

Triennial Delegate Assembly

Delegate's Guide

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A. Selection of Delegates and Alternates

The Triennial process begins with a notice to the Secretaries of all Fellowship Societies from the Secretary of the Fellowship that a meeting of the TDA will take place at a given time and location. Not less than 60 days prior to this date, each Society must elect a Delegate and Alternate. Within 15 days notice of this election, certified by the Society President, must be given to the Fellowship. The Delegate and Alternate must each certify to the Fellowship that he or she has read The Urantia Book in its entirety.

B. Constitutional Requirements

The only binding characteristics of a Fellowship TDA are those set forth in Article VI, Article VIII section 2 of the Fellowship Constitution, and Chapter VI of the Fellowship By-Laws.

Section 6.3 of the Constitution requires that the TDA be conducted according to *Robert's Rules of Order*, except in respect to the order of procedure, which shall be as follows:

- (a) Assembly called to order and address of welcome.
- (b) Report of Credentials Committee and seating of delegates.
- (c) Appointment by the President from the floor of a Committee on Nominations and a Committee on Resolutions.

- (d) Reports of outgoing officers and chairmen of Departmental Committees.
- (e) Report of Nominations Committee and election of members of General Council.
- (f) Report of Resolutions Committee.
- (g) Consideration of old business.
- (h) Consideration of new business.
- (I) Reading and approval of minutes unless Assembly votes to waive such reading or designates some other manner of approving minutes.
- (j) Adjournment.

The primary purposes of the TDA are:

- 1.) To elect General Councilors. Any individual is eligible for election who:
 - has given *prior consent* (Constitution, Sec. 8.2),
 - is a member of *THE FELLOWSHIP in good standing* (ibid., Sec. 8.3), and
 - has read *The Urantia Book in its entirety* (ibid., Sec. 8.3).

The elections are

- by *secret ballot* (ibid., Sec. 8.2)
- decided in favor of the *candidate receiving the majority of the ballots cast* (ibid., Sec. 8.2).

2.) To present resolutions to the General Council. These resolutions are forwarded to the General Council, which may confirm, study further, or decline to carry out the resolutions. In the latter situation, the General Council must fully report the action at the next TDA.

C. Other Procedures and Traditions

1. Subsequent to the reports to the TDA of Fellowship officers and committee chairs, these individuals should leave the room, except, of course, for those who also happen to be Delegates or Alternates. In recent years, guests have been welcome to attend the TDA through these reports, but not thereafter. Should any Delegate desire guests present, the TDA must first approve.
 2. The President of the Fellowship appoints a Delegate or Alternate to serve as temporary chairman of the TDA pending election of a chairman by the TDA itself. The function of the temporary chairman is merely to provide order during the election of the permanent chair.
 3. One point must be established prior to the election of the permanent chairman. Since only the Delegates actually represent the Societies, the temporary chairman must request a vote on the issue of whether Alternates shall be permitted to speak. This has been the tradition at least since 1979. The Alternate votes only in the absence of the Delegate.
 4. The temporary chairman then proceeds with nominations for a permanent chairman. The TDA may choose to elect one chairman, or separate chairmen for elections and resolutions.
 5. Routine voting is normally carried out by a counting of raised hands: those for, those against, and abstentions. (Delegates only.)
 6. Upon election, the (permanent) chairman should solicit nominations for, and proceed to elect, a secretary of the TDA, who shall be responsible for recording the proceedings.
 7. At this point, role should be taken of those officially present. In this process, Delegates and Alternates traditionally dilate a bit on where they are from and how long they have been reading the book.
 8. The Constitution refers to nominations being processed first by a Committee on Nominations, and to resolutions being processed first by a Committee on Resolutions. Traditionally, these committees are “committees of the whole” $\frac{3}{4}$ i.e., the entire TDA.
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D. Election Process

9. In the elections process, nominations for Councilors are completed before any

discussion of the candidates takes place. Each counselor should have been provided a list of candidates with biographical sheets. The TDA may vote to accept this list of individuals as automatically nominated, or may do a quick run through to determine that there is at least one Delegate willing to support each candidacy. (A person is not automatically nominated simply as a result of having indicated his or her willingness to serve.)

