From the Editor

In the fall 1994 election fewer than 10 percent of the members returned ballots, which meant that the amendment to the Bylaws did not pass, since, according to the Bylaws, amendments can pass only when at least 10 percent of the members vote and two-thirds of those voting approve.

The point here is not the merits of the amendment but rather the lack of participation of the members in the governance of the Society. This lack of interest is exhibited elsewhere.

There are about 300 appointments to committees made by the president each year acting on recommendations made by a committee on committees. Each year I place full-page advertisements in the Notices asking for recommendations to be forwarded to the Committee on Committees. Chairs of existing committees and members of the Council are polled for suggestions to be forwarded to the Committee on Committees. The response to these requests is horrible. There were at most a handful of responses to these calls for suggestions.

There were fewer than five suggestions for nominations for elections to the Council. There were NO suggestions from the general membership for nominations for election to the Nominating Committee and the Editorial Boards Committee.

A request from department chairs for recommendations did elicit about thirty responses. I can assure those chairs that all of their recommendations were considered, one by one. (The Committee on Committees met last for well over five hours. This face-to-face meeting is only a portion of the work involved in this activity.)

The Society belongs to the membership, and the membership should be involved in its governance. It is impossible for the president and her Committee on Committees to know all members of the Society and especially which members are willing to serve the Society in various capacities. Thus it is important that the members communicate with the leadership about all aspects of the Society business. This includes desires and wishes about meetings and conferences, publications, science policy, education policy, and issues of the profession.

There are three committees that make recommendations to the president and the Council for election to various leadership and governance positions in the Society. These are: the Nominating Committee, which recommends nominees for the contested elections to the Council; the Editorial Boards Committee, which recommends editors to the Council for election to the editorial boards and associate editors for appointment to these boards; and the Committee on Committees, which recommends individuals to the president for appointment to the many committees of the Society. The Nominating Committee and Editorial Boards Committee members are elected, in contested election, by the membership. The candidates are nominated by the president. All suggestions received by the secretary are forwarded to her. The Committee on Committees is appointed by the president as one of her first official duties.

Among the many committees to which the president makes appointments are the five so-called policy committees: the Committee on Education, the Committee on Meetings and Conferences, the Committee on the Profession, the Committee on Publications, and the Committee on Science Policy. These committees are responsible for recommending to the Council of the Society the policy in their areas of responsibility. The president appoints members to these committees upon recommendation by the Committee on Committees. In order that these policy committees represent the opinions of the membership, it is vital that the Committee on Committees has a diverse and rich pool of members from which it can choose individuals to recommend to the president.

Communications from the members are always welcome by the officers and other members who volunteer their time to insure that the Society is fulfilling its mission. The Notices regularly publishes electronic mail addresses for the various officers and committees. We still read regular mail. We still answer the phone.

So please vote in the next election. Send in your suggestions for appointments and nominations. Tell your committees what is right and what is wrong.

Robert M. Fossum