

THE  
FORUM  
ON EDUCATION  
ABROAD

Operations of the Forum Council

Revised 8/1/18

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## The Forum Council

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The Forum on Education Abroad's mission is to serve as the collective voice of U.S. post-secondary education abroad. To benefit students, The Forum develops and disseminates comprehensive standards of good practice, resources, and training; advocates for education abroad and its value; and engages the field in critical dialogue. The Forum includes the Forum Council, which is elected by the voting members of the organization.

### Constitution of the Council

The Council consists of fifteen members elected by the voting members of The Forum, at least eight of whom represent voting member institutions of The Forum, and is headed by a Chair and Vice Chair elected by Council members. The Council consists of a Nominations Committee, committees and, as needed, working groups and task forces.

Council membership should reflect a balanced representation of the constituencies of The Forum's membership. Council members serve three-year terms, and each Council member may serve a maximum of two terms.

For a current list of Council members and their Council terms, see: <https://www.forumea.org/about-us/who-we-are/forum-council>.

### Role of the Council

The Council serves as part of the shared leadership of The Forum, along with the Board of Directors ("Board") and The Forum staff ("staff"). A strong partnership among these three entities allows for a healthy flow of ideas, permitting the organization to evolve with the field of education abroad. One of the primary roles of Council members is to represent The Forum membership and the greater field, and communicate the interests and needs of the field to The Forum. The Council works primarily and collaboratively with the staff to assess and produce member programs, resources, services, and benefits. This work is accomplished through the Council's committees and working groups, and service on these groups is an essential responsibility of Council members.

The Council apprises the Board of its activities, and these activities further the mission and strategic plan of the organization by providing Forum members with meaningful products and benefits. Strategic decisions are overseen by the Board, which can call for adjustments as it deems necessary. The Council Chair, who sits on the Board *ex-officio*, takes primary responsibility for communications with the Board through attending Board meetings twice a year. On an ongoing basis, the Council Chair updates the Forum President ("President") on the Council's activities, and the President may include any important updates in quarterly reports to the Board. The Board, in its role of monitoring the performance of the organization, may provide direction to the Council when it deems necessary.

To further facilitate communication between the Board and Council, at least one joint meeting takes place per year, typically during the summer, overlapping between Board and Council meetings. Such meetings are scheduled in tandem with staff and Board and are designed to give all three bodies an opportunity to discuss critical issues in The Forum and the field of education abroad. An additional joint meeting such as at the annual conference may also be warranted.

Additionally successful communication is achieved through regular contact between the Board Chair, Council Chair, and President, which can take place by email, phone, and in person, at the discretion of each person.

## Operations of the Council

### Annual Plan

Each year, an annual work plan is jointly developed by representatives of the Council and staff, which helps to focus the Council's efforts and ensure that new projects and initiatives are aligned with The Forum's current strategic plan. Planning begins in advance of the Council's meeting at the annual conference, with a discussion by staff and Council leadership (Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary). A rough draft is prepared and distributed to staff and Council members prior to the meeting. During the meeting, a discussion on the plan takes place, both on the projects/initiatives to be developed as well as a consideration of various types of support needed to carry out the work. This includes whether existing groups should continue, be reconfigured or redirected, or disbanded, and if any new groups should be formed. Following the meeting, staff and Council leadership incorporate changes and finalize the annual plan, which is shared with Council members. The Council Chair presents the final approved annual plan as part of the report on Council activities to the Board.

### Committees and Working Groups

The need for committees and working groups is determined during the development of the annual plan. These groups are designed to be linked to strategic initiatives with clearly defined beginning and end dates. The term "committee" is used for any ongoing project, and typically one that recurs on an annual basis, e.g. conference, state of the field survey, awards. "Working groups" designate units organized around a one-time project, e.g. creation of a new publication, revision to the *Standards of Good Practice*.

