

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING



## MANUAL

For  
Regional Governors  
District Governors  
And  
Chapter Presidents

REVISED AND APPROVED BY NATS BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON JUNE 24, 2017.

# Introduction

The Association is organized to benefit the public good and generally enrich the public through: (1) encouragement of members to achieve the highest standards in their teaching of singing; (2) promotion of vocal education and research at all levels, both for the enrichment of the general public and for the professional advancement of the talented; (3) requiring members' adherence to stated ethical principles in the teaching of the vocal arts; and (4) organizing and affiliating its members to provide nationwide accessibility to qualified teachers for all students of singing. [NATS Bylaws, September 30, 2015]

As an elected or appointed officer, you are committed to actively work to foster these stated purposes. The guidelines in this manual define your areas of responsibility and work. The bylaws relating to your position are given first, and then a practical application is made to illustrate how to fulfill and work within your stated duties. Every region has different needs due to geographic challenges or historical practices. These guidelines are not written to be absolute dictums; they are provided to help frame the work of each region. If this material fails to answer your questions or meet your needs, you should consult your fellow officers in the Association for further insight and help. You can also receive assistance from the NATS Executive Office staff. In addition to these guidelines, you are urged to review the complete Bylaws and the NATS Code of Ethics, available on the NATS website, in order to further acquaint yourself with NATS practices and customs. The practical application sections are constantly under revision as procedures and technology advances.

Based on Handbook written by Jean W. Gregg, September, 1980

Updated by John Burgin, January, 1982

Further revised by William A. Vessels, June, 1992 and June, 1995

Further revised by Task Team: Lloyd Mims, chair; Diana Allan, Kathleen Arcocchi, Elaine Case, and Caroline Smith,  
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Minor text updates by NATS ED Allen Henderson, June 2013

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## Establishment of Offices

(Quotes are taken from the Bylaws of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, Incorporated; September 30, 2015.)

Article I, Section 4. Administration. Except as otherwise set forth herein, the property, funds, and affairs of the Association shall be controlled and managed by a board of directors (hereinafter referred to as the board), members of which are referred to as directors, consisting of the president, past president, president elect, all vice presidents, secretary/treasurer, and all regional governors. The Executive Director, the International Coordinator, and the Editor in Chief of the Journal of Singing, attend meetings of the Board and may speak at meetings, but do not have a vote. The Board communicates with the Executive Director through the President of the Association.

Article VIII, Section 1. Regions. a. The board shall define and establish regional boundaries. There shall be a governor for each designated region of the Association who shall be a full member in good standing of the Association, and who shall be elected by the membership of that region by vote, which may be conducted at a regional meeting, by mail, or electronically. Regional governors shall assume office at the conclusion of the annual board meeting or national conference, serve for two years, and may succeed themselves once. Regional governors who have served two terms in office may seek election to additional terms after a hiatus of at least four years following their most recent term in office.

Article VIII, Section 2. District Governors. a. The board shall define and establish district boundaries within each region. Each district of a region shall have a district governor, appointed by and responsible to the regional governor. District governors shall serve terms of two years and may succeed themselves once. District governors who have served two terms in office may be appointed to additional terms after a hiatus of at least four years following their most recent term in office, unless otherwise approved by the board.

Article X, Association Officers. Section 1. Officers. The Association officers shall include a president, president elect, past president, four vice presidents, and a secretary/treasurer. Each Association officer shall be elected by vote of the membership as provided in these bylaws. The person elected for the position of president elect shall serve one two-year term in that office, one two-year term as president, and one two-year term as past president, and may not succeed himself or herself in any of these offices. Vice presidents and the secretary/treasurer shall serve for two years and may succeed themselves once.

Officers must be full members in good standing of the Association when elected and remain so throughout their terms of office.

