

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION REFERENDUM

CASE STATEMENT IN FAVOR OF CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

We, the majority of the current Alumni Board, including all officers and Alumni Trustees, thank the entire Reed Alumni Association community for taking an interest and voting. We appreciate your participation and will respect the referendum's outcome. **We recommend, and ask you to approve these updates to our governing documents.** Your vote matters!

Hopefully, you've read the **full redline changes approved by the Board**. Mischaracterizations have circulated in our community. Constitutional change can sound precipitous. When feeling uncertain, it's a natural inclination, even among Reedies, to keep the status quo.

The approved referendum was anything but casually considered; the status quo is not serving us well. The changes resulted from more than three years of research, self-assessments, meetings, and discussions involving the entire Alumni Board, Chapter leaders, past Board presidents and alumni trustees, other alumni, and the College. The Constitution and bylaws structure the Board and its ability to serve the Alumni community. Updating them benefits the community.

Proposed changes make the governing documents internally consistent, modernized, and expand opportunities for alumni participation. The changes create a self-governing Chapter Steering Organization – while maintaining dedicated Chapter representation. This latter change is a point of contention. Regrettably, these amendments have been cast by some as a secretive, malicious act to disenfranchise the role of Chapter leadership. Nothing could be further from the truth.

So, it's fair to ask, why the changes? Key benefits include: **(FAQS)**

- Chapters will gain increased college support focusing on localized activities, while being able to define their own membership and self-governing collective, with a fair representative voice on the Board through three dedicated seats.

- Streamlining of the Board's organization, with national focus and scope, and greater emphasis on strategic planning activities rather than informational reporting.
- Expansion of alumni participation opportunities, including ability to serve in leadership roles in Chapters and committees through reasonable term limits and ad hoc membership.
- Modernized language permits electronic communication (rather than only hard copy print) in official notices and flexibility for electronic voting, clarifies textual ambiguities, and matches historical practices.

As part of the long self-assessment process that identified structural concerns, Board members were encouraged to submit their own proposals. Those few members most vocally opposed to the approved changes offered alternatives that were not endorsed by the majority director membership. While we believe the changes will be successful in promoting a stronger alumni volunteer community and do not take the amendment process lightly, the Board will reassess again should the changes not achieve their positive objectives.

We believe the changes expand both Board impact on and participation by the greater alumni community. The large majority (80%) of current Board members wholly supported these changes and the process that brought them forth. Now, the votes by the alumni community will determine whether they are implemented or not. We urge you to vote "yes."

Authored by:

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Alumni Board Executive Committee

CASE STATEMENT OPPOSED TO CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Because of our love of Reed College and our community, we oppose key aspects of the proposed constitutional changes. We, the authors and co-signers, include past and present trustees, alumni board members, alumni office staff, Reed service award honorees, and chapter leaders. Three dedicated chapter chairs resigned in protest of this proposal, and at least one at-large board member resigned. Our goal is to strengthen the Alumni Association and Board of Directors (ABD).

ARTICLE II Purpose: ...Alumni Association exists to foster the continuing welfare of both the College and its alumni by promoting mutually beneficial interaction, by sustaining a sense of community among alumni and between the College...

Chapters are essential to ABD's defined purpose—promoting beneficial interaction and strengthening the Reed community. 65% of alumni live in chapter regions. Programming by chapters is a critical way for alumni to meet other alumni outside of reunions. When ABD and Reed offices need people to assist students or alumni, they count on chapter leaders. Chapter representatives are essential participants in ABD discussions—they explain what does and doesn't work locally; coordinate potentially conflicting efforts; leverage complementary projects; and serve as liaison between the ABD and chapters.

The ABD consists of 23 members chosen by the board's Nominating Committee, and a representative selected by each active chapter (currently 9), for a total of 32 members. The proposal would reduce chapter representation to a maximum of 3, chosen by the Nominating Committee from a list supplied by a yet-to-be-created nominally independent Chapter Steering Organization. These representatives would serve for one year (as opposed to three or four for other ABD members), possibly renewable twice by the Nominating Committee. Importantly, these changes have no transition provision—if accepted, they remove all chapter

representatives from the ABD until the Chapter Steering Organization is created and can go through the annual nomination process.

The four "**Goals for changes**" published in September 2018 Reed Magazine are vague and do not reflect what the changes actually do. No rationale for reducing the number of chapter representatives is ever given. One stated goal is to provide chapter independence, yet each chapter would remain required to report to the ABD. Chapter representation would be controlled by the ABD. The constitutional changes do not change committee assignments or project-based work.

Although supporters of the proposed changes claim that the ABD will be more streamlined and nimble once the changes have been adopted, the changes we oppose will instead add bureaucracy and distance between the ABD and the Chapters. Other changes, especially those that permit distanced and asynchronous participation, are entirely reasonable, but they have been unfortunately packaged with changes to chapter representation for a single yes-or-no vote.

The Alumni Association Board's principal purpose is bringing together alumni as well as other College constituencies. Chapters are essential to this function.

We urge alumni to vote NO, rejecting these constitutional changes.

Read more at

<https://reedalumni.blogspot.com/>

The authors and co-signers of this statement are listed at:

<https://reedalumni.blogspot.com/2018/12/list-of-authors-and-cosignors-of.html>