The Forum Council also solicits and reviews suggestions for projects by members through an on-line form on The Forum's website. The Council and staff discuss the projects to determine if the proposed project addresses a need in the field, provides potential benefit to the membership, its degree of innovation, assessment of time for the project to be completed, budget and staffing considerations, and whether or not a new group needs to be formed or whether the work can be done entirely by staff, depending on the nature of the work. Proposed ideas are ideally discussed at the Council meetings; however, when the project is time-sensitive, the Council Chair may convene a conference call or web meeting to discuss the project. When new groups are needed, they should be established as a collaborative effort between the Council, Council leadership, and staff, typically during Council meetings but also as need arises.

Members of committees and working groups are recruited through an open call. The Council leadership and staff confirm the appointment of members, ensuring representation of different Forum constituencies and striving to represent the diversity of the field with attention paid to gender, geography (including members from outside the U.S.), ethnicity, institutional type, and professional and academic expertise. The Council Chair communicates results to selected members via email.

Each committee and working group leader is determined by Council leadership and a designated staff member. The group leader should have relevant expertise and passion, based on the topic. Each group will ideally include a Council representative who serves as a liaison and provides updates during Council meetings. Each Council member is expected to serve on at least one committee or working group. Each group is also assigned a staff member whose role is to support and move forward the group's work, ensuring work completion by the stated deadline. The staff member should be included in all correspondence and meetings.

### Committees

Forum Council committees take up work that happens on an annual or regular basis. Committee chairs are expected to maintain regular contact with committee members to keep them moving forward in carrying out the work plan. Telephone conferences, e-mail, and face-to-face meetings at meetings and conferences are

effective ways to manage the Committee’s work. The Forum has a telephone conferencing service, scheduled through staff, which is available for use by committees at any time.

### Working Groups

After members have been selected, the Council Chair sends a welcome email along with the group’s charge, objectives/expected results, and key dates/deadlines. The email should include a copy to the President & CEO and/or designee and Vice Chair of the Council. When a working group is not meeting its objectives by the stated deadline, the group leader and staff member will do their best to resolve the issue(s). As needed, the Council Chair and senior Forum leadership can be brought in to determine the best course of action. At times, staff may provide additional assistance for projects, sometimes developing first drafts, for example, and then gaining feedback. This permits groups to benefit from staff members’ expertise and move projects forward more quickly and efficiently, while gaining important input along the way.

Generally, there should not be a need to develop working groups outside of the regular annual meetings, as most projects tend to be ongoing and not urgent. If an urgent need does develop, staff and the Council leadership will discuss whether an existing working group can handle the project or whether a new group needs to be formed. The Council is notified of the development of any new groups, and given the opportunity to provide input should there be any concerns or recommendations.

Major projects, reports, and other documents produced by these groups are submitted to the full Council for review and comment. Feedback on projects from Council members is shared with group members, typically through the Council liaison. The Council Chair consults with the President as to whether or not Board review of a project may be appropriate. If Board review is appropriate, the Council Chair submits documentation to the President, who presents it to the Board. Final products are reviewed by the Council and staff and approved by senior Forum Leadership before being distributed or made public.

Once the work of a committee or working group has been accomplished, the Council Chair thanks members for their service and disbands the group.

### Annual Assessment of and Report on Annual Plan

At the end of each academic year, committees and working group chairs and designated staff members should submit to the Council Chair and the President an assessment of progress during the year that details the successes, challenges, and any modifications made to the plan. This report is to be disseminated to the Council and forms an important element in the Council Chair’s reports to the Board.

## Council Dropbox

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The Council’s Dropbox is used to provide ready access to key Council documents, and individual folders are created for each committee, working group, and task force. The folders include original charges as well as any meeting minutes and documents created. Access is given to all Council members and designated staff.