## Responsibilities of Officers

### Regional Governor

#### Article VIII. Section 1. Regional Governor.

- b. Regional governors shall have direct responsibility over the affairs of their regions and for the coordination and operation of the districts falling within their regional boundaries according to these bylaws.
- c. Regional governors appoint district governors and are authorized to appoint those regional officers they deem necessary for the successful operation of regional activities. Regional governors shall be provided an annual approved reimbursement fund, in an amount determined by the Association from time to time, for the carrying out of their responsibilities.
- d. The regional governor may appoint a regional cabinet made up of present officers at all levels and past regional governors who reside within the region, provided they remain full or emeritus members of the Association. This cabinet shall act as a regional board and assist the governor in proper administration of the region.
- e. Prior to the end of each two-year term of office, it is the duty of the regional governor to appoint a nominating committee for the region to recommend a candidate or candidates for the office of regional governor. A current regional governor may not serve as a member of any regional nominating committee for that region.
- f. Regional governors may obligate their regions for only those funds available in their regions, through grants from the discretionary fund, or the regional allocations of the Association. Obligations beyond that level must have the approval of the board of the Association. No regional governor shall have the authority to act as agent for the Association nor have the power to bind the Association.

## Practical Application

**Introduction.** As officers of the National Board, Regional Governors hold the only legal representation for the affairs of NATS in their Region. All regional officers are appointed by the Regional Governor. Critical is the word “may” in section 1.d. Practical considerations render it unlikely and unworkable to require the governor to include ALL officers at ALL levels of the region which would include all officers of all chapters within the region. At a minimum the regional cabinet should include the regional governor and all district governors. Additional positions may be created by the governor to ensure effective management of regional activities. Similarly, it is unlikely that ALL past regional governors **must** be appointed to the regional cabinet but the governor may certainly call upon them for service. A more logical model would be that which the national board follows with the immediate past governor serving as past governor on the regional cabinet providing that person resides in the region and maintains a full or emeritus membership. This cabinet serves at the pleasure of the Regional Governor in an advisory capacity. Policy is enacted only by the vote of the regional membership through the leadership of the Regional Governor.

Regional Governors are expected to model the “Culture of Communication” in NATS by responding to communication and forwarding communication to appropriate personnel within two business days of receipt of any information.

- 1. Appointing District Governors.** Regional governors appoint district governors for each district in the region, and keep an accurate record of their terms of office, as per Bylaws. These, and all officers, are to be persons who inspire the membership to active participation. Although an incoming regional governor may value the input of people in the district, it is the regional governor’s responsibility to appoint a district governor who will work well on the team and serve the purposes of the region—not necessarily someone “in line” for promotion. Although districts may be geographically the same as a state or province, there is no such thing as a state or province governor; these persons are referred to as district governors. If a district which is also the geographic area of a state or province is chartered as a chapter, it may have a president of the chapter and a district governor. In such cases, Regional Governors are responsible for delineating the varied roles of the District Governor and the Chapter President’s duties are delineated in the chapter bylaws. Notify the Executive Office of all appointments as soon as possible after any changes occur.

## 2. Membership Coordination.

- a. Regional governors are to maintain an accurate list of members in the region. Periodically, they will receive a list of all new members in the region. It is expected that the Regional Governor will:
  - 1) Send a letter of welcome to these new members within two weeks of receipt of the information from the National Office; this may entail setting up a database of new members for the mail merge of such letters. Electronic communication is also acceptable.
  - 2) Keep the information accessible until the next updated membership list arrives in the event that imminent upcoming events necessitate contact. It is often the case that regional officers have more updated information on members than the Executive Office, especially e-mail addresses. Forward any corrections or missing information to the Executive Office.
  - 3) Immediately send the names and addresses to the appropriate district governor and/or chapter president along with a copy of your letter. Encourage the district or chapter officer to follow up with a telephone call, e-mail or personal greeting of an appropriate nature.
  
- b. Periodically, the NATS Executive Office will send out a listing of all changes in membership status and addresses.
  - 1) The Executive Office will forward a simple notice of resignations, reinstatements, and deaths.
    - a) Note the ones for your region and report any discrepancies to the Executive Office.
    - b) Notify district governors and/or chapter presidents of the changes. Ask them to report any discrepancies to you and the Executive Office.
  - 2) The Executive Office will maintain the online membership database. Use this database as your official membership roll. Electronic access is provided for those in regional and chapter leadership.
  - 3) The Executive Office will maintain the database that includes the last known contact information for lapsed members in the region. Lapsed member lists can be accessed in the same manner as membership lists. Use the data to follow up and to encourage these members to renew their membership. In some instances it may be better to start the process as outlined below; in other instances it may be best to start the process at the grass roots level.
    - a) Send an e-mail or letter to lapsed members following the dues renewal deadline; remind them of their status and loss of privileges after March 1st. Inquire if there is a problem with their relationship to NATS and ask them to respond to you candidly. Keep track of

responses and notify the membership services coordinator in the Executive Office.

