

*OPTN/UNOS Policy Oversight Committee*

# Proposal to Increase OPTN/UNOS Committee Terms to Three Years

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# Proposal to Increase OPTN/UNOS Committee Terms to Three Years

## Executive Summary

Most OPTN/UNOS committee members currently serve terms of two years, with the exception of the Patient Affairs (PAC), Transplant Administrators (TAC), and Ethics committees, who serve three-year terms. Committee members and committee leadership have expressed that it would be beneficial for all committee members to serve three-year terms to decrease committee turnover, enable members to continue work on long-term projects, and retain needed historical knowledge and expertise for a longer period.

## Is the sponsoring committee requesting specific feedback or input about the proposal?

Since three-year terms for committee Chairs and Vice Chairs would require, in some cases, a 9-year commitment to a committee (or ten if you include the *ad hoc* final year each Chair serves), this proposal leaves Chair and Vice Chair terms at two years each, with the exception of PAC, TAC and Ethics Committees. The proposal also leaves the Membership and Professional Standards committee (MPSC) terms at two years, since the volume of work for this committee tends to be larger than for other committees.

The Policy Oversight Committee (POC) seeks input from current committee members of all committees about:

1. Whether a two-year term for leadership is appropriate.
2. Ideas for a process for replacing committee members who do not participate or who are not appropriately engaged.

The POC requests input from the community about:

1. Whether three-year terms will likely increase efficiency and effectiveness of the committees.
2. Who should serve on the Policy Oversight Committee (POC), given that the POC's purpose is to review developing and proposed policies and Committee initiatives for the purpose of providing input both to the Committees and the Board with regard to some specific perspectives? Specifically, whether Vice Chairs of the other OPTN/UNOS committees are the best members to serve on the POC. Other viable options could be either immediate past committee Chairs or to have each committee appoint its own representative to serve on the POC.

# Proposal to Increase OPTN/UNOS Committee Terms to Three Years

*Affected Policies:* OPTN Bylaws Article VII, Sections 7.2, 7.3, and 7.5

*Sponsoring committee:* Policy Oversight

*Public Comment Period:* August 14 – October 14

## What problem will this proposal solve?

Currently committee members have terms of two years, except for Patient Affairs, Ethics, and Transplant Administrators committee members who serve three-year terms. The committees were specifically asked in spring 2015 if they believed that a two-year term is adequate to allow the completion of large projects that may take longer to complete. In response, committee members with current two-year terms voted almost unanimously to extend terms to three years. Those who currently serve three-year terms expressed the opinion that they thought that was the right amount of time. Examples of recent large projects that have taken longer than two-years to complete include KAS (Kidney Allocation System), ABO Blood Typing Requirements, and Revisions to LAS (Lung Allocation System).

Two-year terms also often mean that each year roughly half of the committee needs to be educated and oriented as to their committee duties, which is inefficient and may cause the committee to lose important expertise and historical knowledge.

## Why should you support this proposal?

This project will help the OPTN/UNOS run more efficiently since committee members will be able to serve longer on a committee and see important projects through to completion. It will also help committees to retain important historical knowledge and spend less time orienting new members on their duties as committee members. And, increasing committee terms would maximize the return on investment in orienting new committee members and getting them over the learning curve.

