

General Assembly Commissioner Proposal

At the November meeting of Blackhawk Presbytery, the following motion was approved: “That Presbytery asks the Presbytery Council to re-consider the Presbytery policy of nominating commissioners to serve for General Assembly (and Synod if those nominations are also made by a rotation method), in order to align with principles of representation according to gender, age, geography, etc.”

In response, the Presbytery Council appointed a committee to develop a proposal. That committee consists of John Dillon, Anita Stuart-Steva, Laurie Walker and Jim McCrea (chair). They have submitted the following proposal for your consideration:

Policy for determining commissioners to General Assembly

Who is eligible for election as commissioner?

Any Minister of Word and Sacrament, who is a member in good standing in Blackhawk Presbytery — whether they are actively serving or honorably retired — and who has not served as a commissioner for any of the previous six General Assemblies.

Or any Ruling Elder, who is a member in good standing in their home congregation — whether they are currently serving on that church’s Session or not — and whose home church has not had an elder serve as a commissioner for any of the previous six General Assemblies.

Please note that anyone who has served as a Young Adult Advisory Delegate or a Theological Seminary Advisory Delegate within the time frames above will not have that fact impact their eligibility for election as a Commissioner.

For the purpose of determining how long it has been since any Minister of Word and Sacrament has served at General Assembly or any congregation has sent a ruling elder, the presbytery will be responsible for creating and maintaining a cumulative list of Blackhawk commissioners to General Assembly. That list will be readily available on the presbytery website and/or in any other readily accessible format.

Anyone who wishes to be considered as a candidate for Commissioner must complete an application form (attached below) in the appropriate category — Minister of Word and Sacrament or Ruling Elder. Ministers of Word and Sacrament may submit that form directly to the presbytery’s Nominating Committee. Ruling Elders must submit their forms to the Session of their local congregation. The Session is asked to discuss the form with the candidate and then vote on whether to endorse his or her application. No Ruling Elder application may be submitted to the presbytery without the endorsement of the candidate’s Session. In addition, no Session may endorse more than one candidate — Ruling Elder or YAAD — in any given year.

After the Session has endorsed a Ruling Elder candidate, his or her application — with the signature of the Clerk of Session — is sent to the Blackhawk Presbytery Nominating Committee. Those applications must be submitted by the date of the September presbytery meeting in the year prior to General Assembly.

If there are more than four application forms turned in by either Ruling Elder or Minister candidates, the Nominating Committee will work to reduce that number to four candidates for each type of commissioner. This reduction may be done through the answers candidates give on their application form, as well as by answers to questions posed to the candidates in person or via phone/Skype interviews or email responses, followed by voting by the members of the committee. The Nominating Committee is charged to make their selections keeping in mind the need for balanced representation in regards to race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction.

If there are less than four candidates in either category, the Nominating Committee will be charged with recruiting eligible candidates to fill the slate of candidates.

The Nominating Committee would then be responsible for forwarding a maximum of four Minister nominees and four Ruling Elder nominees on to the presbytery. The application forms of those candidates will be distributed to presbytery commissioners prior to the November presbytery meeting.

Each of those nominees will have the opportunity to make a brief personal statement at the presbytery meeting if they choose to do so. Those statements will be limited to two minutes per person.

After any personal statements are given, a prayer for guidance will be given by the moderator or his/her designee, then paper ballots will be distributed to the presbytery commissioners. The ballots will have the names of the candidates printed in alphabetic order by last name. Each commissioner will be given the right to vote for two Ministerial candidates and two Ruling Elder candidates.

The ballots will then be tallied and the results announced at that meeting. The top two vote getters will be elected Commissioners. The person who receives the third highest number of votes will be the first alternate; the one who receives the fourth highest votes will be second alternate. In the event of a tie that gets in the way of determining these results, only those candidates involved in the tie will have their names placed in a runoff election until they may be sorted into the appropriate position.

**Application form for Minister of Word and Sacrament
Commissioner candidates**

Name _____

Address _____

Church you are serving _____

Age _____

Ordination date _____

Year of the last time applicant was a G.A. Commissioner _____

I've never served as a G.A. Commissioner

I've never served as a G.A. Commissioner, but I served as a Youth Advisory Delegate or Theological Advisory Delegate in the year _____

Reason for wanting to be a G.A. Commissioner in this particular year? _____

What Presbytery committees have you served on and/or what other involvement have you had in higher judicatories (presbytery, synod, General Assembly)?

