

Trustee Removal Procedures Committee
Report for BOT Meeting - October 13, 2011

Since January 2010, the six-member Trustee Removal Procedures Committee has been tasked with drawing up a formal set of procedures for situations in which a Trustee is alleged to have behaved in a manner (i.e., a return to gambling, or an act or acts deemed detrimental to GA as a whole) that would necessitate his or her removal from the Board.

To be clear, the Committee was *not* tasked with formulating a comprehensive *description* of acts detrimental to GA as a whole, or even a set of criteria for identifying such acts, as such a categorical definition would necessarily be extremely broad, unwieldy, and no doubt flawed in unforeseeable ways.

Currently, the GA Guidance Code stipulates that a Trustee may be removed from the Board by a 2/3 vote of the Board members. However, up until now, there have been no procedural steps delineated that would precede such a vote -- that is, no protocols for determining whether such a vote should take place, or specifically what types of testimony or discussion should occur prior to a vote.

At the May 2011 BOT meeting in Cherry Hill, a discussion of whether or not to possibly remove a particular Board member shed light on the need for explicitly defined protocols. In the absence of a structured procedure, the discussion assumed a quality that was not consistent with the value of *orderliness*, as prescribed in Section IV, Paragraph 3 of the Procedures ("Meeting Presentations and Proceedings"). The result was a process that was unclear, unfocused, and -- at moments -- simply confusing.

After much earnest labor, the Trustee Removal Procedures Committee has authored a step-by-step procedural protocol for the removal of a Trustee. We believe that the proposed procedures are fair, measured and precise. At the upcoming BOT meeting in Los Angeles, the Trustees will vote on Agenda Item #41 whether or not to accept these new procedures as GA-approved literature and agree to incorporate the necessary modification in our Guidance Code. The committee urgently hopes that the vote will be in favor of approval.

The procedures include mechanisms that can avert the necessity of a vote at the BOT level, including a mandatory 45-day period during which the member filing a complaint against a sitting Trustee must make a good-faith effort to have a hearing and resolve the issue at the level of his or her local Intergroup. Then, if the matter cannot be resolved locally, it will be referred to a special 5-member Trustee Removal Merit Panel, comprised of geographically disparate Trustees (to avoid bias). This Panel will evaluate the merit of the charge (based on information and testimony submitted by the concerned parties) and determine whether or not the matter should be considered by the full Board of Trustees. These preliminary procedural "layers" will ensure that only legitimate and serious complaints reach the BOT, underscoring the gravity of what it means to remove a Trustee from service.

Should the complaint reach the BOT, both the petitioner and the Trustee in question will have ample opportunity to submit testimony and have their perspectives heard. BOT members will have the opportunity to question the concerned parties, and the vote itself will be taken by secret ballot, with a 2/3 majority remaining as the standard for removal of a Trustee.

Despite the various safeguards and buffers built into the process, the procedures are constructed in such a way as to ensure expediency as well. The "Trustee Removal Guidelines and Procedures" have been carefully wrought by a committee of six GA members who very much hope that they will not be needed often. But when a crisis arises -- as crises do -- it is critical to have recourse to an efficient, practical, unambiguous process. We strongly believe the Procedures provide just that.

Respectfully submitted,
Ed E. – Committee Chair
Area 2 – Northern California