Core Committee Member Handbook

December 2021

Welcome to the Core Committee, the board of directors and governing body for the POD Network. This handbook provides background and operational information for you as new Core members (and a refresher for more experienced members), and it reflects the POD Network's commitment to a developmental approach to leadership. Please review it before each Core business meeting -- a new version will be distributed to all Core Committee members each year in time for the spring business meeting.

General Overview

The Core Committee is responsible for carrying out the mission of the organization by overseeing and providing direction to the activities, affairs, and finances of the POD Network. The committee is guided by the POD Network Governance Manual, its Strategic Plan, and a commitment to consensus decision-making and respectful conflict resolution. All voting Core Committee members are volunteers.

The committee includes 15 elected POD Network members, the three presidents (current, elect, past) and the Executive Director (ex-officio, non-voting). Every year, five new members are elected for a three-year term by a vote of the POD Network membership. When the Finance Committee Chair is not a current Core member, they are an additional ex-officio, voting member of the Core Committee.

Core Committee participation is an opportunity for you to support and advance, in a collaborative fashion, the POD Network's strategic priorities, which currently include equity and evidence-based practice. It also enables you to self-nominate for the POD Network President position for five years following your three-year term of service as a Core member.

Financial Support to Core members:

POD offers full, need-based financial support for Core Committee members to attend twice-yearly business meetings (fall and spring) when held in person. This support is intended to

ensure that service on Core is not dependent on the financial commitment of anyone's home institution or organization.

As Core members, you may seek travel, conference registration, and/or lodging support when your employer cannot or will not financially support your participation at the fall annual conference or the spring meeting. Partial requests are also granted. Requests are emailed directly to the POD office, with a brief explanation, and are confidential (only the Executive Director and the admin assistant know the identities of those who receive need-based support).

Expectations of Core Committee Members:

As Core Committee members, you are expected to attend all six business meetings (two per year, usually in June and November) during your three-year term, plus the spring meeting preceding your official term; newly elected members become official Core members at the conclusion of this initial meeting. At this initial meeting, incoming Core members are primarily observers: you are welcome to ask questions but do not vote.

Most of the official work of the Core Committee is accomplished at the two semi-annual business meetings, whether online or in person. The Executive Committee (president, past president, president elect, chair of finance, executive director) carries out the work of the organization between Core Committee meetings and oversees other aspects of our work. The Executive Committee currently meets every two weeks.

Occasionally, items arise that require online Core Committee discussion or approval (sometimes just by email) between business meetings, as determined by the Executive Committee. Additional shorter meetings may be scheduled throughout the year, as needed, for strategic planning, professional development of Core members, etc. Typically, these meetings are held online.

One essential role of each Core member is to serve as a liaison to a limited number of committees and SIGs, and to represent them at Core meetings: presenting and explaining requests, answering questions, and relaying information and decisions back to the committees and SIGs. This area of responsibility, along with others, are described in the Governance Manual.

Core Committee members are expected to:
- Be guided by the mission, purpose, and values of the POD Network.
- Read the Governance Manual thoroughly and be aware of roles and responsibilities.
- Attend spring and fall Core meetings and stay the entire time unless prevented by extraordinary circumstances.
- Contribute to any discussion either electronically or in person requiring consensus, and vote on all measures submitted for a vote either electronically or in person.
- Authorize budgets in ways that are the most fiscally responsible to the POD Network.

- Participate in the election process for the incoming President-Elect.
- Encourage POD Network members to self-nominate for the Core Committee.
- Serve in leadership role(s) on standing committee(s) or SIG(s), as a chair and/or Core Representative.
  - Represent those committee(s) and/or SIG(s) and answer questions on behalf of those committee(s) and/or SIG(s) during Core Committee meetings.
  - Proactively communicate with those committee(s) and/or SIG(s) on behalf of the Core Committee, including discussions, questions, and decisions, both specific to committee(s)/SIG(s) and broadly relevant to all POD Network members.
  - Engage in shaping, carrying out, and assessing POD Network strategic plans, broadly and with respect to those committee(s) and/or SIG(s) that the Core Committee member serves on or chairs.
- Serve on and/or chair ad-hoc committees formed by the Core and/or Executive Committee(s)
- Serve as a mentor for new POD Network members at the annual conference and to new Core members.
- Participate in professional development activities for the Core Committee when they are made available.

