

**Council on Membership, Ethics and Judicial Concerns (COMEJC)  
Report to the GLAO  
February, 2022  
Stephen J. Belli, D.D.S.,M.S., Chairman COMEJC**

The annual meeting of the Council on Membership, Ethics & Judicial Concerns (COMEJC) was held on Saturday, January 8, 2022 both virtually via Zoom and in-person at AAO headquarters.

**Membership:**

The 2021-22 renewals have exceeded 2020-21 for most prominent member categories and have already surpassed the entire 2020-21 fiscal year among Active and International members. The increase among Internationals is largely attributed to the new international dues structure that was implemented this year. Other highlights include:

- AAO has fully transitioned 93.9% of Students to Active in FY22, compared to 93.5% for all of FY21.
- 82.4% of International Members in their first four years have renewed, up from 61.9% for all of FY21.
- 116 AAO members with AAOIC coverage were dropped in November; however, 55 have reinstated to date.
- Based on forecasts through the remainder of FY22, the AAO projects to grow active membership by approximately 59 members year-over-year.
- AAO's market share of U.S. orthodontists is 86.3% as of May 2021, up from 86.0% in 2020. The AAO staff are currently conducting research on Canadian orthodontists to calculate Canadian market share. This is expected to be complete in May 2022.
- In the fall of 2021, the AAO conducted a member pulse survey. Key takeaways include:
  - The primary reason that members belong to the AAO is to “do their part in creating a unified voice that advocates for the specialty”.
  - A combined 51% of respondents gave the AAO an “excellent” or “very good” rating on value for the money, a decline from the previous survey.
  - Respondents gave the AAO a Net Promoter Score (likelihood to recommend) score of 35.8, also down from the previous survey.
  - The AAO engaged with a third-part researcher to conduct interviews with members whose value ratings and likelihood to

recommend declined from fall 2020 to fall 2021. The research concluded that the key reason for the ratings declines was related to a perceived lack of advocacy/protection of the profession.

- **Non-Orthodontist Faculty Category**

- COMEJC submitted a HOD resolution in 2021 to adopt a new member category for non-orthodontist faculty. However, the resolution was referred back to COMEJC for further consideration of full-time faculty who may be general dentists or other specialists. Council asked staff to discuss with AAO legal whether it would be possible to add language to Bylaws restricting dentists and dental specialists from being members. AAO legal has confirmed that adding language to Bylaws to restrict certain groups of individuals from being members would be legal. After an extensive discussion, the council voted not to resubmit the resolution. “We currently have means of appreciating and including those who have dedicated their careers to educating and mentoring us.”

- **Member Gender Identification**

- Following recently approved changes to AAO patient health forms regarding gender identification and pronoun selection, COMEJC discussed whether the AAO should make similar changes to membership applications and profiles. Consensus among the council was that gender selection should be expanded; however, asking for transgender status or pronouns for membership purposes is not necessary. Council made a motion to the BOT that the AAO revise its membership applications to include the following gender selections:
  - Female
  - Male
  - Non-binary/third gender
  - I use another term
  - Prefer not to say
- The Inclusion and Engagement Task Force agreed with the gender options as well as not to include transgender status or pronouns.

### **Annual Session Registration Categories for Non-Members**

COMEJC identified potential issues with two Annual Session registration categories:

- C5 (Non-Member – Faculty, Full-Time) – This implies the faculty who are not AAO members but are eligible for membership can register using this category. The implication is that non-member faculty orthodontist would be paying only \$50 more than AAO members.
- C7 (Non-Member – Dental Specialist) – The implication is that non-members who are not eligible for AAO membership and may be practicing orthodontics (e.g., pediatric dentists) can register for only \$50 more than AAO members.

A recommendation was submitted to CCon for consideration that the AAO eliminates the Annual Session registration category C7 and that category C5 be revised to the following: Non-Dentist Orthodontic Faculty, Full-Time. (requires verification of faculty status by the orthodontic program chair)

### **Orthodontic Residency Presentations Report:**

During the 2020-21 academic year, residents from 54 programs attended the Resident Vitals presentation, which was the highest number in at least eight years. The 2021-22 academic year was off to a slower start with 12 programs signed up for Resident Vitals to date, which was primarily due to staff turnover at the AAO. That role has since been filled and invitations were sent to programs again in January to sign up for spring presentations.

### **Ethics Resources and Promotion:**

COMEJC discussed how the AAO can better educate members on how to practice ethically in today's environment. Council identified that educational content for general AAO membership via webinar is limited. Council made a motion to the BOT that the AAO explores and develops a CE course on ethical considerations for orthodontists.

### **New Business:**

Staff liaison Brandon Hackworth gave an overview of Member Appreciation Month, which is planned and being budgeted for winter 2023. The concept is to show the AAO's appreciation for its members through a dedicated month that will offer discounts to AAO store products, complimentary access to recorded lectures, a special webinar and more.

### **2023 COMEJC Meeting**

COMEJC will hold its annual meeting on Saturday, January 7, 2023 at AAO headquarters in St. Louis.

