



## On the candidate trail

*ASWB's Nominating Committee is charged with developing a slate of candidates for 11 seats on the Board of Directors and Nominating Committee that reflects diversity and fulfills the requirements of ASWB's bylaws*

While the U.S. presidential primaries fill newscasts in both the U.S. and Canada, ASWB's Nominating Committee is making election news of its own. The responsibility for slating 22 candidates to run for seven positions on the Board of Directors and four seats on the Nominating Committee rests on the shoulders of four dedicated volunteers: current Nominating Committee members Sandra Barlow of Florida, Anwar Najor-Durack of Michigan, and Barb Whitenect of New Brunswick, and Past President Dorinda Noble of Texas, who was appointed to the committee by President M. Jenise Comer.

In the history of ASWB, there has never been a slate this large. The Board of Directors has never been larger than eight members, and the Nominating Committee has been stable at three elected members, with the addition of either the president-elect or the past president as a fourth committee member by presidential appointment. That all changed in November 2015, when delegates voted to approve amendments recommended by the ASWB Bylaws and Resolutions Committee to increase the size of the Board to 11 members and the Nominating Committee to five members. The recommendation to increase the size of the Board was

based on best practices according to the size of an organization of this nature. Increasing the size of the Nominating Committee was recommended to ensure the committee had enough members to identify and network with potential ASWB leaders for all elected positions.

The committee held its first meeting by conference call in February, a change made in recognition of the amount of work ahead. During this meeting, the committee elected Whitenect as its chair, set its schedule of follow-up calls and meetings, and began planning for its in-person meeting at the Association Education Meeting in April.

Committee members also began strategizing about how to recruit candidates for these positions and how to encourage membership to submit recommendations. "We intend to use several different modalities to broaden how we get information out and encourage interest," said Whitenect.

The committee will have its first opportunity to address membership in person at the Education Meeting. Other outreach is planned, including talking with committee chairs about the volunteers currently serving, having more opportunities to talk one on one with membership at the Education Meeting, and taking advantage of

communications such as the *Association News*.

Whitenect envisions the most challenging aspect will be finding candidates to fill the slate of 22 when a slate in past years numbered half that, at most. From her experience with the New Brunswick board, Whitenect believes it is important for the Nominating Committee to begin long-range planning to build a pool of volunteer leaders. "It's really important that we look beyond the current needs and look at future planning so that we have a collection of people to call upon," she said. "It adds to the robustness of the organization."

The seven Board of Directors seats up for election in November are: president-elect, secretary, and five director at large seats, including the three new positions created in 2015 by the adoption of bylaws amendments. Two of the director at large seats are for licensed social workers; one seat is for a member board staff member; and one seat is for a public member. The fifth seat is designated as an open seat, which means that it may be filled by a licensed social worker, a public member, or a member board staff member. According to the bylaws, the election for the Director at Large Open seat is held in odd years. To bridge the gap until the 2017 elections, the candidate elected to this seat will serve a one-year transitional term. If otherwise eligible, the candidate elected to the one-year term may be nominated for a full two-year term (or terms, depending on the bylaws requirements) after completing service during this transitional year.

Four seats on the Nominating Committee will be up for election



*The 2016 Nominating Committee includes Sandra Barlow (FL), Anwar Najor-Durack (MI), and Chair Barb Whitenect (NB). Not shown: Dorinda Noble (TX).*

this year, two added due to 2015 bylaws amendments. Candidates for three of these seats will be elected for two-year terms. The fourth seat will be filled by a candidate elected to a one-year transitional term to fulfill bylaws requirements for election for this seat to be held in odd-numbered years. This term rotation creates continuity. Barlow and Whitenect served on the committee last year and will complete their terms this year. Najor-Durack was elected in 2015 and will serve until 2017. She will provide the continuity and experience to guide the four new members who are elected this year.

While having two candidates run for each open position is optimal, it is possible that only one candidate may be slated for some positions during these elections. Such a scenario is not unprecedented, as happened in 2015 and in 2000, when only one candidate was put forward for the director at large, public member seat on the Board of Directors. Developing a pool of members interested in serving in leadership positions as Whitenect suggests builds capacity for the future and turns a potentially disruptive process, nominations from the

floor, into a supportive one.

Service on the Nominating Committee is a serious commitment of time, brainpower, and energy to identify the best leaders for the organization. Committee members are assisted in this major undertaking by ASWB staff members Dwight Hymans, executive vice president, and Melissa Ryder, executive services manager. Committee members and staff cannot do it alone, however, said Whitenect. "Membership involvement is critical to our success."

Members who are interested in nominating themselves or someone else for a position on the Board of Directors or the Nominating Committee may submit their recommendations through the [ASWB website](http://www.aswb.org). Suggestions may be made by any board or staff member or by a board as a whole. Prior service on an ASWB committee or task force and attendance at ASWB meetings are important prerequisites for most elected positions. Other requirements are outlined in the recommendation forms. The deadline for submitting recommendations is July 1, 2016.