Ongoing DEI work

As the governing body of the POD Network, the Core Committee takes POD's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion seriously.

Core works with consultants and trainers to deepen our own understanding of these complex issues, in periodic all-Core training sessions, while seeking to promote the advancement of DEI awareness in the work of the organization and in the capacity of our members.

In July 2021, the POD Network hired the consulting firm Think Again Training and Consulting to do an organization-wide, year-long review of the POD Network's diversity, equity, and inclusion culture and practices. The goal and hope is that "DEI will truly become an integral part of the POD Network" (from the contract).

For other developments and updates, please check the POD Network's DEI Resources page here.

Operations of the POD Network

The rest of this handbook provides detailed and operational information about various aspects of the POD Network and your work within it.

Electronic Communications and Social Media:

Google Group List: core-pod@podnetwork.org (all current Core Committee members)

Google Team Drive: The "POD Core Committee Team Drive" Google Team Drive folder is the repository for all enduring Core Committee materials including folders and materials for ongoing initiatives, upcoming Core meetings, and archived materials.

Our social media platforms and hashtags are below. Please join, amplify, tag, support, and promote.

- Twitter: @PODNetworkHQ
- LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/podnetworkhq/
- Instagram: @PODNetworkHQ
- Facebook: @PODNetworkHQ

The official POD Network hashtag is: #PODNetwork

The official annual conference hashtag changes each year: #POD21, #POD22, etc.

Questions about social media? Send to the POD Network Manager of Digital Marketing & Communications: digital@podnetwork.org.

POD Network Office:

The POD Network Office (Executive Director and Admin Assistant) seeks to support you in your work as a Core Committee member. Please reach out at any time with your questions or concerns.

Email: podoffice@podnetwork.org.

Current Staff:

Executive Director: Hoag Holmgren. Hoag is the POD Network's only full-time employee. Hoag's primary responsibilities include strategic communications, leadership for initiatives, financial affairs and records curation, management and supervision, event management and coordination, committee/SIG support, and website coordination. Hoag also serves as POD's parliamentarian.

Administrative Assistant: Gaye Webb. Gaye works 20-hours a week and is responsible for responding to member communications, processing membership fees and conference registrations, maintaining financial and membership records, making minor website updates, and managing POD's leadership resources, including the Google Lists and Team Drives.

Manager of Digital Marketing & Communications: Keeghan Sinanan. Keeghan is responsible for developing and implementing a communications strategy (including social media) to help increase member engagement and awareness of the POD Network.

Finance/budget overview:

The POD Network has two main streams of revenue: membership dues and conference registration. The Core and Finance Committees pursue responsible fiscal stewardship to protect and utilize the organization's finances in accord with strategic priorities.

In order to ensure that we follow Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures (GAAP), we engage in bi-annual external financial reviews and audits as needed for compliance.

For each spring Core business meeting, the Finance Committee prepares, for Core Committee review and approval, a proposed annual budget based on projected revenue, anticipated expenses, and budget requests submitted by committees and SIGs.

The Finance Committee meets monthly to review and discuss the budget, financial statements, and any related updates, trends, and developments.

The POD Network fiscal year is July 1 to June 30.

Core Committee Business Meetings (semi-annual):

Core Committee business meetings are held semi-annually, usually in June and November. The November meeting is typically immediately before the annual conference when held in person.

- Typically, two to three weeks prior to each business meeting, you will be notified to check the meeting's folder in the Core Committee Google Team Drive. You are responsible for reading all materials there before the meeting. Materials include committee/SIG reports (with budget requests in the spring), financial statements, e-minutes, Executive Director materials, procedural overview, the agenda, and other documents. Be prepared to discuss items and please bring your comments, insights, and questions.

- The annual budget, proposed by the Finance and Executive Committees, is reviewed, discussed, and voted on by Core at the spring business meeting so it is ready to be implemented on July 1, the start of our fiscal year.

- For whichever committees and/or SIGs that you chair or serve as a Core rep, you are responsible for presenting that committee or SIG report when it includes proposals for Core and answering any questions. You are also responsible for communicating back to the committee/SIG any decisions, questions, or requests from Core.

