

Governance Frequently Asked Questions

At the 2022 national convention, national council is recommending a *Bylaws* amendment to transition the national council roles to a governance board (president, national vice president for finance and six general vice presidents). The recommendation will be voted on by the convention body. The questions below are ones identified by staff and council to prepare and educate on the proposed changes. To learn more about governance and why it's beneficial for Sigma Kappa to transition to it, [please click here](#).

To support the transition to governance, the national and local volunteer structures will also be changing. Please see the links below for details on that transition.

Additional resources available:

- [Explanation of governance and why it's beneficial for Sigma Kappa to transition to governance](#)
- [Volunteer Structure Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Details on volunteer structure recommendations.](#)
- [Volunteer structure team diagrams](#)

What is governance?

- *Governance is defined as the practices and systems an organization utilizes to develop options and make decisions among those options. It is a shorthand way of describing how the governing body – national council – works. An operational board, as council has traditionally served, represents teams and does work. A governing board, as we are moving toward, thinks and decides for the good of the whole, and delegates the day-to-day work, either to staff or to operational volunteers.*

Why is Sigma Kappa transitioning to governance?

- *National council members have duties, outlined in our Bylaws, to supervise specific subject areas and oversee volunteer teams. Thus, the primary focus of any national council member is management of sorority operations and volunteers; organizational strategy is a secondary focus (usually during board meetings only).*
- *With a shift to governance, national council can focus primarily on organizational strategy and foresight, both inside and outside of board meetings.*

- *The candidate pool for council members will expand to all Sigma Kappa strategic leaders, rather than a presumed line of succession through operational volunteer teams.*
- *National council roles will become increasingly manageable for today's professional.*
- *The shift modernizes the board from a model that is more typical of new organizations that lack professional staff.*
- *More than two-thirds of NPC groups have transitioned to board of general vice presidents in a governance model.*

How does national council currently operate?

- *National council spends about 80% of its time focused on Sorority operations. This is in line with the duties of council members outlined in the Bylaws, which require council members to oversee subject areas and volunteer teams.*
- *National council spends about 20% of its time on strategy and foresight, usually only during once-a-month board meetings.*
- *Hours council women are currently committing to the operational side of the organization are not sustainable for today's professional. Many have full-time professional careers and families outside of their volunteer duties.*

What are the benefits to national council, staff, volunteers and the general membership?

- *For national council, governance means the opportunity to focus fully on providing strategic direction for the organization and the ability to reduce what for some council members is a 40 hour per week volunteer commitment.*
- *For staff, governance offers the opportunity to merge professional expertise with decision-making authority in conjunction with operational volunteer counterparts.*
- *For volunteers, governance in conjunction with the volunteer realignment creates a flatter structure, allowing for speedier decisions. The anticipated outcome is a transition to volunteer roles that require a reasonable time commitment and allow members to volunteer in ways that let them develop and utilize their skills and talents to best support members and chapters.*
- *For the general membership, this will create speedier decisions, more personalized support, and a national organization governed by board members who are positioned to spend their time focusing on strategic and futuristic thinking rather than day-to-day operations.*

What does this change mean for Sigma Kappa?

- *Specifically, this means we will have a national president, a national vice president for finance and six vice presidents-at-large serving on national council.*

- *This shift allows national council to be forward-thinking and not just react to the challenge of the minute. It creates more opportunities for members to engage at all phases of their membership experience.*
- *A governance model will allow sufficient time to research industry trends, prepare for unforeseen challenges and protect the assets of the organization.*

What changes can our members expect?

- *The first change will be to our Bylaws at the 2022 convention, when the positional titles and duties for our national vice presidents are changed to general vice presidents-at-large (excluding the national president and national vice president for finance). There will also be changes to the nominating process, the volunteer structure, and the staff structure to ensure that we are providing appropriate support across Sigma Kappa.*

What is the timeline for the changes?

- *National council has been focused on the shift to a governance board for several years. In 2020, we began working with a governance expert (consultant) to guide us through the concrete steps necessary to finally implement this change and appointed a volunteer structure task force (VSTF) to support the shift of national council to a governance board and meet the needs of an evolving organization. In 2021, we engaged an outside firm (consultants) to recommend changes to the staff structure to support this shift.*
- *Proposed bylaw amendments outlining changes to national council roles and the nominating committee will be shared in August 2021 prior to the start of the nominating process. Although candidates will be slated into the current named positions (national vice president for alumnae, etc.), the expectation will be that those women will serve as non-specific vice presidents on national council after the approval of the bylaws at convention 2022.*
- *The volunteer structure task force recommendations will be shared in June 2021, with the expectation that volunteers will be interviewed and appointed into the new structure for January 2022.*

How does this shift align with our commitment to DEIA?

- *The change to a strategic governance model will allow national council the space to ensure that our organization continues to think in an inclusive manner. The changes to the volunteer structure will also create transparency and additional opportunities for volunteers to engage in ways that suit both the volunteer and the organization.*

What happens if the Bylaws amendment doesn't pass at convention 2022?

- *We hope that the amendment will pass as it will help national council and thus Sigma Kappa be a more strategic organization. In the case that it does not, national council titles will remain but national council roles will be focused on strategy instead of operational areas.*

How does this impact the other two entities?

- *The Sigma Kappa Foundation already operates as a governing board, so the national council shift will in some ways model their operation. The Foundation will review its bylaws and trustee ex officio positions and recommend changes based on the new structure.*
- *The National Housing Corporation uses a mixed board approach to governance. Positions offer governing and managing support to the organizational structure. A national council member will continue to serve as a liaison to the board. (It has not yet been determined if it will be the national vice president of finance or other qualified board member)*

Where does decision-making authority lie?

- *Decision-making authority for day-to-day operational decisions will be articulated in volunteer and staff job descriptions – in general, operational decisions will rest with staff and volunteers.*
- *National council will maintain authority over policy changes in the National Policy Handbook, opening and closing chapters, membership status changes, and appointment of volunteers.*

Who will volunteers report to?

- *Volunteer directors are peers and have equal authority. They will work in conjunction with staff counterparts to make decisions.*
- [Link to diagram](#)

Who directs projects and owns the work?

- *It will depend on where the project generates, but in general, operational volunteer directors and staff will own and manage projects and work flow.*