- b) Forward the list to appropriate district and chapter officers. Have them follow up with appropriate contacts. They may be aware that people have moved to a different region. Forward all changes of this kind to the Executive Office.
  - c) By whatever date you or other regional officers have exhausted appropriate and sufficient means to establish contact with lapsed members, you may assume that nothing further can be done. Document your efforts for subsequent regional governors and forward your results to the Executive Office.
- 4) The Bookkeeper of the Executive Office will send reports to treasurers of chapters reporting the collection of dues through the national office. Treasurers are to send that information to Chapter Presidents; Regional Governors are able to view this information on the member page of the website and can track membership numbers appropriately.

**3. Recruitment.** Actively involve all regional officers to identify and encourage membership of new, qualified prospective members.

- a. Identify private teachers in the area as well as teachers in nearby educational institutions who are not NATS members to join as full members. Identify and encourage associate members who need to upgrade their membership to full member status.
- b. Identify private teachers in the area as well as teachers in nearby educational institutions who are relatively new teachers and are not NATS members to join as associate members.
- c. The Executive Office sends new member packets to all new members. Packets are also available to officers at the region, district, and chapter levels to distribute to prospective members.
- d. Offer to mentor these teachers. Encourage them to visit regional events. Loan them copies of the *Journal of Singing* and *Inter Nos*. Model the ethics of being a good NATS member.
- e. Assist in recruiting student members and in the establishment and offer encouragement to Student Chapters of NATS (SNATS). Keep an accurate record of where student chapters are located and the contact information for the president and the faculty sponsor. Share any changes with the Executive Office so that the online directory is kept as current as possible.
- f. Periodically the Executive Office will send you contact information of people who are prospects in your region; these are people who have visited the national website or called the Executive Office from your Region. They already will have been sent a membership packet from the Executive Office. Write a letter thanking them for visiting and encouraging



them to join the organization, if that was the intent of their online visit. Often a prospect's name will remain on subsequent lists and a status column will indicate the status of their application. Officers should maintain familiarity with the status of various applications and offer assistance in helping prospects complete the application process.

4. **Funds.** The Executive Director of NATS will notify each regional governor, shortly after January 1, of the amount of his/her regional budget for the fiscal year (January 1 through December 31). The amount of each region's budget, administered by the Executive Director, is set by the Board of Directors and is based on an amount per member in the region. Budgets are approved in final format in July preceding the calendar year.
  - a. The regional governor determines how these funds will be used to benefit the activities of the region. They may be used for regional events or prorated to assist districts and chapters with specific activities. Some regions have devised formulas for the use of these funds when they are prorated for districts and chapters; others have set maximum award amounts. Such funds are typically not used as prize money for regional auditions.
  - b. Expense account vouchers (obtained from the Executive Office or downloaded from [www.nats.org](http://www.nats.org)), substantiated by receipts for monies spent, may be submitted only by the regional governor to the Executive Office as funds are needed and will be deducted from the year's budget for that region. All expense vouchers must be signed or countersigned by the regional governor.
  - c. The funds may be used for a number of activities as approved by the regional officers and as allowed by the Executive Office. These activities will often involve the preparation and presentation of a master class, conference, workshop, or other educational event sponsored by the region or one of its districts or chapters. Funds may assist with travel and accommodations for district and regional NATSAA judges, with the printing and mailing of newsletters and other communiqués, with the establishment and upkeep of a website. If in doubt about a particular use of these funds, check with the Executive Office.
  - d. Expense vouchers should be submitted as quickly as possible in conjunction with an event rather than being held for processing late in the year. In no case may a request exceed the allocations set for that calendar year in that region.
  - e. Monies in the regional budget not requested by voucher by the regional governor by December 1 of any year revert to the NATS treasury on January 1 of the following year. Regional governors may designate unused monies to the NATS Foundation.