- Minutes of the business meetings are compiled by the Administrative Assistant and Executive Director based on collaborative notes taken (via shared Google doc) during the meeting. Minutes are first approved by the Executive Committee and then the Core Committee. Approved minutes are then posted publicly on the POD website.

Core Committee Business Meeting Details:

The work of the POD Network happens year-round, and the two Core Committee business meetings (fall and spring) allow the leadership to come together to receive updates about past and present efforts, provide guidance on the organization's work, and make decisions about the organization's future. Typical meeting content includes the following:

- Who are our Core members?

  - Ice-breakers, check-ins, concluding perspectives activities

- What has happened since the last meeting? (recent past)

  - Executive Director report
  - Administrative Committee reports (Exec, Finance, Ad hocs)
  - Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Actions
  - Operational Committee reports (Conference, External Partnerships, Membership, Scholarship, etc.)
  - SIG reports (targeted subpopulations and/or topics)

- What needs to happen to move us forward? (decision-making for the future)

  - Budget (spring meeting)
    - Overview (major sources of income, expenditures)
    - Full budget (discussion of budget requests)
  - Discussion items from committees and SIGs
  - Activities to address current issues
  - Governance Manual Updates (rules of POD)
  - Emergent ad hocs

Below are the processes and procedures typically followed at Core business meetings:

1. The President develops the agenda for the semi-annual Core business meetings based on input from the Committee/SIG reports and the Executive Committee and distributes it 1-2 weeks prior to the meeting. The President serves as meeting Chair at these semi-annual meetings. Additional meetings of the Core Committee may be chaired by the President or another member of Core or Exec, depending on the purpose of the meeting. At the semi-annual Core business meetings, the President calls for two volunteers to share note-taking and two to keep time for discussions.

2. Trust the work of the committees/SIGs. It is appropriate for Core members to ask questions and raise issues or concerns at any time during the Core business meetings. During discussions of the reports, inevitably a question arises that starts with "But did they consider…?" We need to trust that our colleagues did! This approach is one of the great joys of (good) committee work (i.e., within a group of smart people who are equally valued); it is likely that many different perspectives and issues are represented and considered when proposals are brought forward for discussion and/or approval.

3. Speaking and Discussion

    a. All voices matter and all Core members are treated as equals. Please speak up when you have something new to add. Your ideas are like gifts to the group. Other Core members may challenge and improve on the starting points that you provide.

    b. While affirmation of and support for others are important traits in educational developers, it is not necessary to verbally affirm your agreement with previous speakers. Given the volume of work at Core and the brevity of our meetings, please consider whether a previous speaker has already made a similar comment, and if so, refrain from repeating it.

    c. Aim to interact respectfully and assume good faith on the part of the speaker. Limit side conversations and disruptions: give speakers your full attention.

    d. Please speak in-turn and only for yourself. In order to allow all members to be heard, an ordered list of speakers is kept by the President-Elect during Core business meetings. Some people are comfortable jumping in, but others need time to think. If the discussion process gives primacy to those who jump in, they can end up dominating the discussion, even if not intentionally. This speaking queue process can feel a little awkward at first, but most of us end up appreciating the variety of voices that it enables.

        i.   Core members who want to speak let the President-Elect know, usually by signaling with a slight raise of one's hand or a small wave. When meetings are online, we signal via the Chat function.

        ii. We strive to make our points concisely to leave time for other voices and perspectives.

        iii. If you are on the speaking list and your point gets made by another Core member, you can pass when your turn is called.

        iv. When a discussion begins to wind down, the President will ask to be added to the list and will end the discussion.

    e. Recognize that silence will often be interpreted as agreement. Please take responsibility for sharing your wisdom and representing your perspectives. If you

find it difficult to speak up, please connect with the President-Elect before the meeting to let them know and identify agenda items where you want to be called on to speak.

