Council on Membership, Ethics and Judicial Concerns (COMEJC)
Constituent Report for Ad Interim Meetings – Fall 2026

Council Changes for 2026-27

- Dr. Josh Murphy (RMSO) is serving as Chair.
- Dr. Angela McNeight (SAO) is serving as Vice-Chair.
- Dr. Shawheen Saffari is the new NESO representative, replacing Dr. Chris Murphy.
- Dr. Nellie Kim-Weroha (MSO) is the new Board liaison to COMEJC.

HOD Resolutions

- COMEJC submitted two resolutions to the 2026 AAO House of Delegates that were adopted (or adopted as amended), including:
    - 12-26 RC – Financial Policies Amendment (Life Active Dues)
      Result: Life Active Academic dues rates are now codified in AAO Financial Policies.
    - 13-26 COMEJC – Financial Policies Amendment (Service Member Dues)
      Result: Service Member dues are now calculated as a percentage (40%) of Active Member dues, rather than a flat dues rate.
- The House of Delegates referred a separate resolution to COMEJC for investigation: 19-26 PCSO (S1-BOT) - Student Members as Constituent and Component Members
  Result: COMEJC is investigating the necessary steps to make current Student Members, members of their respective constituent and component societies. COMEJC will report back to the 2027 House of Delegates.

Membership Trends

COMEJC continues to monitor membership data and trends. Highlights include:

- From the latest AAO Secretary's Report (March 2026):
    - Total AAO membership is now at 18,816, a net decrease of 119 year over year. Increases among the Retired (+105), Student (+87) and International Student (+41) categories were outweighed by declines among Active (-180), International (-148) and Life Active (-28).
    - Total member retention decreased from 94.1% in 2025 to 92.8% in 2026. This is primarily driven by declines among Active and International Members.
    - Active Membership (U.S. and Canada) is now at 8,201, a net decrease of 180 members year over year.
        - Increases from Student Members transitioning to Active (+355) and new/reinstated Active Members (+145) were offset by Active Members dropped for non-payment of dues (-440) and transitions from Active to Life Active (-135) and Retired (-100).
        - New and reinstated Active Members increased from 134 in 2025 to 145 in 2026, an increase of 8% year over year.

        - Active Member retention decreased from 96.2% to 94.6%. This is primarily driven by a 42% increase in Active Members dropped for non-payment of dues (308 in 2025 to 440 in 2026).
- The AAO's updated U.S. market share number is 82.2% as of May 31, 2026. This is a decrease from 84.6% in 2025. The current U.S. market share is calculated as 9,508 AAO members out of a total population of 11,567 orthodontists.
    - Key drivers of the year-over-year decline include mid-career orthodontists (11-20 years post-residency); early career orthodontists (1-10 years post-residency); female and male orthodontists; and orthodontists in prominent states, most notably Texas, California and New York.
- The AAO's updated Canadian market share number is 46.7% as of May 31, 2026. This is a decrease from 48.4% in 2025. The current Canadian market share is calculated as 437 AAO members out of a total population of 936 orthodontists.
- Membership renewals for the 2026-27 membership year are currently pacing behind year-over-year results. As of August 24, 72.2% of Active Members have renewed, which is 6.5 percentage points behind the same approximate date in 2025. In addition to regular renewal communications from the AAO, constituent and component leaders, as well as other member volunteers and AAO staff, are conducting personalized outreach to support renewals. The deadline for members to renew is November 15th.

COMEJC Programs & Strategic Initiatives

- In response to growing membership challenges, COMEJC launched the Membership Ambassador Program (MAP) in June 2026 for the 2026-27 membership year. The purpose of the MAP is to drive grassroots engagement, and ultimately recruitment and retention, among volunteer leaders through a defined structure and roles. The program has launched as a pilot with two AAO constituents (NESO and SWSO) participating.
- COMEJC continues to oversee the Resident Vitals and Financial Management for Residents presentations that are offered to residency programs annually (either in-person or virtually).
    - In 2025-26, 32 accredited orthodontic programs hosted the Resident Vitals presentation, up from 13 in all of 2024-25. In addition, 22 programs hosted Financial Management for Residents course, up from 8 in all of 2024-25.
    - In total, the AAO facilitated 90 presentations, including the AAO Legal Course, in 2025-26 44 of 75 accredited programs (59%) hosted at least one of the AAO's three presentation offerings, including the AAO Legal Course, in 2025-26.
    - Programs may request presentations at https://www2.aaoinfo.org/programs-for-residents-and-educators/orthodontic-program-presentations/.

COMEJC Meetings

- The next in-person COMEJC meeting will be Friday, January 8, 2027 at AAO headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri.