National Leadership Conference in New York for fall 2011 to help promote and implement these goals.

Proposed National Council Structure

CURRENT

Executive Committee

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer/Councillor
for Finance & Development
Councillor for Education
Councillor for Professional Development
Councillor for Conventions
Councillor for Competitions & New Music
Convener of Regional Councillors
Executive Director

National Council

President
Vice-President
Secretary

Treasurer/Councillor
for Finance & Development

Councillor for Education
Councillor for Professional Development
Councillor for Conventions
Councillor for Competitions & New Music
9 Regional Councillors
Executive Director

PROPOSED

Executive Committee

President
Vice-President
Secretary/Councillor for Membership
Development
Treasurer/Councillor
for Finance & Development
Councillor with portfolio
(rotating from meeting to meeting)

Convener of Regional Councillors
Executive Director

National Council

President
Vice-President
Secretary/Councillor for Membership
Development
Treasurer/Councillor
for Finance & Development
Councillor for Communication
Councillor for Education
Councillor for Professional Development
Councillor for Conventions
Councillor for Competitions & New Music
8 Regional Councillors
Executive Director

Committee Structure

President
Nominating
Personnel
Editorial Resources Board

Vice-President
Professional Networking & PR

Secretary
Membership Development &
Chapter Support

Treasurer/Councillor for
Finance & Development
Budget & Finance
Development

Councillor for Education
Continuing Professional Education
Educational Resources
Professional Certification
New Organist

Councillor for Professional Development
Career Development & Support
Seminary & Denom Relations

Councillor for Conventions
National Conventions
Regional Conventions

Councillor for Competitions & New Music
New Music Comp & Commissions
National Comp Improvisation
National Young Artists Comp
Regional Comp Young Organists

Committee Structure

President
Nominating
Personnel

Vice-President
Long-Range Planning

Secretary/Councillor for Membership
Development
Membership Development &
Chapter Support
New Organist

Treasurer/Councillor for
Finance & Development
Budget & Finance
Development

Councillor for Education
Continuing Professional Education
Educational Resources
Professional Certification
Part-Time Musician

Councillor for Professional Development
Career Development & Support
Seminary & Denom Relations

Councillor for Conventions
National Conventions
Regional Conventions

Councillor for Competitions & New Music
New Music Comp & Commissions
National Comp Improvisation
National Young Artists Comp
Regional Comp Young Organists

Councillor for Communication
Professional Networking & PR
Editorial Resources Board
New Technology