

## Policy on Public Representatives

Key to Changes: **Delete**, **Add**

One of ABHE's major purposes is to assure the public that its institutions and programs are educationally effective. To realize this purpose, ABHE ~~seeks to be sensitive to the need for having representation from the public at the meetings of an accrediting agency's decision makers. Accordingly, ABHE seeks to have~~ includes public representatives on both the Board of Directors and the Commission on Accreditation (COA).

### Relationship to the COA

Public representatives are related to the COA as follows:

1. They are appointed to their office by the relevant decision-making body upon the recommendation of the professional staff.
2. Non-student public representatives are appointed to their office for one four-year term and may succeed themselves for a second term after which they may not be re-appointed for four years.
3. Nominations for student public representatives will be solicited from the ABHE membership via a call for nominations when there is a vacancy. Student public representatives may be appointed to a two-year term, which may be repeated for a second two-year term at the discretion of the COA Officers. Student public representatives may serve one year beyond graduation from a COA-accredited institution. Student public representatives that enroll in a second program at a COA-accredited institution may serve on the COA up to two 2-year terms. The student public representatives are considered to be full participating members of the COA with all the rights and responsibilities of a public representative.
4. They can terminate their appointment by written resignation to the COA officers.
5. Their appointment can be terminated by the unanimous vote of the COA officers.
6. They will serve as voting members of the COA.
7. They have the right to enter comments into the official minutes of the COA.
8. They will constitute at least one seventh (1/7) and not more than one fourth (1/4) of the COA membership.

9. Should the decision-making body receive a complaint about a public representative currently serving, the complaint will be reviewed by the officers of the decision-making body within 30 days of receipt.

## **Qualifications**

Public representatives will have the following qualifications:

1. They will not be related to an ABHE applicant, candidate, or accredited institution or program by employment or board membership.
2. They will not serve as a consultant to an ABHE applicant, candidate, or accredited institution or program.
3. They will not be a member of any trade association or membership organization related to, affiliated with, or associated with the COA.
4. They will not be a spouse, parent, child, or sibling of an individual identified in paragraphs one through three above.
5. They will be sympathetic to biblical higher education and its philosophy of education.
6. They will be individuals who are known for their integrity, common sense, and professional accomplishments.
7. They will be individuals who have an awareness of needs and interests of the public as related to higher education.
8. Student public representatives should usually be a graduate student and endorsed by a faculty member or administrator at their institution.

## **Public representatives will have the following duties:**

1. They will acquaint themselves with the purposes of biblical higher education.
2. They will acquaint themselves with ABHE Standards for Accreditation.
3. They will acquaint themselves with ABHE procedures for accreditation.
4. They will complete the required online evaluator training and the COA orientation training.
5. They will familiarize themselves with materials made available to them prior to a meeting of the decision-making body to which they are appointed.

6. They will attend a major portion of all meetings of the decision-making body.
7. They will seek to ensure that the decision-making body follows established ABHE policies and procedures.
8. They will alert the decision-making body to issues they perceive to be pertinent to the public interests and that relate to the issue requiring a decision.
9. They will honor ABHE's policies concerning the confidentiality of materials. Within these constraints, they will have the privilege of reporting to the public such items and through such media as they deem desirable.

Adopted October 1982; Revised February 2007, April 2012, June 2014, June 2016, February 2021,  
**PROPOSED January 2023**