## Forum Council Member Position Description

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### Specific Obligations

- Advocate for and promote The Forum’s [mission, vision, and foundational principles](#);
- Prepare for, attend, and actively contribute to twice-annual in-person Council meetings and in two conference call meetings;
- Participate actively in Forum committees and working groups;

- Assist the Council Chair and staff in vetting new projects and proposals;
- Actively engage Forum members in order to solicit feedback on the work of The Forum and identify member needs in the changing landscape of the field; and
- Assist staff in other ways, for example by helping to represent The Forum when hosting an information table at conference exhibit halls.

## Term of Office

Council members are elected to a three-year term, and may serve a maximum of two terms. Ideally, fifteen (15) members serve three-year terms from July 1st to June 30th of the respective years. Members are eligible for re-election, but there is no guarantee or expectation that a member will be re-nominated as a candidate or serve more than one term.

Council members are expected to participate actively in the Council, attend regularly scheduled Council meetings and phone calls, and participate in one or more committee/working group. Those who are not carrying out one or more of these duties may be removed from the Council and/or may not be added to a ballot at the time of reelection, at the discretion of the Council Chair and President. It is also important for Council members to be actively engaged in the field of education abroad through some sort of employment, so as to represent The Forum's membership. A Council member who leaves the field will be granted up to one year to reenter or will be asked to step down.

## Meeting Attendance

Council members are expected to participate in twice-annual in-person Council meetings and in two conference call meetings. In keeping with The Forum's fiscal-year membership and Council election cycle, the first meeting takes place during the summer via an in-person meeting typically in July, at The Forum offices or another location. Orientation of newly-elected Council members generally occurs via a webinar in advance of the July meeting. Second and third-quarter meetings are held by conference call. The fourth in-person meeting occurs before, during, or after the Annual Forum Conference and can run from two hours to a full day depending on the tasks at hand. An additional joint Board/Council meeting is scheduled in tandem with the annual July meeting, typically immediately following the Council meeting and just before the Board meeting.

The Council Chair is responsible for informing the Council members about the schedule of meetings. Dates for the meetings for the following year are set as soon as practical to aid in planning.

The Forum believes that lack of institutional funding should not be a barrier to attending in-person Council meetings. Council members' institutions and organizations are expected to cover the costs for Council members to attend the twice-annual in-person meetings. However, in cases where a Council member's institution or organization is unable to cover such costs, Council members may request support by submitting a travel grant form to Forum staff.

## Confidentiality and Conflict of Interests

Council members have access to records, plans, and other proprietary information of The Forum and are thereby privy to confidential information about organizational changes and strategic initiatives. Council members are expected to keep this information confidential and are also asked to sign a confidentiality agreement and Conflict of Interest form at the start of each year of service on the Council. These documents are reviewed by staff, who follow up on any missing documents until they are received.

Conflicts of interest may arise in terms of leadership service to other organizations. Given both the level of responsibility and time commitment associated with being a Forum Council member, Council members are

expected to put their service to The Forum before service obligations to other national-level organizations in the field of education abroad, particularly in leadership positions.

## Service

While Council work requires significant commitments of time and effort, there are benefits to such service, some of which include:

- The opportunity to have an influence on the overall direction of The Forum and the field of education abroad;
- A chance to work with highly-committed colleagues on a variety of initiatives that span the field;
- Multiple opportunities to demonstrate leadership; and
- Recognition as a leading professional in education abroad.

## Election of Members of the Council

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As provided in the bylaws, Section 9.04, members of The Forum Council are elected annually by the voting members via electronic ballot. Nominations are generated by the Council's Nominations Committee.

The Forum Council will not move forward with nominations for colleagues from institutions or organizations currently represented on the Council or the Board. In the case of multiple nominees from the same institution or organization, the Council Nominations Committee will consult with the institutional representative and request that one nominee be endorsed.

### Forum Council Nominations Process

#### Forming the Nominations Committee

Immediately following The Forum Annual Conference, the Forum Council Nominations Committee is formed, consisting of the Vice Chair of Council, who acts as Chair of the Nominations Committee, two Council members, the Vice Chair of the Board, and a representative of staff appointed by the President. If the Vice Chair of the Council is up for re-election to The Forum Council, a replacement will serve as the Chair of the Nominations Committee; the replacement will be named by the Council Chair in consultation with staff. Given The Forum's commitment to diversity and inclusion, one of the Council members on the Nominations Committee is assigned by the Chair of the Nominations Committee to identify and actively reach out to potentially diverse candidates, encouraging them to self-nominate.

