

Draft Proposal for ABCT Student Vote

What are we proposing to change to the ABCT By-Laws?

The Leadership and Elections Committee of ABCT (informed by input from SIG leaders and Board members) would like to propose an amendment to By-Laws Article V on “Voting”, which currently states:

“There are six classes of ABCT membership. Full and Fellow members may nominate, vote, and hold office. New Member Professionals may nominate and vote. Students, Post Baccalaureates, and Associate members may not nominate, vote, or hold office.”

We would like to amend this to allow all membership categories to nominate and vote, to read as follows:

“There are six classes of ABCT membership. Full and Fellow members may nominate, vote, and hold office. New Professionals, Students, Post Baccalaureates, and Associate members may nominate and vote, but not hold office.”

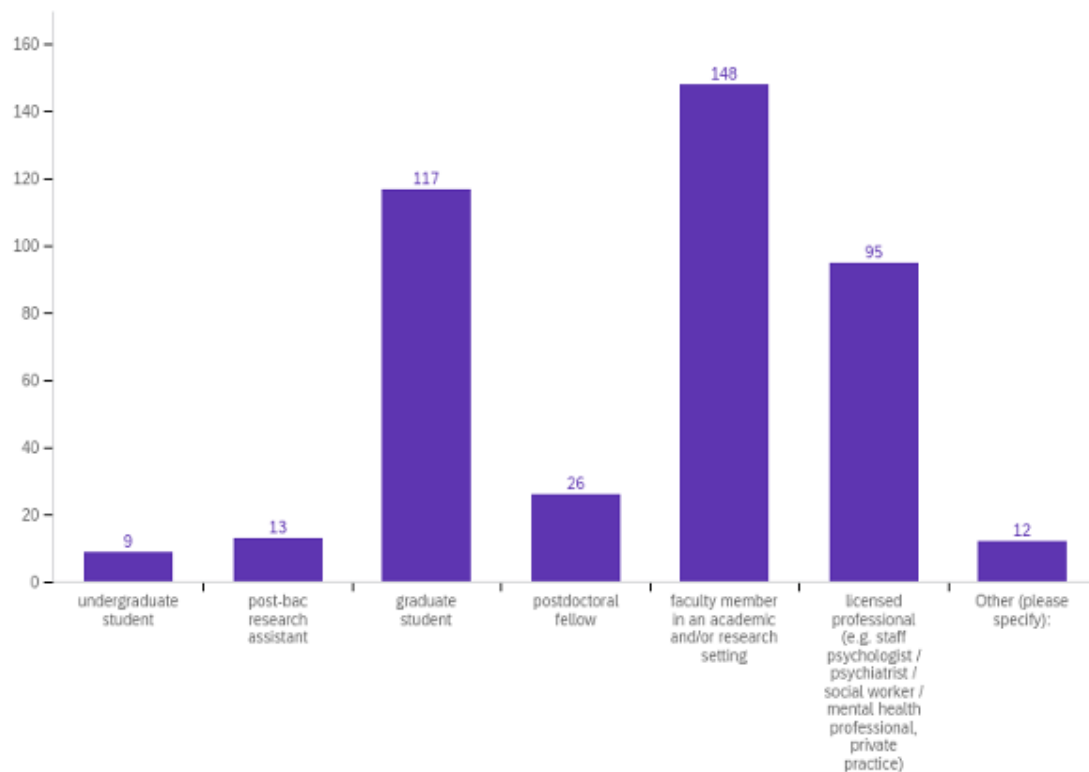
Who would this change impact and who supports this?

In November 2022, the ABCT SIG Leader subcommittee on student voting sent out a survey to the ABCT Listserv, the SIG leaders listserv, and to individual SIG listservs, as well as shared with attendees at the 2022 Convention, to elicit preferences on student voting within ABCT. Between November 5th and 29th, a total of 352 individuals responded and 92.90% (n = 327) supported student members being able to vote in ABCT elections. We also learned that 87.78% (n = 309) endorsed student members being able to nominate candidates for ABCT elections. We asked respondents to tell us the earliest career stage at which they believe student members should be eligible to vote (no “all of the above” option was included in this question). The vast majority of respondents (86.36%; n=304) indicated that students should be eligible to vote by their first year in graduate school, including 31.81% (n = 112) who felt voting rights should be conferred at the undergraduate stage, 12.22% (n = 43) who felt voting rights should be conferred at the post-baccalaureate stage, and 42.33% (n = 149) who felt voting rights should be conferred upon 1st year graduate students. A minority of respondents felt voting rights should be conferred during the second (4.83%; n =

17), third (2.56%; n= 9), or fourth (0%; n= 0) year of graduate school, or during the internship year (3.41%; n = 12). Ten respondents did not answer this question.

