

# 5 MEMBERSHIP ISSUES TO RESOLVE USING TOASTMASTERS GOVERNING DOCUMENTS



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## ABOUT THE LEadership LEGACY SERIES™

The LEadership LEGACY SERIES™ is a collection of informational, leadership resources created from the perspective of **Cassandra "D.I.V.A. of Dialog™" Lee**. She is a distinguished Toastmaster and the first-ever District Director for **District 103 Toastmasters**. Each report in the series contains details, strategies, tips, and/or plans which can be used for the educational achievement of club members and the distinguished success of club leaders, Area Directors, Division Directors, and District TRIO members of Toastmasters International.



### Recipient of the Excellence in Program Quality Award

Past District Director (PDD) and Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) Cassandra "D.I.V.A. of Dialog™" Lee knows a thing or two about education and training. She advised members toward educational achievement and leaders toward distinguished success in her role as Program Quality Director (PQD) for District 30 in the 2016-2017 club year. Her commitment to education and training earned her the "Excellence in Program Quality Award" from Toastmasters International

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Cassandra "D.I.V.A. of Dialog™" Lee, DTM, PDD** became aware of **Toastmasters International** in 1996 as a member of a Speechcraft class sponsored by a Toastmasters club in Evanston, IL. However, her career as a Toastmaster started in January 1998 when she became an official member of the ABA SPEAKeasies #9424 in Chicago, IL. She credits her growth as a person and development as a professional to the communication and leadership training of Toastmasters. Her professional career flourished from administrative professional to mid-level manager to full-time entrepreneur thanks to Toastmasters. At the same time, her involvement in Toastmasters shifted from member to club officer to Area Governor to Division Governor to Club Sponsor, Club Mentor, Charter Member, Division Governor again, Club Retention Chair, Program Quality Director, and the first-ever District Director for **District 103 Toastmasters**. She is a Career Advancement Strategist™ who uses "Divine Inspiration Vocally Applied™" to educate and empower professional audiences toward workplace satisfaction and career success. She is Sponsor, Mentor, and Charter Member of the award-winning **Wrightwood-Ashburn Overcomers (WAO) Toastmasters club #771880** in her hometown of Chicago. Besides "Pivoting Towards Pathways" for 2020, she is working to become certified as an Accredited Speaker (AS) by Toastmasters International. To learn more information about her, visit [www.d103tm.org](http://www.d103tm.org); <http://wao.toastmastersclubs.org> and/or [www.divaofdialog.com](http://www.divaofdialog.com).

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# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

**Cassandra "D.I.V.A. of Dialog™" Lee** provides regular tips on professional development and personal growth via her FREE newsletter, *Dialog Digest™* each month. Want to receive a personal copy? Sign-up at <http://www.divaofdialog.com>. As a bonus, you'll get a complimentary copy of "101 Tips to Elevate Your Career."

## Introduction

Club members. Club leaders. Area Directors. Division Directors. District TRIO members. Everyone has experienced club and/or membership issues in which they were unsure of the best way to resolve it. Issues can range from members not showing up regularly to club meetings; members not signing up to fulfill meeting roles; members constantly canceling out on meeting roles; officers not fulfilling their duties and responsibilities; to arguments and combative behaviors between members and leaders. A common observation has been how the club environment is jeopardized when an unresolved club or membership issue exists.

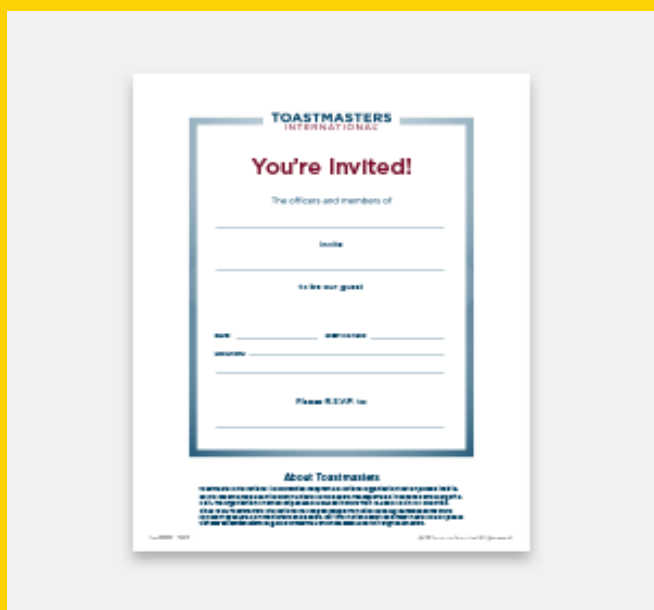
In this special report, I will focus on areas of the Toastmasters International **governing documents** which can help you to prevent some issues from arising within your club. Issues that raise such questions as:

- Did you know membership in your Toastmasters club was by invitation only?
- Are you aware of the differences between ACTIVE members vs. INACTIVE members?
- Does your club vote-in new members?
- Has your club voted members out?
- Do you know how to handle a vacant club officer role?
- Are you aware of how to discipline, expel, suspend, or decline to renew membership of your club members?