#### Call for Nominations

A call for nominations is posted on The Forum website and in the *Forum News*, with a link to the online Forum Council Nominations form. There is a two-week minimum time period for nominations.

To encourage a diverse range of nominees so as to fully represent The Forum membership, the following text may serve as a sample for the call for nominations:

“The Forum on Education Abroad Council seeks to engage diverse representatives from education abroad and higher education to effectively represent the membership on the Council. In seeking nominations, the Council is particularly interested in nominees from underrepresented institutions and demographics including but not limited to nominees from community colleges, non U.S.-based institutions and organizations, young and midcareer professionals, minority-serving institutions, and institutions with diverse student populations.”

Nominations should make a compelling case for what the nominee would bring to the Council and to The Forum's mission and goals. A compelling case includes the nominee's prior engagements with the field of education abroad, with The Forum, and involvement and work in topic areas in the field, including applicable training and expertise.

### Determining the Slate of Nominees

After the deadline, the Nominations Committee reviews the nominations received and forms the slate of candidates. The slate should consist of two more candidates than there are vacant spaces on The Forum Council. The Nominations Committee should consider the expertise, interest, experience and type of constituency of the Council members cycling off and seek candidates who will maintain a balance of expertise, interest, experience, and type of constituency on the future Council. Special attention needs to be placed on ensuring that the slate includes a diverse group of candidates (see Call for Nominations above).

*If nominations received in response to the open call ("nominated candidates") are adequate to form an appropriate slate:* the Chair of the Nominations Committee informs the President and Council Chair of the candidates' names for final vetting. Barring any objections, these candidates are notified by The Forum Council Nominations Committee Chair via the [council@forumea.org](mailto:council@forumea.org) email address, with a copy to the designated staff member, and are asked to provide a statement in support of their candidacy to be placed on The Forum website. Along with this email, the candidates are provided with The 'Forum Council Member Job Description' and examples of candidates' statements from the previous year's election. Candidates send their statements [council@forumea.org](mailto:council@forumea.org).

*If The Forum Council Nominations Committee decides that, after reviewing the nominations, the nominations received in response to the open call are not adequate to form an appropriate slate:* the open call for nominations is extended as needed until the slate is filled.

*Reelection of standing Forum Council members:* Council members whose terms are expiring and who wish to stand for a second term should complete the online Forum Council Nominations form. The Forum Council Nominations Committee decides whether or not to add these members to the election slate based primarily on individual members' prior contributions to the Council and to ensure a diverse range of nominees.

### Voting Process

Once a slate of candidates has been determined, the candidates' names and statements are posted on The Forum website. An announcement is also posted on the website and in The Forum News, notifying members that a Council election is in process and encouraging institutional representatives to vote. A separate message goes out to each institutional representative, who votes on behalf of his or her institution via an electronic ballot. The deadline for voting is at least 30 days from when the election is announced. The candidates receiving the most votes are elected.

## Officers of the Council

The elected officers of the Council leadership are the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary, who constitute an executive committee within the Council.

### Election of Officers of the Council

When a Council Chair, Vice Chair and/or Secretary completes a term, either by cycling off the Council or by stepping down, the President calls for a nomination for the open position(s). This call goes to current members of the Council. The President issues a ballot containing the names of nominees for Chair, Vice Chair,

and/or Secretary and conducts the election. A tally of the winning votes is shared with the Council, and the nominees receiving the most votes are appointed. In the event of a tie for a position, an election is re-run for that position, with only the tied nominees on the ballot. In the event of a further tie, a new vote is taken as many times as needed to settle it.