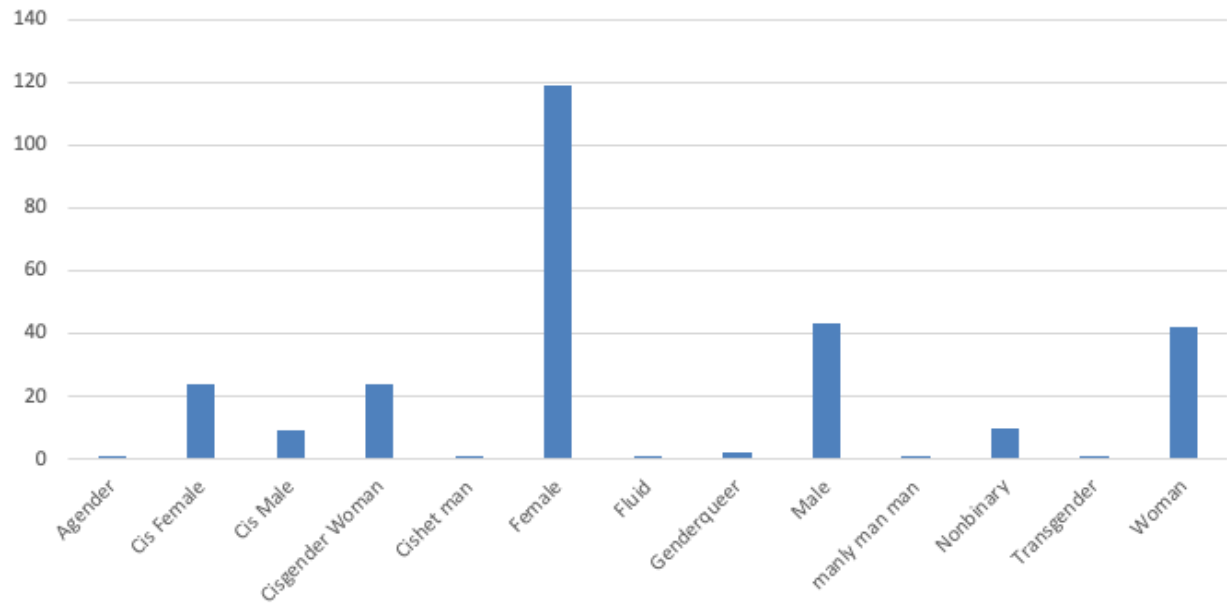
All 42 SIGs were represented amongst the 352 respondents. The majority of respondents were full members or emeritus members (38.64%; n = 136), new professionals (12.78%; n = 45), student members (31.53%; n = 111), associate and post-baccalaureate members (4.55%; n = 16), non-members (5.11%; n = 18), while 3 respondents (0.85%) indicated that they were former members of ABCT and 23 respondents (6.53%) did not indicate their membership status.

Of the respondents who identified as full members or emeritus members, 91% supported students being able to nominate a prospective elected official and 89% supported student voting. Below we include results from demographic questions.

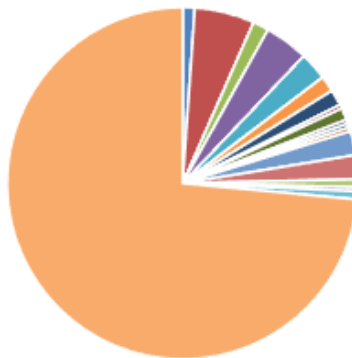


Of those who selected “Other”, responses included: Would rather not say, Staff member in an academic and or research setting, Applying to PhD programs, Mental health organization administrator, Graduate student – master’s, VA operations, APPIC predoctoral intern, Clinical intern, Non-profit leader, Industry Government admin and Decline to answer.