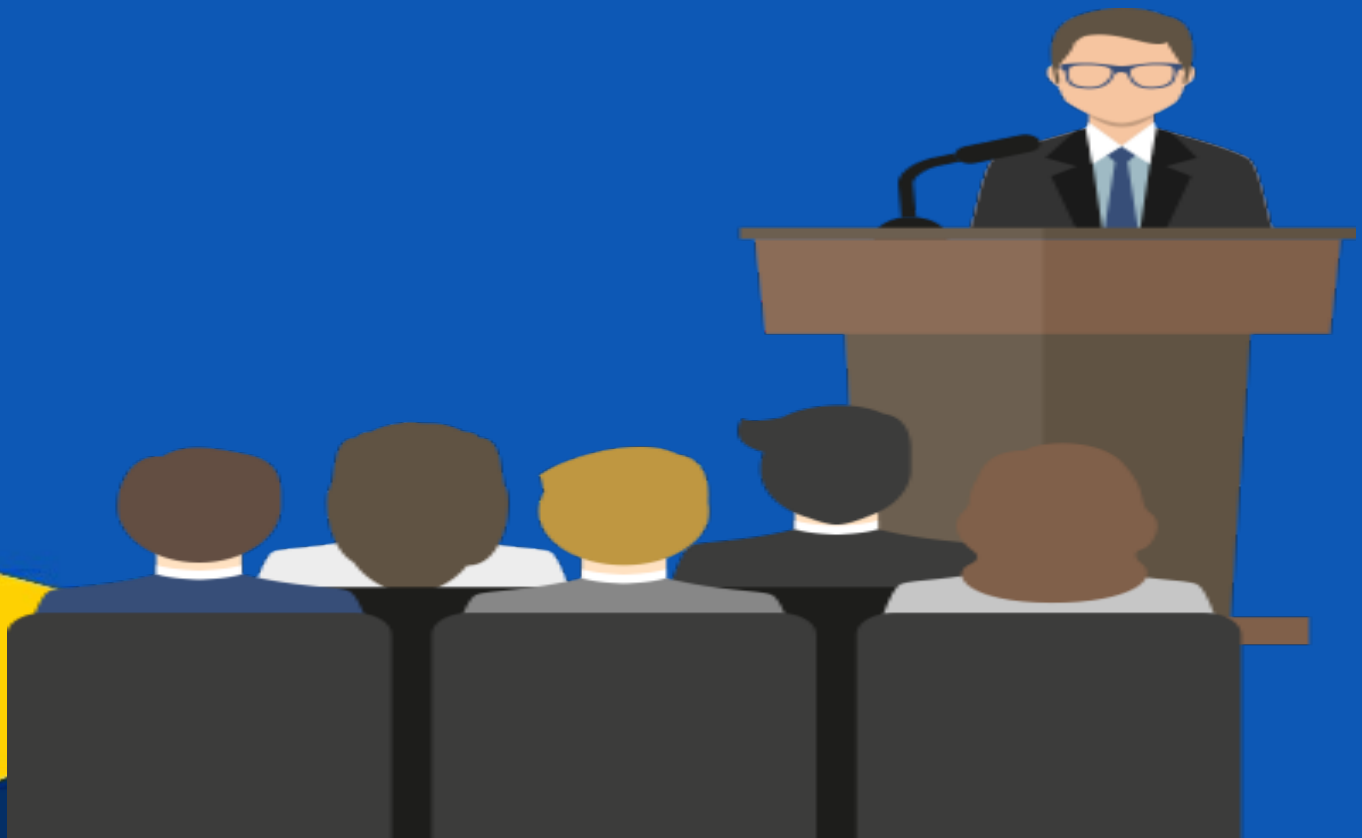
Let's use <https://www.toastmasters.org/leadership-central/governing-documents> to explore the answers to these questions which can lead to membership issues for your club.

## Invitation Needed to Join Your Club

According to the **Bylaws of Toastmasters International**, **Article III: Membership, Section 2: Composition of Member Clubs**, it says "Member clubs are **private associations** composed of persons seeking to improve their ability to communicate and/or lead. Individual membership in any Member Club is **by club invitation** and is open only to individuals who remain in good standing with Toastmasters International under Article III, section 8..." This information lets you know your club does not have to accept the membership application of everyone who says they want to join your club. Of course, you cannot discriminate against anyone! The key is to know who your club serves. Identify your ideal member. Build your marketing plan to invite and recruit that ideal member to join your club. Do you know who the ideal member is for your club?



See also **Article II: Membership, Section 2: Admission to Membership** of the **Club Constitution for Clubs of Toastmasters International**.



## Active Members vs. Inactive Members

Every club in Toastmasters will experience the **ACTIVE** and **INACTIVE** participation of its members. On one hand, there will be members who you can count on being present and involved in your club meetings. On the other hand, there will be members who haven't been involved in so long that you forgot they were members of your club. Let's face it, we know life will happen. Work will take priority. Family will be the focus. Self-motivation will disappear. However, **ACTIVE** members find a way to stay consistently involved in your club meetings; whereas, **INACTIVE** members won't. Toastmasters International covers this issue in the governing documents.