What do you see as the top three issues impacting the PC(USA) today? _____

What do you see as the top three issues impacting the world today? _____

Where do you see God acting in your community and/or in Blackhawk Presbytery today? _____

What do you do to try to discern the will of God? _____

**Application form for Ruling Elder
Commissioner candidates**

Name _____

Address _____

Church you are serving _____

Age _____

Ordination date _____

Year of the last time applicant was a G.A. Commissioner _____

I've never served as a G.A. Commissioner

I've never served as a G.A. Commissioner, but I served as a Youth Advisory
Delegate or Theological Advisory Delegate in the year _____

Reason for wanting to be a G.A. Commissioner in this particular year? _____

What Presbytery committees have you served on and/or what other involvement
have you had in higher judicatories (presbytery, synod, General Assembly)?

What do you see as the top three issues impacting the PC(USA) today? _____

What do you see as the top three issues impacting the world today? _____

Where do you see God acting in your community and/or in Blackhawk Presbytery today? _____

What do you do to try to discern the will of God? _____

Endorsed by the Session of _____ church.

Affirmed by the Clerk of Session _____ (signature)

Date the Endorsement action was taken _____

Policy for determining Young Adult Advisory Delegates to General Assembly

Who is eligible for election as a YAAD? Any person between the ages of 17-23 who is active in the ministry of their home church as defined by the Session of that church. They must also be a member of a congregation that didn't send a YAAD to the previous General Assembly.

Like the commissioner candidates, YAAD candidates must fill out an application form (attached below) and be endorsed by the local Session. In the case of YAADs, however, the Session and pastor have the additional role of keeping their eyes out for young people who might enjoy the General Assembly experience and who would presumably do a good job while there. If a suitable person is identified, the Session or pastor should try to encourage that person to consider the possibility of applying.

To assist in that recruitment, here is what the General Assembly says about the function of the group of YAADs:

"Advisory delegates advise commissioners in a variety of ways throughout the assembly. The General Assembly recognizes that few young people are likely to be elected as commissioners. Therefore, the category of young adult advisory delegate was created in 1970 so that those voices could be heard. The General Assembly is open to having young people in its midst and encourages the voice of young adult advisory delegates in its deliberations.

"The basic role and function of a young adult advisory delegate (YAAD) is to make the assembly aware of issues and ideas they might not otherwise come to know."

For those YAAD candidates who complete the form and are endorsed by their local Session, the process is the same as that of commissioner candidates.

The form should be submitted to the Blackhawk Presbytery Nominating Committee by the date of the September presbytery meeting in the year prior to General Assembly.

Then, through interviews and the text on the applications, the Nominating Committee will narrow the field down to a maximum of three candidates, whose names and applications are forwarded on to the presbytery commissioners prior to the November presbytery meeting. Again, the Nominating Committee is charged to make their selections keeping in mind the need for balanced representation in regards to age, gender, theology, etc. In addition, the Nominating Committee is charged with recruiting candidates if less than three applications are received.

The YAAD candidates will then be voted on by presbytery with the person receiving the largest number of votes being elected the YAAD from Blackhawk Presbytery. The person who receives the second highest number of votes will be the first alternate; the one who receives the third highest votes will be second alternate. In the event of a tie that gets in the way determining these results, those candidates involved in the tie will have their names placed in a runoff election until they may be sorted into the appropriate position.

**Application form for Young Adult
Advisory Delegate candidates**

Name _____

Address _____

Church of membership _____

Age _____

Reason for wanting to be a YAAD? _____

What church and/or Presbytery ministries have you been involved in?

What do you see as the top three issues impacting the PC(USA) today? _____

What do you see as the top three issues impacting the world today? _____

Where do you see God acting in your community and/or in Blackhawk Presbytery today? _____

What do you hope to learn from the experience of being a YAAD? _____

Endorsed by Session of _____ church.

Signed by Clerk of Session _____

Date the Endorsement action was taken _____