Council officers are elected to a three-year leadership term, which may not necessarily align with the beginning and end of their Council terms. If an officer assumes a leadership position in the middle of his or her first Council term, he or she still needs to go up for election as normally scheduled. If he or she is re-elected to the Council, he or she may finish out the leadership term. If a Council leader is in his or her second Council term, he or she may only remain in the leadership role for the remainder of the Council term, i.e. upon completion of six years maximum on the Council.

## Responsibilities of the Officers of the Council

### Chair of the Council

- *Ex-officio* member of the Board
- Chairs the meetings of the Council
- In collaboration with other members of the Executive Committee and designated staff, recruits and appoints committee chairs and working group leaders
- Keeps Council members focused on the strategic needs of the organization
- Communicates the needs of the committees and working groups to the President and staff
- Manages communications between the Board and the Council

### Vice Chair of the Council

- Chairs The Forum Council Nominations Committee
- With the Council Chair, recruits leaders and members of the committees and working groups
- With the Council Chair, facilitates communications with the Council
- Stands in for the Chair as needed, including with communications and at Board meetings in the Chair's absence.

### Secretary of the Council

- Produces minutes of Forum Council bi-annual meetings and quarterly calls; when absent, he or she finds someone to take the minutes
- Takes attendance for bi-annual meetings and quarterly calls, and informs Council leadership when a member misses more than one meeting in a row
- With the Chair and Vice Chair, manages and updates the Forum Council annual calendar
- Oversees the maintenance of the Council's on-line documents storage, including minutes, agendas, and calendar
- When requested, assists the Chair of The Forum Council Nominations Committee with communications for annual Forum Council elections

## Forum Council General Annual Calendar

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Month	Council Activity	Details
July	July 1: New Council member terms begin	New member orientation, work plan discussed and finalized, additional topics as needed

	<p>1st Quarterly meeting (in-person meeting, 1 day)</p> <p>Joint Board/Council meeting (1/2 day)</p> <p>Board of Directors meeting</p>	<p>Discussion with Board and Council members, usually after the Council meeting and before the Board meeting, taking advantage of both groups being in the same place</p> <p>Council Chair attends and reports to Board</p>
August	<p>Working group and committee calls for volunteers based on work plan</p> <p>Award for Academic Achievement Abroad nominations due</p>	<p>Each Council members serves on at least one committee/working group</p> <p>Committee will request from Council members faculty readers of student nominations</p>
September	<p>Annual Conference proposal deadline</p> <p>Curriculum Award submissions due</p> <p>Award for Innovation in Education Abroad deadline</p>	<p>Submission deadline for proposals for Council (or committee/working group) sessions</p> <p>Council rep on the Annual Conference</p> <p>Committee participates in session and workshop proposal review</p> <p>Council rep serves on selection committee</p> <p>Council rep serves on selection committee</p>
October	<p>2nd Quarterly meeting (conference call)</p> <p>European Conference (every other year)</p>	<p>Council participation encouraged, if possible</p>
November	<p>Ongoing work of committees and working groups</p>	
December	<p>Ongoing work of committees and working groups</p>	
January	<p>3rd Quarterly meeting (conference call)</p> <p>Board of Directors meeting</p>	<p>Updates on activities, other items</p> <p>Council Chair reports to Board</p>
February	<p>Forum Council election process begins</p> <p>Development of Work Plan for presentation at March meeting</p>	<p>Nominations Committee is formed and election process begins</p> <p>Council Officers work with staff to prepare following year's work plan; Council discusses at March meeting.</p>
March	<p>4th Quarterly meeting (in person) at Annual Conference (may also take place in early April)</p>	<p>The Council typically presents a conference session on its work</p> <p>Work plan discussed and finalized, additional topics as needed</p>

April	Forum Council election closes	New and re-elected Council members announced
May	Annual Business Meeting (online)  Annual Conference theme selection and call for proposals drafted	Council participation expected  Council rep on the Conference committee
June	June 30: End of Council terms  Annual Conference call for proposals published	