

# **AGENDA ITEM**

**IV.D MAY 2015**

**DATE:** April 28, 2015

**TO:** Members, Planning & Budget Committee

**FROM:** Staff

**SUBJECT:** Update on Board of Trustees District Election Process

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This memorandum is to update the Board Planning and Budget Committee about the use of “email blasts” to enhance the 2015-16 Board-year District Election process, which accomplishes the P&B Committee’s Goal “G”: Election Process - Reinvigorate district election process by examining voting procedures and methodologies for increased turnout.

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## **BACKGROUND**

### **Past Election Practice**

On March 25, 2009, the California Supreme Court adopted new Rule 9.7 of the California Rules of Court, effective February 1, 2010. Rule 9.7 requires that members provide email addresses to facilitate communications by the State Bar with its members. Adoption of Rule 9.7 facilitated the move to a “Hybrid” Board election because email addresses would be available for members.

Consequently, from 2010 – 2014, the State Bar conducted a “Hybrid” Election that used a combination of voting by mail ballot and by the Internet. A ballot packet was mailed to all members of record that included a ballot, instructions, candidate statements, a unique voter PIN number printed on the ballot, and a return mail ballot envelope.

Upon receipt of the ballot packet, members could vote using the mail ballot or by Internet with their member number (blind information - not printed on the ballot) and the voter PIN number printed on the ballot. The combination of these two numbers identified members and allowed them to vote online in their district election. The candidates’ statements were accessed via a “pop-up” that appeared when voters click on the candidates’ names. Write in candidates were also supported on the Internet.

### **2015-16 District Election**

For the 2015-16 Board-year election conducted in the fall of 2014-15<sup>i, ii</sup>, we added an “E-balloting” feature to the hybrid election process in the hopes that it would increase voter turnout. E-ballots were sent three times to members who had not voted and had valid e-mail addresses on file. Voters could vote directly from the E-ballot by clicking on a voting link and utilizing the unique Personal Identification Number (“PIN”) provided on their paper ballot. Additionally, if needed, the vendor could re-ballot individuals with an existing valid e-mail address on file and with our State Bar authorization. Consequently, if voters had misplaced their hard copy voter PIN, there was now an email retrieval option.

In the spring 2014 election for the 2014-15 board-year three district elections were conducted: District 2 (Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties); District 4 (Imperial, Inyo, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego counties); and District 6 (Monterey, San Benito, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties).

There were 107,256 eligible voters for all three districts, 12,282 valid voters and overall turnout of 11.45%

In the fall 2014 election for the 2015-16 board year, there were two district elections conducted: District 5 (Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Stanislaus, Tulare, and Tuolumne counties) and District 4 (Imperial, Inyo, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego counties).

Because there was a single candidate in District 5, he was deemed elected without the occurrence of an actual ballot. In District 4 there were 38,459 eligible voters with 5,811 valid voters with a 15.11% turnout as compared to the spring District 4 election where there was only a 12.79% turnout; an 2.32% increase from the 2014 spring election.

For the 2014 fall election for District 4, paper ballot voting decreased from an average of 58% to 39.44% in the 2014 spring election and web voting increased from an average of 42% to 60.56%.

The tilt toward web voting appears to be the result of the addition of E-balloting.

#### **FISCAL / PERSONNEL IMPACT:**

None

#### **RULE AMENDMENTS:**

None

#### **BOARD BOOK IMPACT:**

None

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<sup>i</sup> In March 2014 the Board of Trustees approved of changes in the schedule for the district elections of members of the Board of Trustees. The Board moved the schedule for the Board district elections to the fall of each year to allow Trustees who are in the final year of a three-year term to seek re-election to a second term on the Board and to qualify to run and serve as President, Vice-President, or Treasurer in the following board year.

<sup>ii</sup> A “board year” is the time intervening between two successive Annual Meetings. Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 6016.