5. **Discretionary Fund Grants.** In addition to the regional allocations mentioned above, funds are also available for particular activities in the region from the NATS Discretionary Fund. Application forms are available at [www.nats.org](http://www.nats.org). Chapter presidents or regional governors are required to approve any grants awarded.
6. **Regional Bank Accounts.** Regional monies earned by regional projects and received from voucher receipts may be kept in a regional checking or savings account for which the regional governor must keep accurate records.
  - a. The NATS IRS tax ID number is to be used to establish or maintain such accounts. NATS is designated as a 501 (c) (3) organization by the IRS.
  - b. Regional governors may appoint a regional treasurer to keep accurate financial records. It is strongly recommended that two signatures be required on checks for amounts above a determined threshold. Both the regional governor and treasurer should sign checks above that amount. The regional governor may appoint a third regional officer to sign checks in the event such a need is justified.
7. **Communication with Members.**
  - a. Maintain a user-friendly regional online presence. Appoint a webmaster if a competent member of your region is available and has the time to maintain a professional-looking site. If not, hire a person to make updates as needed. Post a home page with contact information for all regional officers; include pictures if available. Post regional announcements about events on the website. Post registration forms and audition guidelines on the website. Post newsletters, regional meeting minutes and financial reports on the website. Provide links to district, chapter, and SNATS websites or allow districts, chapters, and SNATS chapters to have a sub-page on the regional website. Keep regional, district, and chapter events updated regularly. Some regions also maintain a page with the listing of previous regional governors. Provide a link to the national website and provide your region's link to the Executive office so they can link your site to the national website.
  - b. The NATS website allows region, district, and chapter officers to send emails to all members in their region or chapter. These lists can also be downloaded for use of the officer when offline.
  - c. Prepare at least two newsletters each year to the regional membership concerning national, regional, district, and chapter news, activities, projects, and membership. Keep your members informed and interested. Send the newsletter by e-mail or arrange to send a hard copy to members without e-mail. When a postal mailing is necessary, request address

labels for regional members from the Executive Office as needed, well in advance of the mailing date.

d. Disseminate information from the Executive Office to regional officers.

8. **Events.** Where applicable, the regional governor should organize and supervise regional auditions, regional workshops, or other suitable activities that further the goals and objectives of the Association. Annual professional development opportunities for members and students are encouraged.

a. Regional auditions follow the format and regulations of the NATS National Student Auditions (NSA). Each district and chapter that sponsors separate auditions may not establish guidelines that are contrary to the regional or national guidelines. Regional guidelines are based on guidelines approved by the NATS Board.

b. The regional governor should make decisions about other regional activities in context of meeting the regional membership's needs and not exceeding fiscal constraints.

c. Contracts or official letters of agreement for site hosting and personnel should be prepared and filed.

d. Certificates of insurance (available on the NATS website), when needed, should be prepared and filed with the assistance of the Executive Office.

9. **NATSAA, NSA and Emerging Leader Awards.**

a. The regional governor shall work with the Vice President for Auditions and other leaders in the region in organizing preliminary NATSAA competitions at the regional level. The regional governor shall direct the regional NATSAA auditions and report the results to the Vice President for Auditions. Instructions for these competitions are received from the Vice President for auditions and are available on the Association's website.

b. The Regional Governor shall work with the Vice President for Auditions and the Executive Office in reporting regional winners to be included in the National Student Auditions (NSA); deadlines for submission must be strictly maintained.

c. The regional governor will assist in the advertising and selection process for Emerging Leader Awards. These awards are presently available to each region every four years on a rotating basis.

10. **Board Responsibilities.** As a member of the NATS Board of Directors, the regional governor receives communications from the Executive Office, national president or other national officers, concerning board business. The regional governor is required to vote on whatever matters are placed before the board and return ballots promptly. He/she is required to attend all board meetings; in rare occasions that s/he cannot attend, another regional officer

should be appointed as a substitute. Online asynchronous meetings are called as needed and regional governors are expected to participate in discussions and vote when required. Regional governors are not part of the Executive Committee of the NATS Board.

