

RD Governance Proposal Zoom Call Notes for 2019-09-04

[Announcement post](#)

Read the full proposal:

[Recovery Dharma - Transitional Bylaws and Election 2019](#)

2019-09-03 [Recorded video of Zoom call](#)

Introduction and summary of new structure

- Jean:
 - We're going to try to do these once a month while the transition team is doing our work
 - Topic today is governance. We have folks from the governance circle to lead this and answer questions. Don W, Gary M, Paul A.
- Paul:
 - I will summarize then take questions.
 - High level: We had surveys that went out and the overwhelming majority wanted to do direct elections.
 - We talked about doing direct elections of board members having a starting total of 12 people on the board, including the 4 people that are currently on the board, and to have terms that overlap so we don't have a whole new board for every election. That's the proposal for election.
 - Bylaws were also put together starting from RR as a template and incorporating all those ideas. I would defer to the brilliant Don and Gary for that.

- Don

- The other key thing from the survey was an interest in making sure there was some breadth or diversity on the board in terms of the regions our membership comes from, that we want nominations and voting to both come from the membership in an open manner, and that diversity and making sure typically underrepresented groups are present. All were important and identified in the survey and we tried to design a system that accomplishes all those things.
- We decided to prepare a nomination packet saying what the qualifications are and getting that to the community.
- Then we put together a slate of qualified candidates (meet the minimum standards of membership in organization and not being members of conflicting businesses or organizations).
- Voting open to the entire community starting in the middle of January.
- There will be 4 open seats each year because they are staggered.
- So each member of RD has 4 votes and the top candidates get seated on the board, with the provision that no more than 2 candidates can come from one region, so if 3 candidates won from a single region the third would be skipped.
- Board would take their positions starting in February and be there for the first annual RD conference next summer.
- If after the elections are over there are under-represented communities/parts of our community the board can open up 1-2 new seats to increase diversity.

- Gary

- A specific nuts-and-bolts thing about this first election is that there will be the 4 members of the transition board

who will be part of the new board. We wanted to have a full 12 members but also set it up so there's the overlapping terms. So the first set of elections there will be 8 positions open. 4 who become directors will start serving 3 year terms and the rest will serve 2 year terms, with the transition team members having 1 year terms.

Questions and answers

Dirk Question: What's the nomination process going to look like. If I nominate someone will they be notified? Have you thought about the system behind that?

- Don: As nominations come in the nominations committee will contact that person and get their consent to be nominated and ask them to provide info about their background, participation in RD and what they want to be put out to the community. We will confirm that they want to run, are willing, and
- Dirk: Can someone nominate themselves?
 - Don: Yes.

Jer question: What about campaigns? Will people be allowed to campaign? Where? What are the limits?

- Don: We hadn't thought about that a lot. I guess they can post on facebook. Jer do you have ideas?
- Jer: It would be good to have guidelines to avoid it getting too crazy. Maybe we can just wing it and wait for problems to arise.
- Jer: It shouldn't be only on Facebook for those who don't use facebook.
- Paul: There will be emails going out, newsletters in the offing and that's one venue I imagine that will also have the slate of candidates. We do want to make it not FB centric.
- Don: voting will definitely not take place through facebook.

- Don: Once we have the information from candidates we'll assemble a package for each of them and send them out to the email list which goes to everyone.

Daniel question: How will voting work?

- Don: Survey said have it be individual votes and not based on a meeting. Each person who identifies as an RD member and signs up for the election list, gets to vote. Each person gets to vote for 4 candidates.
- Paul: It's like school board elections in my jurisdiction you get 4 votes but it means you can vote for 4 different people and not vote 4 times for one person.
- There's a platform called Election Buddy that is auditable and looks good. Something we need to discuss is the idea of a two-factor authentication system where you have both an email and a phone number. That would be better but limits who can participate. There are ways of securing it but also we've never done anything like this, so a lot of information sharing and evaluation by the community is worthwhile.
- Critter (chat): "I'm wondering if there can be a way to mail in a vote for folx who are not online? I know we are discussing encouraging each meeting to print out the newsletter to bring to meetings, so perhaps we can have a way of a printed out version? "
- Paul: Personally I don't like the idea of physical ballots but I can be talked out of that
- Don: To me an easier solution is to encourage meetings during this process to have somebody bring an iPad or whatever to the meeting and let people vote right there individually and privately.
- Sean (chat) "Over in the Apache Software Foundation we also have a set up for proxy voting for people who cannot otherwise attend the annual members' meeting, vote due to technical limitation, etc. Hopefully RD isn't something that'll need that quite yet, but could be something to keep on the radar just in case? "

Donald question: “What if the individual voter is not an "active" member of in-person or online meetings? ”

- Don: A member of RD according to the bylaws is anyone who identifies themselves that way and is associated to a local meeting, an inter-sangha or an online meeting. We agreed it would be on the honor system, we will not be verifying this, for various reasons. If you sign up to vote then you are entitled to vote.
- Don2 (chat): “don't let the perfect get in the way of better than no/delayed election ”

Craig question: “I was going to ask. could the local sangha which the member is a part of have some say as well in their nomination? ”

- Paul: I don't understand the question
- Craig: If someone is nominated and they aren't active
- Don: One of the qualifications to be on the board is that you be a member of a local or online group and you need to identify that to be certified. So the control would be when the nominating committee contacts someone and says what's your local group and what's your involvement.
- Craig: Can someone nominate someone and break their anonymity
- Gary: They can nominate them but that only goes to the nomination committee who reaches out to them and ask if they want to run.