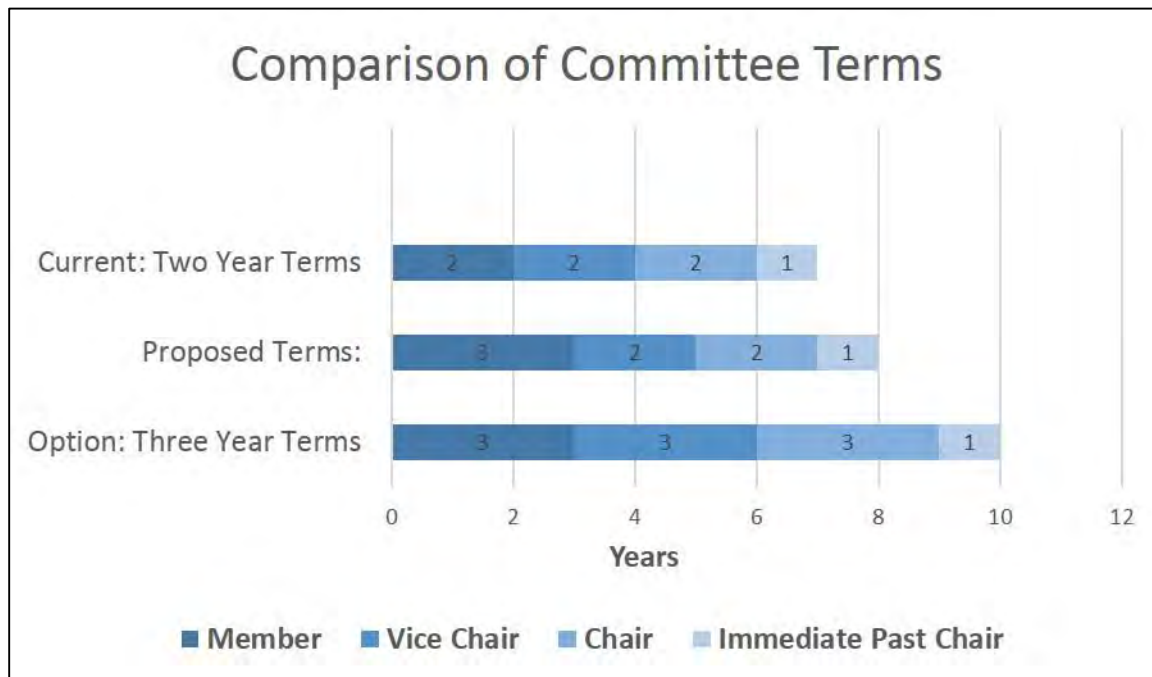
## How was this proposal developed?

This proposal resulted from a request of some members of the organ-specific committees who wanted to explore the possibility of increasing terms to three years since they often have large, complicated projects that need more time to complete. The POC was given this project for consideration since it represents the Vice Chairs from each of the OPTN/UNOS committees. The POC collected additional committee and member input through the following process:

- In spring 2015, each of the Vice Chairs from the POC presented the proposed plan to each of their OPTN/UNOS committees for an official vote on increasing committee terms to three years, and asked for specific input on leadership terms as well. Each of the committees voted overwhelmingly in support of increasing committee member terms to three years, but the results were mixed for increasing Chair and Vice Chair terms to three years.
- Later, the POC sent a survey to all current committee members that specifically asked:
  - Do you feel the current two-year term limits for your committee are too long, just right, or too short?
  - Do you think your committee would benefit from an increase in the current term length from two to three years? (Yes or No)

- Would you be willing to serve a three-year term instead of the current two-year term? (Yes or No)
- A three-year term could require Vice Chairs and committee Chairs to serve at least six consecutive years, as opposed to the current four years. Should leadership term lengths be different? (Yes or No)

After reviewing the committee votes, the survey results, and committee member comments, the POC considered three-year terms for all committees and leadership, but decided that a total of nine years (or 10 with the additional post-Chair *ad hoc* year) is likely too long and too much to expect from volunteers. The POC then discussed the options and decided that the best option is three-year terms for all committee members but leave two-year terms for committee leadership, other than the TAC, PAC, and Ethics committees which serve three-year terms and will continue to do so.



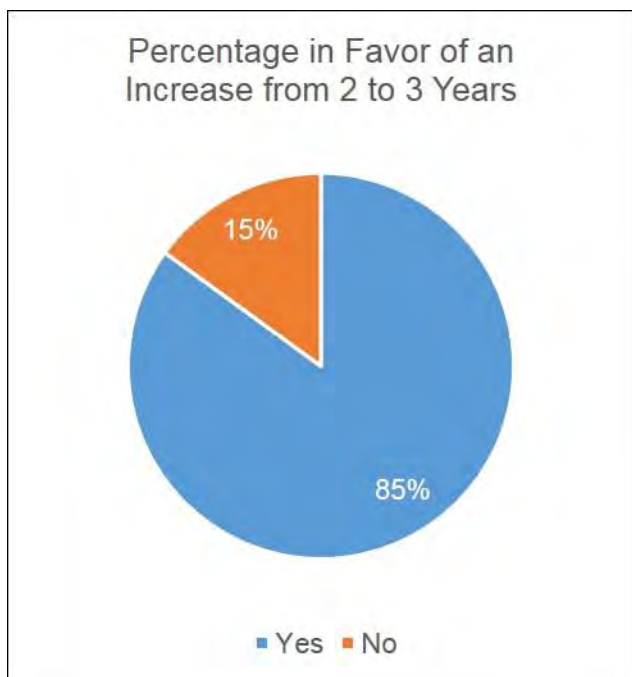
The MPSC will continue to serve two-year terms only, because those committee members believed that the large volume of work for this committee and the associated time commitment required of these committee members is too heavy a burden to place on volunteers for three years.

