

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE CONFERENCE CALL – MARCH 3, 2009.

The following Committee on Governance (CoG) members participated in the call: Alison Head, Miki Christophersen, Lisa Gorretta, Robert Higgins, Bill Maybee, Linda Mazur, Janet Foy, Chris Trentelman, George Williams, and Terry Wilson. Stephen Hienzsch participated from the USDF office. Margaret Freeman was unable to attend.

The committee reviewed member input received on the preliminary proposal presented at the 2008 annual convention and subsequently posted on the USDF web site. Alison Head summarized some suggested discussion points and ideas for the committee to consider.

It was noted that member feedback received indicated little support for a system that would result in a substantial reduction in the number of delegates that actually attend the annual Board of Governors (BOG) meeting. There was some support among the commenting members for minor changes to the BOG that would improve its ability to function, both at the annual convention and during the course of the year. The CoG also felt strongly that it is its duty to consider not only the comments of the various and limited number of members responding to the request for input (which may or may not be representative of the general membership of USDF), but also to consider what is best for USDF's interests in the long run.

The CoG concluded its discussion on the BOG with the following points:

1. The bicameral approach and some other alternative possibilities were briefly discussed.
2. The CoG agreed that it was best to begin with some minor changes to the BOG and the delegate process that might improve efficiency and help educate and communicate with the delegates. The timeline for these suggestions is fairly short, as the CoG would like to have something it agrees upon to present to the Executive Board (EB) at its spring meeting in April.
3. It was decided to ask the Subcommittee on the Board of Governors (Miki, Chris and Bill) to meet again with two major tasks: the first, to come up with some suggestions for smaller changes, such as an earlier deadline for GM delegate designations, that would help the BOG operate more efficiently in the short term; and the second, to investigate if and how a modification in BOG delegate numbers might bring benefits to USDF and its members, including but not limited to reduced costs for meeting time or space, ease of communication and education, better more fair representation of small GMOs etc.. Finally, the group was asked to reconsider some of the various options for streamlining the BOG.

The CoG then discussed the changes to the EB. Among the comments received from members, there was less focus on this portion of the proposal. Many people did support in principle the idea of the At-large Directors and the more general concept of adding expertise to the Board. The group revisited the initial proposal for President Elect, President, and Past President. The CoG considered alternative proposals for the EB. The CoG agreed that a better definition of the duties of President Elect and other Board members was needed and should be worked on.

The CoG revisited the terms for the President Elect, President, and Past President positions and considered the merits of a longer term in office that might result in more continuity of leadership. In addition, the CoG decided that the proposal regarding At-large Directors should be changed to do away with the idea of an undefined Director to meet some hypothetical need (too vague). Instead, the three At-large Directors would each represent one of the three divisions of the Committee structure. The group decided it would make a revised proposal to present to the EB.

Finally, the CoG discussed the revisions to the Council and Committee structure. The CoG noted that, while this is something the EB is charged to do as outlined in the Bylaws and Policies and Procedures, any new proposal should be sent to current council and committee chairs and members for input, even though the comment period has already taken place. A general comment was that the structure was a bit too complicated and needed to be simplified further. The Youth Executive Board was a topic of discussion. The group discussed some ideas that would give the Youth members better representation, and yet allow supervision by volunteer leadership rather than staff.

Some general discussion of the value to committees of having clearly defined sub-committees (as is done with the USEF Dressage Committee) ensued, and ideas for space saving at the annual convention were presented. It was also discussed that the next proposal should be more clear as to how each Committee is defined and described, and that needs such as regional representation should be considered.

The CoG concluded that another sub-committee would be established to work on a revised proposal for the new committee structure, taking into consideration the ideas discussed on the conference call, as well as comments received on the original proposal. The sub-committee consists of: Janet Foy (later appointed by Alison as Chair of the sub-committee), George Williams, Lisa Gorretta, and Margaret Freeman. The sub-committee was advised of a short time-line to arrive at a proposal that the CoG could finalize on another conference call and then present to the EB at the spring meeting.

The CoG adjourned following the establishment of the subcommittee.

3/9/09

Alison Head