

69th General Service Conference Committee Considerations

Agenda

Committee Considerations:

- The committee discussed the report of the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference and encourages Conference committee chairs to communicate with their committee both before and after the Board weekend conference calls with their corresponding trustees' committee chairs. The committee noted that this may help to ensure all Conference committee members are fully informed.
- The committee reviewed the 2019 General Service Conference evaluations and noted that improvements were implemented from the 68th G.S.C. Evaluation suggestions.
- The committee reviewed the summary of the 2019 General Service Conference evaluations. The committee suggests that Conference members be given the option to select the Conference Manual format and that the online version of the evaluation form be formatted such that it can be continually updated during Conference week.
- The committee reviewed the report on the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Conference Agenda Process from the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference, which included sharing from the 2019 Conference committee chairs. The committee noted that the January conference call portion of the plan was implemented and request reporting of the 2019 participant survey results to the 2020 Conference Agenda Committee.
- The committee reviewed the sharing results of the 2019 survey of Conference committee chairs.

Archives

Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed the revised Archives Workbook and newly released Archives Service Piece, "Archives Checklist: A quick guide for local A.A. archivists" and expressed satisfaction with the content. The committee suggested that the use of gender specific language be avoided, when possible, in future printings of the Archives Workbook.
- The committee appreciates the work of the trustees' Committee on Archives in exploring the feasibility of including in the A.A.W.S. Literature catalog all reproductions of archival materials being distributed by the Archives department

upon request. However, the committee expressed concerns of pursuing this suggestion, noting that over-exposure of these items would increase the workload of the Archives staff and could trivialize the archival materials.

Corrections

Committee Considerations:

- The committee considered a request for a review of all corrections-related literature in order to make the language more modern and inclusive and agreed to take no action. The committee noted that there was not a widely expressed need to warrant a change in the language currently used in A.A. literature for corrections. The committee also noted the absence of suitable language alternatives that could be used across all areas.
- The committee considered a request that the General Service Office establish and help maintain a database of Correctional facilities in each service area in the U.S. and Canada and the status of meetings held therein, and took no action. The committee noted the merits of the goal but considered that the diverse experiences and needs in different areas would be better served by a tool, or resource, that would help areas develop their own database tailored to their needs. The committee requested that the staff on the corrections desk ask for shared experience from A.A. members involved in corrections service for tools currently being used to create local databases with correctional facility meeting information, the status of the meetings, contacts, possible needs, and any other relevant information, and that the information be considered for a possible service piece or added to the Corrections Workbook, as appropriate.
- The committee expressed appreciation for the hard work accomplished by the trustees' Committee on Corrections and encouraged the continued communication between the chairs of the trustees' and Conference committees on Corrections throughout the year.
- The committee reviewed the Corrections Kit and Workbook and noted that many of the pamphlets used in correction service work have staples. The committee shared that a growing number of correctional facilities will not allow materials with staples into their facilities. The committee requested that the Publishing Department give priority to pamphlets used in corrections service for publication without staples, including, but not limited to, "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated," "The Twelve Steps Illustrated," "Many Paths to Spirituality," "Is A.A. for Me?," "This Is A.A.," "Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.," "Do you think you're different?," "Too Young?" and "Women in A.A."

Cooperation with the Professional Community

Committee Considerations:

- The committee discussed the progress on implementing a static LinkedIn page and felt that the overall goal of the 2018 Advisory Action on creating a LinkedIn page had not yet been achieved. The committee agreed that the wording suggested for the LinkedIn page did not adequately describe Alcoholics Anonymous. The presence of a LinkedIn page describing Alcoholics Anonymous would be a valuable tool to aid local C.P.C. committee work in the U.S. and Canada to inform professionals about A.A. The committee requested that the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities revisit the plan for implementing a LinkedIn page taking into consideration the following suggestions:
 - Add a disclaimer explaining that the “promoted” content on the LinkedIn page is not affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous.
 - Include information from current A.A. literature about what A.A. does and does not do that can be useful to professionals who work with alcoholics.
 - Add a concise description of Alcoholics Anonymous that is based on the Conference-approved literature intended for professionals that was reviewed at the October 2018 trustees' meeting.
 - Add a link to aa.org and a link to the information for professionals' page.
 - Add a link to the *About A.A.* newsletter.
 - Include a schedule of C.P.C. exhibits at national level events that are coordinated through the General Service Office.
 - Annually provide a report tracking the A.A. LinkedIn page, including visits to aa.org from the LinkedIn page for review by the Conference Committee on C.P.C.
- The committee requested that the trustees' committee review the pamphlet “A.A. in Your Community” with a focus on what professionals can expect from A.A. and A.A. members and bring a report back to the 2020 Conference Committee on C.P.C.
- The committee reviewed the C.P.C. Kit and Workbook and noted their value to local C.P.C. committees and suggested that a section be added where local experiences can be noted.

Finance

Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed and discussed area contributions for delegate expenses for the Conference and took no action.
- The committee reviewed area contributions for delegate expenses, discussed the costs of the Conference and suggested that the trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee provide a detailed breakdown of Conference expenses be included as background when delegate expenses are reviewed every two years, beginning in 2021.
- The committee requested that additional information regarding statistical information on delegate fees and contribution limits be available as background when reviewed every two years, beginning in 2021.
- The committee reviewed and discussed the Conference-approved maximum annual contribution of \$5,000 to the General Service Board from an individual A.A. member and took no action.
- The committee reviewed the Self-Support Packet and suggested the following changes:
 - In the Finance Guidelines mirror the language on how to make a contribution from the end of "The A.A. Group Treasurer" pamphlet.
 - Include the regular contribution envelope in the packet.
 - Revise the back of the Self-Support card as suggested, to reflect the following:
 - Move "What is the value of your sobriety?" under the title.
 - Move last bullet under "Some facts" to be first: "Your contributions help ensure the future of our Fellowship worldwide."
 - Rephrase the first bullet under "Some facts" to read: "Historically, less than half of all A.A. groups contribute to the General Service Office" and make it the second bullet.
 - Remove second bullet regarding "Costs of services..." from "Some facts."
 - Rephrase the third bullet under "Some facts" to read: "Gross profit from literature sales make up for the shortfall in contributions," or something similar to emphasize being more self-supporting.
 - Remove the titles "Personal thoughts" and "Some facts."

- Include contribution information from the end of “The A.A. Group Treasurer” pamphlet.

Grapevine

Committee considerations:

- The committee considered a request to remove the Alcoholism at Large section from AA Grapevine and took no action. The committee affirmed Grapevine and La Viña’s editorial freedom, as expressed in the Grapevine Charter that states: “to prepare, edit, print and publish...written material concerning generally the subject of alcoholism and related matters and dealing with various means, methods, techniques and procedures available or proposed for the treatment, relief, rehabilitation and recovery of persons suffering from or potentially subject to alcoholism.”
- The committee requested that the disclaimer for the Alcoholism at Large section be printed more prominently and visibly.
- The committee agreed to forward to the AA Grapevine Corporate Board the suggestion that Grapevine produce in the year 2020 or later:
 1. The Early Days of AA (working title)
Classic stories previously published in Grapevine by members from the 1930s, ‘40s and ‘50s about what A.A. was like in its earliest days.
 2. Getting Involved in General Service (working title)
Inspiring stories previously published in Grapevine by A.A. members who have been involved in general service.
 3. Surrender and Hope (working title) (La Viña book)
Stories by Spanish-speaking A.A. members, previously published in La Viña, about how they came to surrender and join A.A. for a new life.
- The committee reviewed the progress report on the AA Grapevine Workbook revisions and looks forward to reviewing a progress report or draft at the next Conference. The committee also forwarded suggestions to the Grapevine office including expanding shared experience and how to use GV/LV as a recovery tool.
- The committee reviewed the AA Grapevine Fellowship Survey and summary and noted the actions the Grapevine Board and staff have taken on the findings. The committee looks forward to a progress report at the next Conference on further actions taken.