### How well does this proposal address the problem statement?

Some current committee members believed that the current two-year terms are too short to enable completion of large, complex projects and wanted to increase committee terms to three years. As a result, UNOS staff sent a survey to each member of the 19 OPTN/UNOS committees and received 123 responses out of the approximately 350 total members, as follows:

- At large/public (43%)
- Regional representatives (49.6%)
- Current Vice Chairs (2.5%)
- Current Chairs (5%)

The graph below shows the response to the question of whether terms should be increased to three years and shows that a majority of the respondents (85%) supported the increase in terms.



The POC explored the alternative solution of simply making the ability to serve three-year terms an operational change that could be offered to committee members on a case-by-case basis when certain expertise or historical knowledge was required from a particular member. Currently, a small minority of committee members have their terms extended: 16 members requested term extensions in 2013 and 20 in 2014. This usually occurs when the committee member is leading a key subgroup or serving as a collaborating member for another organization such as the American Society of Transplantation (AST), American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS), or The Organization for Transplant Professionals (NATCO). This practice is used judiciously since this effectively limits the opportunity for new members to participate in the committee process.

The POC did consider that longer terms means that there will be less rotation and the ability for others to participate, but ultimately decided that maintaining expertise and consistency for completion of important projects outweighed this concern, as well as decreasing the time required to orient as much as half of the committee each year.

One unintended consequence of this proposal could be that committees will be populated with members who are not engaged or do not participate regularly as required. Participation in committees is vitally important since quorum is required for all committee voting items. UNOS staff will review the current processes in place to remove non-participatory members to determine that they are appropriate and well implemented.

We may discover that the requirement to serve three-year terms is too long and discourages members from volunteering to serve on committees.

## Which populations are impacted by this proposal?

This project will affect all members of the committees except TAC, PAC, Ethics, and MPSC, who will see no change in their current committee terms. Since most committee members will be asked to serve longer terms, there will be fewer opportunities for people to serve as regional representatives on OPTN/UNOS

committees because the regions will not be able to nominate as many new committee members each year.

## How does this proposal support the OPTN Strategic Plan?

1. *Increase the number of transplants:* There is no impact to this goal.
2. *Improve equity in access to transplants:* There is no impact to this goal.
3. *Improve waitlisted patient, living donor, and transplant recipient outcomes:* There is no impact to this goal.
4. *Promote living donor and transplant recipient safety:* There is no impact to this goal.
5. *Promote the efficient management of the OPTN:* This project will help the OPTN run more efficiently since committee members will be able to serve longer on a committee and see important projects through to completion. It will also help committees to retain important historical knowledge and enable committees to spend less time orienting new members.

## How will the sponsoring committee evaluate whether this proposal was successful post implementation?

The POC will continue to collect input from committee members serving three-year terms to determine if the term length is increasing efficiency and enabling committees to complete projects more easily, through surveys, by directly communicating with each committee, or both. Staff will be able to evaluate if the average length of committee projects is decreasing based on information already provided for each committee project. The POC will also ask UNOS staff at regularly scheduled staff meetings, particularly regional administration and committee liaisons, for updates on how the three-year terms are affecting the membership operationally.

## How will the OPTN implement this proposal?

UNOS staff will need to update the processes for committee selection and appointment based on the new three-year terms for committee members and two-year terms for Vice Chairs and Chairs. This process will differ slightly from the process for the committees that currently serve three-year terms (Patient Affairs, Ethics, and Transplant Administrators committees) since their leadership also serve three-year terms and will continue to do so under this proposal. UNOS staff will review the process for reviewing committee members who are not engaged or who do not participate as required to ensure that the current process meets the needs of the committees when considering three-year terms.

If this proposal is passed by the Board, members will receive a policy notice, including the effective date. This proposal will not require programming in UNet<sup>SM</sup>.

## How will members implement this proposal?

There is nothing members need to do to implement this proposal. UNOS staff will educate all potential and new committee members that they will be committing to serve three-year terms when they volunteer for a committee. They will also communicate that leadership terms are two-years each for the Vice Chair and Chair.