11. **Conference Expenses.** It is the policy for the Association to fund travel and full lodging reimbursement for regional governors during board meetings in non-conference years. In years when the board meeting precedes a national conference, the Association pays travel and full lodging during the days of the board meeting and half lodging for the days of the conference. Regional funds should be allocated for assistance in those years. For called board meetings, other travel expense funding may from time to time be authorized by the board as the budget permits.
12. **Websites:** Regional governors should keep regional websites updated with activities in their regions and forward links or copies of articles regarding activity to the Executive Office for possible inclusion in national level communications. The national webmaster and the editor of *Inter Nos* will use this material for dissemination. Feel free to share successes and good ideas with other regions through this and other forms of communication. Information should be solicited from district governors and chapter presidents regularly.
13. **Elections.** Regional governors serve from the end of one national board meeting or national conference to the end of the board meeting or national conference two years hence. No later than January 1 prior to the end of a Regional Governor's term, the governor should appoint a committee for the nomination of a successor. This must be done even if the regional governor is willing to serve for a second term. It is best to have a standing procedure that represents an appropriate cross-section of the region for the appointment of this nominating committee. The executive director will send a reminder that includes the detailed process for nominating and electing a regional governor. The current governor will work with staff in the Executive Office to facilitate the call for nominations and the distribution of ballots electronically. Provide for an orderly succession of regional business to the new regional governor, including transfer of materials. Brief the new governor on the duties of the office. When a new regional governor is elected, that person should be available to attend the NATS Board meeting just preceding his or her term of election; regional funds should be allocated for the governor-elect's travel expenses. A regional governor may be reelected to a second two year term of office. If a regional governor resigns or moves out of the region prior to the conclusion of his/her term, the national president will

appoint an interim governor until such time a new governor may be elected. Regions are encouraged to elect a regional governor-elect who serves for a designated term prior to assuming the office of Regional Governor. The Executive Office can advise regional governors in this process.

### **District Governors**

Article VIII, Section 2. Districts.

a. District Governors shall be responsible for the administration and initiation of appropriate Association activities in their areas, assist with various NATS competitions, and will be provided with funds, through the Regional Governor, from the regional budget to assist in the work.

b. District governors shall be responsible for the recruitment of new members and the communication of Association affairs, events, and proceedings to the local members. District governors may also initiate the organization of appropriate chapters within their geographic areas or in conjunction with other appropriate geographic areas.

### **Practical Application**

**Introduction.** District Governors have a formalized central role in retention and recruitment of new, lapsed, and returning members. With such a major responsibility, District Governors should not concurrently hold any other office in the region, district or their particular chapter while serving in this capacity. District governors work cooperatively with the region governor and may be assigned additional duties within the region at the discretion of the regional governor.

NATS has Fifty-seven District Governors in our Fourteen Regions. The District Governors can provide a more formalized and central role in retention and recruitment of new, lapsed, and returning members. District Governors should enlist the assistance of other District/Chapter officers and members in order to implement these recommendations in their Chapters and Districts.

**Bi-Annual Report:** due March 1 and September 1 to the Membership Committee

District Governors will submit a District Membership Report to the VP of Membership, the Regional Governor, and the Membership Committee, via a Spreadsheet Template provided by the Membership Committee.

### 1. **Retention**

Track and contact lapsed members using the monthly reports forwarded by the Membership Services Coordinator in the National Office.

2. **Recruitment** – develop a recruitment plan in each District/Chapter of each region locating and contacting prospective NATS members using District and Chapter officers and members at the “grassroots” level. Possible sources of leads include College and University teachers, CMS Directory, College, University, and independent teacher websites, high school teachers, independent studio teachers, word of mouth, other colleagues, collaborative pianist colleagues, and choral colleagues.

Recruit new collaborative pianist members and inform them of the services NATS provides collaborative pianists. Encourage the inclusion and integration of activities, sessions, and professional development for collaborative pianists at all levels.