International Conventions/Regional Forums

Committee Considerations:

- The committee discussed ways of encouraging interest in Regional and Local Forums and attracting first time attendees and suggested:
 - Compiling notes from the first timer sharing at a Forum for later distribution to encourage members to attend a future Forum;
 - Consider developing a Regional Forum app;
 - Consider developing a micro-site in addition to surface mail for distributing the Regional Forum flyers;
 - Increase awareness at the local level, including “intentional” outreach to different populations (i.e., young people, Spanish-speaking communities, Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing);
 - Encourage local welcome committees to create “Save the Date” flyers;
 - Consider inviting A.A.W.S./AA Grapevine directors to “non-service” A.A. events to increase awareness of regional forums;
 - Place information about Regional Forums in the AA Grapevine and La Viña.

Literature

Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed the request for the development of a Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* which would include a section of stories comprised of individuals who got sober under the age of 25, and took no action noting that A.A. is inclusive, never exclusive. If a Fifth Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* is to be developed the committee suggested that stories be gathered from as broad a cross-section of the Fellowship as possible, including from those who got sober under 25.
- The committee reviewed the progress report on the development of a pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women and looks forward to reviewing a progress report or draft pamphlet at the 2020 General Service Conference.
- The committee reviewed the progress report on the development of a pamphlet based upon A.A.’s Three Legacies and looks forward to reviewing a progress report or draft pamphlet at the 2020 General Service Conference.

- The committee reviewed the progress report on the comprehensive update to the video “Your A.A. General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure.” The committee looks forward to reviewing a progress report or draft revised video at the 2020 General Service Conference.
- The committee reviewed a progress report for the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” and suggested an emphasis on the importance of anonymity on social media perhaps by adding an image of the Anonymity in the Digital Age poster as well as the following text:

To quote Bill W.’s writing on page 15 from *The Language of the Heart*, “...it should be the privilege, even the right, of each individual or group to handle anonymity as they wish.” However, when dealing with social media, personal anonymity as well as the group’s anonymity may be easily compromised. We must be careful when using social media to not use full names and/or photos of A.A. members in a way that would identify them or others as A.A. members.

The committee looks forward to reviewing a progress report or revised draft pamphlet at the 2020 General Service Conference.

- The committee reviewed a progress report on the revision of the pamphlet “Too Young?” The committee looks forward to reviewing a draft revised pamphlet and/or samples of other potential formats of the pamphlet at the 2020 General Service Conference.
- The committee reviewed a progress report on the revision of the pamphlet “Young People and A.A.” The committee looks forward to reviewing a revised draft pamphlet at the 2020 General Service Conference.
- The committee reviewed a progress report for language on safety and A.A. for inclusion in the booklet *Living Sober* and the pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” and clarified that the language is meant to focus on safety at the group level.
- The committee suggested that the trustees’ Committee on Literature develop a Literature Committee Workbook and provide a progress report to the 2020 General Service Conference.
- The committee considered a request to add information regarding safety to the pamphlet “The A.A. Group” and took no action. The committee noted that the pamphlet already addresses safety.
- The committee discussed the draft of the proposed revision to A.A. World Services’ “Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials”

and supports the proposed policy and its intended impact to support more effectively carrying the A.A. message.

In keeping with Concept Eight which states in part, “The Trustees of the General Service Board act in two primary capacities: (a) with respect to the larger matters of overall policy and finance, they are the principle planners and administrators...” the committee expressed support for G.S.O.’s publishing professionals and their efforts working on behalf of A.A.

In keeping with Concept One which states in part, “The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship,” the committee recognized the importance and the sensitivity of maintaining the integrity of the Conference process for developing and updating literature to best reflect A.A.’s collective experience, strength and hope.