According to the [Club Constitution for Clubs of Toastmasters International](#), **Article II: Membership, Section 3**, "...**ACTIVE** individual members attend club meetings, have voting privileges, may be elected as an officer of the club, shall be counted towards a quorum of the club membership, may participate in speech contests if they fulfill the other eligibility criteria, and may have a place on the regular speaker's program..." This information let's you know **ACTIVE** membership has its privileges.

Unfortunately, for any member who becomes **INACTIVE** by making a request to the Executive Committee of the club; maintaining individual membership without regular attendance at club meetings; or for having continued absences without notice, **Section 4, Paragraph B** tells you those members "...shall have no voting privileges, shall not hold office, shall not be counted toward a quorum of the club membership, and shall not participate in speech contests.

Now that you know the distinction between **ACTIVE** and **INACTIVE** members, how will your club handle these types of members in your club?

## Vote Members Into Your Club



### Discipline. Expel. Suspend. Decline to Renew Membership

- Does not support the purpose of your club;
- Does not constructively contribute to the programs and activities of your club;
- Acts in a manner inconsistent with standards of conduct set forth by your club or Toastmasters International..."

Did you know your "...club may establish routine procedures for dropping individual members who fail to pay club dues, who miss a certain number of meetings, or who fall below other minimum standards as determined by the club or Toastmasters International...?" Well, **Article II: Membership, Section 6** of the **Club Constitution for Clubs of Toastmasters International** lets you know your "...club may discipline, expel, suspend, or decline to renew membership of any individual member who:

The **Club Constitution** lets you know for these reasons and "...for other just causes..." your club can remove members from your club environment. I think this constitutional rule will help to preserve the quality of your club environment and the future growth of your club.

Does your club have members for which this constitutional rule would apply? Would it be beneficial to your members and club environment to decline to renew the membership of those members?

My Toastmasters mentor, Past District Governor and Distinguished Toastmaster, Charles Brooks once asked me, "Cassandra, how can you vote a member out of your club if you never voted the member into your club?" That was a light bulb moment for me! I realized up until that point, my club had accepted every membership application without officially voting the person into the club as a member. That powerful question led me to learn more about **Article II: Membership, Section 2: Admission to Membership of the Club Constitution for Clubs of Toastmasters International**. It says, "...Application for individual membership shall be made on the form provided by Toastmasters International. Such application shall be returned to a club officer who shall read it to this club. **The applicant shall be declared elected to individual membership upon the favorable vote of at least a majority of the active individual members of this club present and voting at a business meeting of the club membership.**" Thanks to Mr. Brooks and the **Club Constitution**, my club is now consistent in using a vote-in process to accept new members. How about your club? Do you vote members into your club? Have you ever had to vote members out of your club?

## Resignation or Removal of a Club Officer

Has your club ever elected a member to a club leader role only to have the member quit before serving in the role? Does your club have a club leader who is not fulfilling their duties and responsibilities? Did your club lose a club leader in the middle of the club year due to corporate downsizing? If you can answer "YES" to any of these questions, I know you recognize the challenge each of these situations bring.

Club leaders are vital to the success of your club. The Toastmasters International **Club Leadership Handbook** states club leaders "...have the opportunity to aid in your club's success and gain valuable hands-on leadership experience..." The resource tells club leaders that "Serving as a club officer is a great responsibility and an exciting opportunity. Your term of office is filled with chances for you to renew your perspective, practice teamwork and develop your capacity to translate values and strategies into productive actions."

This sounds good. However, what happens when you must remove a club leader? The **Club Constitution for Clubs of Toastmasters International** informs you of what to do in **Article VI: Officers, Section 7, Resignation or Removal**. It states, "Any officer of this club may be removed from office at any time, with or without cause, by majority vote of all active individual members present and voting at a business meeting at which a quorum is present."

When you must replace a club leader, **Section 8, Vacancy in Officer** tells you, "Any vacancy in an office, except Immediate Past Club President, shall be filled by a special election held at the next business meeting following the announcement of the vacancy."

Will this help you the next time your club handles the removal or resignation of a club leader?

## Conclusion

There you have it! A brief look at five (5) issues your club may face and how each issue can be handled using the **governing documents** of **Toastmasters International**. Please keep in mind - I did not give you everything! I only focused on the bylaws, policy, protocol, and/or constitutional rules related to the issues I covered in this special report. I recognize your club may face other issues not covered here. That is why I recommend you invest time to research the **governing documents** on you own. The **Toastmasters International Policy and Protocol, Policy 3.0: Ethics and Conduct, Paragraph 1: Standards, Section B.** states "Each club is responsible for the actions of its members." **Section F.** says, "Each club, not Toastmasters International, is legally and practically responsible for resolving personal conduct issues within the club..." Now that you know this, will you be able to handle the membership issues of your club?



Learn more information about the constitutional rules, bylaws, policy and protocols covered in this special report. In addition, research those specific membership issues faced by your club. Visit <https://www.toastmasters.org/leadership-central/governing-documents>.



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