4. Decision-Making

The POD Network strives for consensus decision-making whenever possible. Every meeting includes a mix of consensus decisions and voting (i.e., counting yeas and nays). The guidelines for consensus taking and voting appear below.

a. Voting. At every meeting we need to do standard voting when seeking to approve proposed changes to the Governance Manual or budget requests. Whether the voting is majority or ⅔ (supermajority) is determined by which part of the Governance Manual we are voting on:

   i. By-laws (⅔ vote)

   ii. Sections II, III & IV (majority vote)

   iii. Final budget (majority vote)

b. Consensus. Many decisions about directions for the organization happen by consensus. The goal of consensus decisions is to make a decision that all can live with and support in the best interests of the organization. Consensus is not the same as unanimity. We use a process that involves individuals specifying different levels of consensus. The levels range from an unqualified "Yes!" to a solid "No," and even include an option of doing more work on the issue before making a decision. A visual model of the levels, "Consensus Levels Visual", is available in each Core meeting folder and appears in the Resources section below. In essence, here's how it works:

We use the Levels of Consensus decision-making method (Kelsey & Plumb, 2004), which provides a format for checking and arriving at consensus in a timely manner without compromising the careful listening, reflection, respect, and trust that should accompany the use of consensus.

   i. After discussion of an issue, the President asks each Core member to hold up fingers indicating where they are on the Level of Consensus Scale (below). If a quick scan of the members indicates all ones and twos, then the group can quickly see that consensus has been reached. If there are several Core members indicating threes and fours, or if there is even one five or six, further discussion is needed to reach consensus.

   ii. It is important to provide time to hear and consider what people indicating five or six have to say. Inquire what would need to be changed (wording, further definition, addition or exception, amendments, etc.) to join the group on agreement on the issue.

      iii. If anyone indicating a five or six is still not in consensus with the group, then Core needs to decide whether the decision-making will be carried over to a later time, whether to continue discussion now, or whether they will use a fallback decision-making method (i.e., voting). In the event of continued difference of opinion, the minutes will reflect the minority position as well as the majority opinion.

Levels of Consensus Scale:

1. One Finger: I can say an unqualified "yes" to the decision. I am satisfied that the decision is an expression of the wisdom of the group.

2. Two Fingers: I find the decision perfectly acceptable.

3. Three Fingers: I can live with the decision. I'm not especially enthusiastic about it.

4. Four Fingers: I do not fully agree with the decision and need to register my view about why. However, I do not choose to block the decision. I am willing to support the decision because I trust the wisdom of the Core.

5. Five Fingers: I do not agree or disagree with the decision but need more time to think or discuss the issue.

6. Six Fingers: I do not agree with the decision and feel the need to stand in the way of this decision being accepted.

7. Seven Fingers: I feel that the Core has no clear sense of unity in the group decision. We need to do more work before consensus can be reached.

5. Conflict Resolution Strategies

Engage, when necessary, in conflict resolution: All ideas will be treated with respect, but in the event of a disagreement, there will be either a vote taken (if appropriate), continued discussion until consensus is achieved, or the issue will be tabled for future action. It is recommended that these principles from conflict resolution be followed:

    a. First identify the nature of the conflict. If it's interpersonal, it may not need to be addressed in the whole group—but it should be addressed; if it's one person taking the group off track or being disruptive, the President should handle "off line"; if it's substantive or procedural and relevant to Core or POD generally, members should work through some conflict resolution process in the context of the whole group.

b. All should seek first to understand the other perspective(s), then to make certain their position is understood.

c. When they encounter conflict, members should together identify options (avoidance, accommodation, competition, collaboration, compromise), and make these options, as well as likely consequences of different approaches, explicit.

d. Differentiate positions from interests. People can get mired in articulating, maintaining, and defending a position, while the values or interests underlying conflicting positions may not be irreconcilable. Unearthing interests and focusing there, rather than on positions, can help resolve much conflict.

e. Acknowledge—don't gloss over—value differences.

f. If a Core member still feels "unheard" or that their position is not accurately presented, that person should speak with the President (or with another member of the Executive Committee if the conflict is with the President) privately.

Recognizing that conflict can be valuable and controversial can be creative. Resolving conflicts and disagreements and addressing concerns will improve our group process and help us reach our goals.

Resources:

[Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

[Consensus Voting Visual](#)

[Current Governance Manual](#)

[Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy](#)

[Visual Style Guide](#)

[Writing Style Guide](#)

[Zoom Guidelines for Meetings](#)

References:

Kelsey, D. & Plumb, P. 2004. Great meetings! Great results: A practical guide for facilitating successful, productive meetings. Portland, ME: Hanson Park Press, Great Meetings! Inc.

_____