The committee requested that the final version of the complete text of A.A. World Services’ “Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials” be included as background for future General Service Conference committees.

- The committee reviewed the matrix of A.A. recovery literature and suggested that the trustees’ Literature Committee consider an update to the pamphlet “Is A.A. for Me?” The committee noted that the pamphlet has not been updated since 1989.

Policy/Admissions

Committee Considerations:

- In reviewing the report from G.S.O.’s general manager on site selection for the General Service Conference, the committee noted the change of dates for the 71st G.S.C. that will take place in 2021 and that it had been necessary for the general manager to move forward and contract for the hotel for the 72nd General Service Conference prior to the selection of dates by the Conference Policy/Admissions Committee.

The 71st General Service Conference will take place from April 18-24, 2021 in Brooklyn, New York and the 72nd General Service Conference will take place from April 24-30, 2022 in Brooklyn, New York.

- In order to provide additional flexibility to the General Service Office management in contracting the most cost-effective and appropriate venues for the General Service Conference, the committee agreed to select three proposed dates for the 73rd and 74th General Service Conferences. The committee selected the following dates in order of preference for the 73rd General Service Conference: April 23-29, 2023; April

30-May 6, 2023 and April 16-22, 2023. The committee selected the following dates in order of preference for the 74th General Service Conference: April 14-20, 2024; April 28-May 4, 2024 and May 5-11, 2024. The committee noted that these proposed Conference dates do not conflict with any significant holidays. The committee asks that all Conference members be notified of the final dates for the 73rd and 74th General Service Conferences as soon as they are finalized by G.S.O. management.

- The committee reviewed the report from G.S.O.'s general manager on site selection of the General Service Conference and looks forward to a progress report for review by the 2020 General Service Conference.
- The committee considered a process for how a Conference committee could review, discuss, and act on proposed agenda items not forwarded to a Conference committee and appreciates the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference's work on developing a process thus far. The committee noted the inclusion of a rationale on items not forwarded that are listed on the grid of proposed agenda items. The committee requested that the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference continue developing the process outlined in their report and provide a report to the 2020 General Service Conference that includes more information regarding the distribution of background and the January conference call between the trustee committee chair and the corresponding Conference committee.
- The committee requested that the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference develop a process for approving qualified representatives from other A.A. service structures to observe the U.S. and Canada General Service Conference that allows for these observers to be presented for General Service Conference consideration prior to the General Service Conference week for review by the 2020 General Service Conference.
- The committee discussed a request to "develop a procedure to deal with special requests/agenda items" and took no action. The committee noted that Concept Three and the Conference Charter provide adequate guidance and flexibility for dealing with agenda items that are outside of the usual process.
- The committee discussed reconsidering the 1986 Advisory Action regarding a simple majority vote by the full Conference and took no action. The committee asked that implementation of this 1986 advisory action resume with the 69th General Service Conference Final Report:

If a committee recommendation does not receive the two-thirds vote required to become a Conference Advisory Action, but has a majority of votes, it automatically becomes a suggestion and be duly noted in the Conference Report.
- The committee noted that the trustees' General Service Conference Committee scheduled a Presentation/Discussion on the Equitable Distribution of the Workload

of Conference Committees at the 69th General Service Conference. The committee looks forward to receiving a plan or progress report on this important process for review by the 2020 General Service Conference from the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference.

Public Information

Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed and accepted the 2018 annual report from the trustees' Public Information Committee regarding aa.org and aagrapevine.org.
- The committee suggested that the A.A.W.S. Publishing Department update all A.A. pamphlet covers to prominently display the G.S.O. website "www.aa.org."
- The committee also suggested that it may be helpful to include "www.aagrapevine.org" on the cover of A.A. pamphlets.
- The committee reviewed and accepted the 2018 report from the trustees' Public Information Committee on the Usefulness and Relevance of Public Service Announcements.
- The committee reviewed and accepted the information on centralized distribution, tracking and evaluation of the public service announcement "Changes."
- The committee suggested that the trustees' Committee on Public Information explore online platforms as a possible additional media outlet for future public service announcement distribution.
- The committee suggested that the "how to find A.A." section of all existing PSAs be edited to include current terminologies that describe how people search for A.A.
- The committee reviewed the contents of P.I. Kit and Workbook, and asked that the contents of P.I. Kit and Workbook continue to be updated with current and relevant information for P.I. committees.