Gender

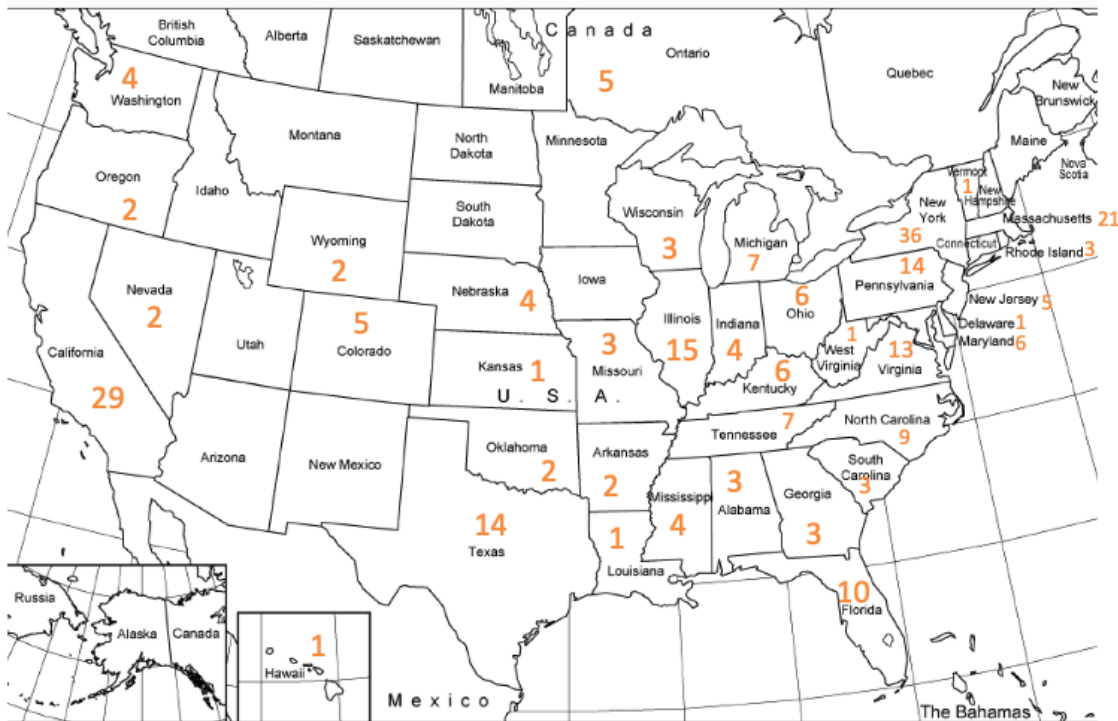


Gender



- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| ■ American Indian Alaska Native | ■ Asian |
| ■ Biracial | ■ Black |
| ■ Caucaisan | ■ European American |
| ■ Hispanic | ■ I wouldn't since race is not a true category |
| ■ Latinx | ■ melanin deficient |
| ■ MENA | ■ Mexican |
| ■ Mixed | ■ Multiracial |
| ■ Non-Hispanic | ■ Other |
| ■ South Asian | ■ White |

Representation by Geography



Why is the Leadership and Elections committee recommending this change?

- The enfranchisement of dues paying members of the association allows members' voices and interests to be represented and protected in association policies and procedures. Disenfranchisement of students is particularly problematic as student members have the least power in institutions and yet benefit the most from career opportunities afforded by professional organizations. By collecting dues from student members but not allowing them to participate in the electoral process, student members are effectively "taxed without representation."
- Moreover, student members serve in a number of leadership roles within ABCT – including as SIG leaders and committee chairs members. As such, by not allowing students to vote, student leaders are disenfranchised despite their significant free labor for the organization.
- Enfranchisement of all members is consistent with the ABCT mission and purposes of the association to promote the utilization and dissemination of evidence-based approaches to behavioral health, facilitate professional

development among members, and promote health and well-being through a commitment to diversity and inclusion at all levels.

- Similar organizations, such as the American Medical Association, American Educational Research Association, American Counseling Association, and American Public Health Association, among many others, allow students to vote.
- Voter turnout has reached all time lows in the past 10 years, down to 18% of eligible voting members in 2022. Enfranchisement of all members would enhance voter turnout.
- Students comprise 33% of the association membership (and approximately 50% of convention attendees) and are the most diverse constituency in the membership. By allowing students to vote, we are taking an important step to ensure diverse voices are shaping the next generation of ABCT leadership, and to foster an increasingly diverse ABCT membership in the years to come.

When would we like to make this change by?

The committee recommends swift action. Toward this end, we propose only that all members be granted voting privileges, and *not* the ability to hold elected office. We aim to amend the By-Laws as soon as possible in time for election season in 2023. A swift change would also allow greater communication to members about these changes in order to encourage greater voter participation in the next election and demonstrate leadership responsiveness to the town hall and survey.

What concerns have we heard about this?

- Concern: Postbacc and undergraduate students are different than graduate students who are invested long-term in their graduate study and in the field. Response: Previous changes to the by-laws have amended membership categories reflecting a distinction between students, but for this proposal, we are guided by ABCT's mission to strive for equity and access (as reflected in its Strategic Plan) and as such, propose to not distinguish voting privileges among membership categories.
- Concern: A student voting block might alter the status quo. Response: Students do not vote monolithically. Altering the status quo is needed in order for professional organizations like ABCT to stay a leader in our field

and to change orthodoxies about leaders within the organization (e.g., that they all need to be famous researchers).

- Concern: Student voting is less important than moving to a slate nomination election process. Response: The committee is conducting work in both of these fronts concurrently and aims to put forward a proposal for a revised election process later this year.