

Cultural Diversity

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of Parliamentarians (NAP) and American Institute of Parliamentarians (AIP). Even though most of the members of AIP are also members of NAP, the cultures are very different. For example, one believes that “*Robert’s*” rules, and the other wants to study many parliamentary authorities.

When we are called to work for an organization, we come from our “parliamentary culture.” If we do not understand the clients’ culture, we can do great harm trying to impose our parliamentary culture on them when all they wanted was help to do their business in their own way.

Our parliamentary work in a sense is based on a culture that may be strange to others. My friends do not understand what I do when I work as a parliamentarian. Why is this the case? More than likely they have a preconceived notion of what a parliamentarian looks like and sounds like. Maybe once they even had one at a meeting. Being different from the majority can be a daunting experience. I want to give great thanks to Kim-See Teo and Susan Glanstein for their fine work in getting this vital discussion started.

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Roadmap to Membership

by Steve Glanstein, PRP

The Hawai’i State Association of Parliamentarians recently increased its membership from 45 to 120 members in three months. All of the new members are professionals within their respective fields of law, property management, and insurance. The common element with this membership increase related to parliamentary practice with community associations. This article briefly describes the genesis of the “Roadmap to Membership” class and provides information on its structure and handouts.

The president of one of the larger property management firms in the state of Hawai’i had been interested in parliamentary procedure for several years. He and I discussed this class for several months. We agreed that in order for the class to be successful, we would have to provide certain special topics and have all of his property managers become members of the National Association of Parliamentarians. I was to be paid the regular hourly rate for preparation and instruction. The first class led to two additional classes and an unprecedented increase in NAP membership in Hawai’i.

There were a few challenges with this approach. They were:

Even though more than 99% of Hawai’i condominiums are legally required to conduct their meetings

in accordance with *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised*, there are significant differences in voting requirements, proxies, written consent ballots, notices, removal proceedings, and executive sessions. Many of the attendees were already familiar with Hawaii’s different parliamentary requirements, and we didn’t want to confuse them. We also didn’t want the attendees to lose points on the membership examination due to these differences. Therefore, we needed a section on Practical Variations in Local Property Management.

The membership examination doesn’t test knowledge of small boards and committees, a large part of condominium parliamentary practice. We needed a section on small boards and committees.

I insisted on teaching the Ethics Code as a part of any endeavor to bring members into NAP. This was not on the membership examination, but I believe it is important for all prospective members to understand and comply with the NAP Code of Ethics.

We only had 8 hours of instruction (including the additional sections) and testing. For the first seminar the attendees were flying in from neighbor islands to attend class on a Saturday.

Materials

I believed that I could put together an extensive set of materials that would provide the basis for future classes.

There are several subject areas tested in the membership examination, including (1.) Hierarchy (sequencing) of Rules, (2.) Bylaw Articles, (3.) Order of Business (Standard), (4.) Motion Classifications, (5.) Handling Motions, (6.) Ranking Motions, and (7.) Parliamentary Terminology.

I developed the following materials for the class attendees:

- revised membership application form to facilitate the application process
- five page “Pre-Course Suggestions” handout, with essential information for knowing the basic parliamentary terms, order of precedence, order of rules, order of business, and sequencing of the bylaws
- course handout containing the main points for all of the test questions and other modules
- instructor’s handout containing the main points, including references to questions (especially tricky ones) reference pages in *RONR*, and specific symbols when standard or ethics examples were needed
- several Powerpoint® displays showing the test questions and including a “tripping hazard” indication when the question was deemed tricky
- post-class evaluation to assess current class and improve future classes

For the first class, the supplemental modules that are *not* tested on the membership examination were

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presented after the attendees took the membership examination. This ensured that the training focus would be on the parliamentary rules in *RONR* as they relate to the membership examination. The Ethics module was moved to the beginning of the class for the second and third classes. This ensured that the NAP Code of Ethics, including realistic examples, would be completely integrated into the entire training curriculum.

I enlisted the assistance of my daughter, Rachel Glanstein, PRP, to proofread the materials and to divide the lecturing duties for the attendees. The NAP Membership Examiners Committee was



Steve and Rachel with First Class

very helpful in mailing examinations and working with us on last minute changes. They also provided us with a list of membership examination questions that were missed most often. This was used to improve the quality of each of the subsequent classes. Headquarters was also very helpful. The

staff worked on resolving numerous individual issues, such as contact information, dues amounts, charge card numbers and security.

First Class

The first class was pioneered in partnership with a local property management company in Hawai'i, Hawaii First, Inc. The company President (who is now a member of NAP) was committed to educating all of his managers in parliamentary procedure, and he wanted them to be NAP members. He paid for his employees to fly in from the neighbor islands to attend the all-day class. He also opened the class to other selected professionals such as lawyers, insurance executives, and general managers.

This class consisted of 29 attendees. We gave these attendees the membership examination; another three individuals received a private membership examination. The one-day class lasted eight hours, including administration of the membership examination. The total class hours were about seven. All attendees passed the membership examination.

Second Class

The second class was partnered with a local property management company in Hawai'i, Certified Management, Inc. This company is part of Associa, Inc., a leader in community association management that serves nearly four million members in associations across North America. The Hawai'i

Chief Operating Officer is an NAP member and committed to educating her managers in parliamentary procedure. This class was limited to the company employees, and was conducted simultaneously on four islands via videoconferencing. We engaged a separate proctor on the other islands during the administration of the examination.



Videoconference Class Participants

This class consisted of 43 attendees. It contained five hours of instruction on the first day and two hours of instruction the second day. At the beginning of this class, the Chief Operating Officer announced that anybody who received 100% on the exam would have an extra day off, courtesy of the company. This dramatically increased the enthusiasm among the attendees. All attendees except one passed the membership examination. The attendee who failed the membership examination subsequently attended the third class and received 99% on the re-take.

Third Class

A third class was provided to 3 attendees, consisting of 7 hours

of instruction on one day. All attendees passed the membership examination.

Final Remarks

Two of us alternated as instructors for most of the class. One would proceed through a section, lecturing on major points that would appear on the membership examination. We provided for questions and answers. We'd then proceed through a Powerpoint® presentation, which included all relevant membership questions organized by section, and the tripping hazards. The final review included matching questions that referred to multiple pages in *RONR*. The time requirement for each section and its associated Powerpoint® presentation was recorded and logged for planning future seminars.

This endeavor is one that I believe can be repeated throughout NAP. A class of this type has the potential to increase our membership significantly. It is my hope that other PRPs will provide a similar undertaking. Therefore, the course materials will be available to PRPs who are willing to commit to increasing NAP's membership.

Steve Glanstein, PRP, currently serves as NAP Treasurer. He has been NAP District Eight Director, president of the Hawai'i State Association of Parliamentarians, and president of the Aloha-Ohana Unit of Parliamentarians. Co-instructor Rachel Glanstein, PRP, is current chairman of NAP's Parliamentary Research Committee.