Report and Charter

Committee Considerations:

- The committee accepted a report from the Publishing Department outlining the General Service Office process for timely and accurate preparation and publication

of *The A.A. Service Manual, 2020-2022 Edition* and the 2019 General Service Conference *Final Report*.

- The committee reviewed the progress report from the A.A.W.S. Publishing Department on the redesign of *The A.A. Service Manual* and forwarded their comments to the Publishing Department.
- The committee considered the A.A. Directories (Canada, Eastern U.S., and Western U.S.) especially in light of the new ERP system and the Meeting Guide app, and requested that the General Service Office explore alternative methods of accessing and distributing the contact information contained in the A.A. Directories (Canada, Eastern U.S., and Western U.S.) The committee requested that a report be brought back to the 2020 Report and Charter Conference Committee.
- The committee agreed with the suggestion from G.S.O. management that a new level of privacy was needed in the General Service Conference Final Report for Conference members' personal information, and that as of 2019:
 - The roster section for Area Delegates include only each person's name, city, state or province.
 - The bios of trustees and nontrustee directors include only each person's name, city, state or province.
 - No email addresses for delegates, trustees, or nontrustee directors will be included.

Treatment & Accessibilities

Committee Considerations:

- The committee considered revising the pamphlet "Bridging the Gap Between Treatment and A.A. Through Contact Programs" to include related corrections activities and agreed with the concept. The committee requested that the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities consult with the trustees' Committee on Corrections to review all treatment and corrections committee literature from G.S.O. related to bridging the gap and temporary contact activities with the following in mind:
 - How treatment and corrections material can be updated for currency and inclusion;
 - How this material could be combined;
 - What material might be discontinued;

- How the combined material might be broadened to encompass the full range of possibilities in which a temporary contact might be useful.

The committee requested that a report be brought to the 2020 Conference Treatment and Accessibilities committee.

- The committee reviewed a draft Remote Communities Kit and agreed that there is a need for this new material. The committee suggested that before the Kit is made available that a guideline or workbook be developed for inclusion. The guideline or workbook might use a locally produced current Remote Communities workbook as an example.

The committee also suggested that the guideline or workbook include a list of available material, with details, including the intended audience, and suggestions for when, why and how it might be used. The committee forwarded a list of additional pamphlets and service material to be considered for inclusion in the Kit. The committee suggested that the trustees' committee not include paper copies of the pamphlets in the Kit but provide a list of material by category and purpose, linked to encourage digital use.

The committee noted the availability and relevance of past articles in Grapevine, *Box 4-5-9*, and *About A.A.*, and requested that the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities and staff work with AA Grapevine to make past Remote Communities articles from Grapevine available for those involved in Remote Communities service.

- The committee reviewed the Treatment Committees Kit and Workbook and forwarded a list of suggestions to the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities.
- The committee reviewed the Accessibilities Kit and Workbook and forwarded a list of suggestions to the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities.

Trustees

Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed the resumes and approved as eligible for election all Class B trustee candidates for Northeast regional trustee, Southwest regional trustee, and trustee-at-large/Canada.
- The committee reviewed the drafted procedures for a partial or complete reorganization of the General Service Board, the A.A. World Services Board and AA

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Grapevine Board. The committee agreed that the procedure needed additional specificity, offered suggestions, and requested that the trustees' Committee on Nominating bring back a revised plan to the 2020 Conference Committee on Trustees.