

Board of Trustees Term Limits – Yes or No

Board rotation is an opportunity to provide change and transformation for a board. Introducing new members on a regular cycle can prevent stagnation and enhance the Board's ability to be innovative.

Defining Board Term Limits

Research of nonprofit organizations indicates that average range of term limits for board member span from 2-4 years with a maximum opportunity to server for two terms. A staggered term system allows only a certain number of new members to be introduced to the board each year, while preserving a certain level of continuity of service among existing board members.

How to Set Board Term Limits

Term limits for board members are typically defined and communicated within the dental society's bylaws.

Key Advantages of Term Limits

- Provides a process for eliminating nonperforming board members
- Provides a process for ineffective members to exit the board
- Can be leveraged with recruitment of new board members to promote limited commitment
- Allow ongoing reconfiguration of the board composition, including opportunities to increase the diversity of board perspectives
- Can grow the base of board alumni and increase the overall number of dental society advocates.
- Fosters camaraderie and comfort among an incoming class of board members
- Encourages board members to add value and strive for accomplishment during their length of service
- Provides process for controlling perpetual concentration of power within the same group

Disadvantages of Term Limits

- Loss of expertise, experience and/or commitment of a particular board member
- Need to rebuild coherence among board members on a regular basis
- Need to invest in orienting and training new board members on a regular basis
- Loss of institutional knowledge and historical perspectives
- Lack of interest and/or participation on behalf of board members as term nears completion

ADA Resources:

- *Assistance with bylaws language through ADA's Department of Legal Affairs*