### 3. **A Hearty NATS Welcome**

As with Regional Governors, District Governors will work within a “Culture of Communication” so that:

- a. Regional Governors forward District Governors and Chapter Presidents the membership reports immediately upon receipt of them from the national office.
- b. Regional Governors routinely send a letter of welcome to new members within 2 weeks of receiving membership reports
- c. District Governors, within 4 weeks of receiving the membership report, routinely:
  - Send a letter of welcome.
  - Ensure new members have joined a chapter.
  - Utilizing the present process within a Chapter or District or creating a new process ensure each new member participates in a mentorship welcome program.
  - Communicate with VP for Membership as needed.

4. **Events.** In coordination with chapter presidents and the regional governor, initiate activities in the district which will help further the purposes of NATS.

5. **Chapter Relations.** The district governor should work closely with chapter presidents in the district. The district governor should provide leadership and assistance in the organization of new chapters as warranted.
6. **Funds.** Regional governors are responsible for seeing that regional allocations are made available to districts for the funding of certain NATS activities and programs. Work closely with the regional governor for the budgeting and accounting of these funds. See the information under the Regional Governor section above.
7. **Communication with Members.** If the size of the district in relationship to the region warrants additional communications, send newsletters or e-mail messages to each member in the district as needed to promote NATS activities.
8. **Assistance.** The regional governor can help with any problems which may arise. District Governors may also receive assistance from the Executive Office. Don't hesitate to request help.

## Chapter Presidents

### Article VII. Chapters.

#### Section 1. Establishing a Chapter.

Any group of active full, emeritus, or associate members of the Association may petition the board for a chapter charter for their geographical area. Chapter membership shall not be restricted by regional or district boundaries, but chapters must be located within North America. Chapters shall abide by Association Bylaws, policies, and guidelines for the betterment of the membership and fulfillment of the Association's purpose.

Section 2. Chapter Policies and Procedures. Chapters will establish their own bylaws and operating procedures consistent with these Association Bylaws, and with the review and consent of the board. Chapters shall accept and allow as chapter members only members of the Association.

Section 3. Chapter Officers. Chapters will be responsible to elect officers, and annually report the name and full address of each chapter president to the regional and district governors and the Executive Office.

Section 4. Student National Association of Teachers of Singing (SNATS). A Student NATS chapter (SNATS) consists of students under the sponsorship of a Member of the Association. A SNATS charter is issued upon the request of a sponsoring member and approved by the Vice President for Outreach. Membership in a SNATS chapter does not constitute membership in the Association.

Section 5. Association Events. Chapters may assist the Association, at the Board's request, with various Association events. In such cases, however, the Association shall be ultimately responsible for board approved costs incurred in connection with the events, and shall be entitled to retain all fees, tuition, and other payments received in connection with the events.

## Practical Application

1. Chapter offices usually consist of president, vice president, secretary and treasurer, program chairman, auditions coordinator or whatever officers work best in a particular situation. Include the necessary officers in the bylaws established at the time of organization. The bylaws should contain a provision



for changes to be made, as needed, by chapter vote. Chapter presidents should communicate with district and regional governors and the Executive Office immediately when chapter officers change.

2. Chapter Presidents are expected to model the “Culture of Communication” in NATS by responding to communication and forwarding communication to appropriate personnel within two business days of receipt of any information.
3. Hold at least two meetings a year during which any chapter business may be conducted. Also, at the same time, programs of interest to chapter members should take place in order to encourage active participation by all members.
4. Establish chapter dues payable through the national membership renewal process (due January 1<sup>st</sup>; late after February 1<sup>st</sup>) in order for the chapter to fund its activities and programs. Chapter Dues shall be collected through the National Office and forwarded to the Treasurer of each Chapter.
5. Students of NATS members (SNATS) may be organized under the sponsorship of the chapter for the purpose of furthering their student needs and activities in the vocal field. This can be a very effective addition to chapter activities. One of the active NATS members should act as sponsor of this group. Students may subscribe to the *Journal of Singing* at a special student discount rate.
6. Chapter Presidents are expected to communicate chapter matters with the District and/or Region Governor and support the work of the association at the region and district levels. District and regional governors are available to provide assistance. The Executive Office is also willing to provide such help and support as may be needed. Help keep the lines of communication open and active.