## Will this proposal require members to submit additional data?

This proposal does not require additional data collection.

## How will members be evaluated for compliance with this proposal?

This proposal does not require any evaluation of member compliance.

## Policy or Bylaw Language

Proposed new language is underlined and (example) and language that is proposed for removal is struck through (~~example~~).

### 1 **7.2 Standing Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs**

2 Committee Chairs inform the OPTN president and the Executive Director of the activities of their  
3 Committees and report to the Board of Directors upon request.

4  
5 The treasurer of the OPTN serves as the Chair of the Finance Committee. The vice president, with  
6 approval of the Board of Directors, appoints the Chair of the other standing Committees.

7  
8 Chairs and Vice Chairs of the standing Committees have the following terms:

- 9
- 10 ■ The Patient Affairs, Ethics and Transplant Administrator Chairs and Vice Chairs serve three-year
  - 11 terms.
  - 12 ■ Other Chairs and Vice Chairs serve two-year terms.

13  
14 The vice president may appoint one or more Committee Chairs for a one-year term so that a staggered  
15 rotation is achieved. Committee Chairs may be appointed to consecutive terms. Chairs will serve an  
16 additional 1-year term as an *ex-officio* member of the Committee.

### 17 18 **7.3 Terms of Standing Committee Members**

19 The vice president appoints members of the Committees for terms of ~~two~~three years, except for ~~the~~  
20 ~~Patient Affairs, Ethics and Transplant Administrators Committee~~ Membership and Professional Standards  
21 Committee (MPSC) members, who serve ~~three~~two-year terms. When appointing standing Committee  
22 members, the vice president may also:

- 23
- 24 ■ Appoint up to ~~one-third~~half of the members of a Committee to a one-year term to achieve a staggered
  - 25 rotation.
  - 26 ■ Appoint any Committee member to an additional full or partial ~~consecutive~~-term whose expertise is
  - 27 needed for the Committee to continue its work.

### 28 29 **7.5 The Policy Oversight Committee (POC)**

30 The OPTN will have ~~as a permanent standing committee,~~ the Policy Oversight Committee (POC), that ~~The~~  
31 ~~POC~~ will be advisory to the Board of Directors. The POC will also:

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- 33 ■ Provide written recommendations about policies to the Board of Directors at least twice a year.
  - 34 ■ Review and comment on research projects being conducted and published by the OPTN and the
  - 35 Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR).
  - 36 ■ Work in collaboration with the SRTR Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to identify and develop
  - 37 SRTR research priorities.

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**A. Composition of POC**

The POC will be comprised of the Vice Chairs of ~~the organ-related and constituency Committees and the following other individuals as needed members:~~

- ~~1. Two public policy or public health representatives, with strong backgrounds in healthcare policy analysis.~~
- ~~2. Representatives from the public including transplant recipients, candidates, donors and their families.~~
- ~~3. Two professionals with expertise in applying research data to policy chosen by the SRTR.~~
- ~~4. Other individuals, as needed.~~

**B. Ex-officio Representation**

The Policy Oversight Committee will also have non-voting, *ex-officio* members from the Division of Transplantation of the HHS and the SRTR, or representatives they designate, as follows:

1. The U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Project Officer for the OPTN contract.
2. The Director of the Division of Transplantation.
3. One other Federal representative to be designated by the OPTN Project Officer.
4. The Project Officer of the SRTR contract.
5. Two *ex-officio*, non-voting representatives of the SRTR, chosen by the SRTR.

~~Current members of the OPTN Board of Directors may not serve on this Committee.~~

**C. POC Chair and Vice Chair**

The ~~president~~ vice president, with approval of the Board of Directors, will appoint the Chair and Vice Chair of the POC for two-year terms ~~the Chair of the POC~~. POC Chairs and Vice Chairs may be appointed to consecutive terms. The POC Chair will also serve an additional 1-year term as an *ex-officio* member of the Committee.

**D. Terms of POC**

~~With the exception of the MPSC Vice Chair, all standing Committee Vice Chairs, or a~~ representative of the Committee appointed by the vice president, serve *ex-officio* on the Policy Oversight Committee . All other members of the POC serve for terms equal to their terms as Committee Vice Chairs. POC terms begin on July 1.

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