10. For clarity, the candidates' names should be written on a blackboard for all to see. Alternatively, photocopies of the complete list should be distributed.

11. Some characteristics worth noting in prospective Councilors are: length of time reading the Urantia Book and dedication to its teachings; quality and length of previous organizational service, both local and national; study group attendance; regional and national conference attendance; consistency of financial support; time available to serve if elected, and; particular skills which may be important to the operation of the Executive Committee. All other matters equal, Delegates sometimes invoke issues of geographic representation and gender balance.

12. Candidates for General Councilor who are also either Delegates or Alternates should leave the room during discussion of their candidacy.

13. Traditionally, voting is for the nine-year slots first, then to fill any vacancies, with the longest remaining terms first.

14. Any candidate who receives a majority of the votes cast is declared elected and removed from the slate. No low-polling nominee should be removed from the slate, since (at least theoretically) all those who voted for a successful candidate might later vote for someone who earlier received no votes. Voting continues until one candidate for each position receives a majority of the votes, regardless of how long this process takes. The chairman should permit additional discussion of the candidates between ballots.

15. The success of the election process depends on forthrightness regarding the qualifications and past performance of the nominees. It does no service to the Fellowship to withhold unflattering information; however, the Master said, "Speak not hearsay." The Assembly should consider the advisability of a pledge of confidentiality regarding matters discussed in the election process.

16. The above election procedures are actually the work of the nominations committee of the whole. Once all positions have been filled, the President of the Fellowship is invited back into the room, where he calls a formal vote on the slate nominated. This completes the election phase.

E. Resolutions Process

17. Having supervised the election of General Councilors, the President then withdraws so that the TDA may consider resolutions. If the TDA has not already elected a chairman for the resolutions phase, it should do so now.

18. Each Delegate and Alternate should have been provided with advance printed copies of each resolution which is proposed to be made. However, there is no restriction on any Delegate introducing any resolution even if no advance copy was distributed.

19. At the beginning of the resolutions phase, the Chairman should assemble all resolutions and lead the process of numbering each for clarity in reference. If several resolutions are more or less the same, they might be grouped together.

20. In order to afford each resolution a theoretically equal chance of consideration, the TDA may find it helpful to adopt rules limiting debate. Several TDAs have proceeded as follows:

- a.) a motion to pass a resolution x is made and read aloud. (Per Robert's Rules, the resolution dies unless seconded.)
- b.) brief and specific questions may be asked the mover regarding the meaning of the motion.
- c.) The chairman invites discussion of the motion by a supporter for not more than 2 minutes; then discussion on the same basis by someone opposed for a total of 3 speakers in favor and 3 opposed shall have spoken. At the end of 12 minutes, discussion is summarily stopped and a vote is called.
- d.) Any Delegate may move to extend debate for any number of additional 6 minute periods by non-debatable motions so to do. These motions require a only majority for passage, not two-thirds. Inasmuch as this procedure limits the rights of Delegates under Roberts' Rules, it cannot be used except by prior 2/3 approval of the TDA.

21. It is incumbent upon the chairman to evidence a spirit of fairness in managing discussion of resolutions so that all sides enjoy full opportunity to be heard. While adhering to whatever rules the TDA adopts, in doubtful situations, the chairman should err on the side of permitting additional debate.

22. Resolutions from the floor may be made subsequent to consideration of those which

are “on the agenda” as a result of prior action of the TDA.

23. When no further resolutions are forthcoming, the chairman should invite the Fellowship President to return to confirm the vote on the resolutions which were passed. (It is unnecessary to consider those which were not passed.) This completes the TDA process.

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