Marjorie question: “How many people are going to be nominated is there a limit? ”

- Don: There is not currently envisioned a limit in place. The survey was really clear that nominations should be open and that we shouldn't place arbitrary limits on them.

Critter question: “I know we have confidentiality of meetings, but do we actually have an anonymity stipulation in RD? ”

- Don: That’s something the guiding principles transition circle is actively discussing as we speak. Ther’es nothing today.
- Craig (chat): “we read one at our meetings. it was just a thought on the anonymity thing. I don’t have an issue but I think about “worst cases” as a way of living. so someone may be a great fit for the board. I think you should personally reach out to who you want to nominate before you nominate them. ”
- Donald (chat): ”I agree with Craig about reaching out to a potential nominee prior to nomination. ”
- Craig (chat): “it would be wise speech/communication ”

Gabe question: “Will there be any qualifications beyond what’s listed in the 2019 Election & Bylaws Summarydocument? ”

- Don: Just what’s in the document. Absence of conflict of interest, personally/professionally/organizationally. Membership in RD.
- Don: We talked about making a job description so people can be aware of what the job entails, that it’s a working board and a volunteer board, and that if a nominee accepts the nomination they need to be ready and willing to participate fully on the board.

Gabe question: “Can you give an example of a possible conflict of interest? ”

- Don: If you are an employee of a business that is trying to get a contract with RD. If you are a member of a recovery program that actively says you must follow these steps or this process in order to maintain recovery, in other words if you are a member of an organization that doesn’t accept the tenets of RD.

- Avi: Conflicts of interest. If there's someone who is following a program that has steps involved. What did you mean by that?
- Don: I didn't say that well. I also do 12 steps. It would be people who follow a program that forbids you from following RD.
- Jean: Can you give an example of what that would be?
- Avi: I attend 12 steps because there's no RD in my region yet. I take what I want and leave the rest.
- Don: I am in the same situation, half my meetings are 12 step, half are RD. I don't know of a specific situation of somebody who is saying that you can't do RD if you are in their program, so it is completely hypothetical. But if e.g. there was a buddhist temple and the teacher in that temple said this isn't buddhism/recovery and you have allegiance to that teacher then you shouldn't be on the RD board because that is a conflict of interest.
- Gary: I don't think I agree with that. I would say it's none of our business. If they go somewhere and the organization says something like that it doesn't seem like a real problem. I think we should focus on financial conflicts of interest.
- Jer: (chat) "This seems like a really unlikely scenario "
- Steve (chat): "There may be a program that does not exclude other programs, but unfortunately, some individual meetings have the attitude that "this is the only way." Somebody that has that attitude wouldn't likely participate anyway...unless it is out of pure malice. I think the financial gain conflict of interest would be the most important as that would greatly tarnish the name of the program. "
- Don: I think the same as Gary does, as long as I can stand up to my employer .
- Tom: I work for a large company and to join the board I would have to tell my employer. We install fire alarms and if you were in the market for fire alarms then that could come up as a conflict of interest. I think that's what conflicts of interest is about. I don't think this has anything to do with our personal recovery.

- Don: Okay that is perfect and I take back what I said about ideology and
- Daniel (chat): “Seems this would be handled by self-selection. ”
- From the [document](#): ““Directors must be free from conflicts of interest (personal/organizational interests that would conflict with the person’s ability to exercise their fiduciary duty to Recovery Dharma)” ”
- Gabe (chat) “Would it be potentially easier to say that if a situation or vote comes up that is a conflict that those members should recuse themselves. Many of us work for Tom: treatment and recovery type organizations. ”

Frankie question: For this first election you talked about having the membership be spread across regions. What are the regions?

- Don: That’s a good question. For the purposes we have not determined what the regions would be. Our intention is to look at where our meetings are and try to make geographic sense in terms of regions.
- Don: The regional reps who came over to RD have come up with a proposal about regions for their purposes which is to support local groups and help RD grow. What those regions will look like hasn’t been determined. But the survey was really clear that they want regional diversity on the board.
- Don: Online is a region and international might be a region with europe and oceania
- Paul: It’s a moving target and that target will change before we do it. The point is to have it as diverse as possible.
- Gabe (chat) “Theres no reason we cant adjust the regions by the next election. They should probably be looked at on an ongoing basis. ”

Ojoku question: I want to clarify. I believe it was don who was saying that the election will be in January and there will be 8 incoming members and 4 exiting ones will be grafted in.

- Don: Unless some of the 4 existing members decide they don't want to do it.
- Ojoku: So there will be 8-12 voted in this section.
- Ojoku: Will they be voted in by region?
- Paul: No everybody votes for everybody.
- Don: But e.g. if the top 3 were all from LA then only the 2 would be accepted and it would go to the next person.

Donald: "I suppose that there will be some sort of impeachment process for Board Members that need to be removed? "

- Paul: The board can take people out for breaking the five precepts and other things or by calling a vote.
- Don: Power to the people