

Final, As Approved June 4, 2025

Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons
Chicago Marriott, Illinois
April 3-5, 2025

Thursday, April 3, 2025

Members Present: Scott Barker, Anita Braden, Lynn Carter-Edmands, Nancy Cohen, Andrew Dumas, Carolyn Glosby, Tom Little, Frank Logue, Andrea McKellar, Steve Pankey, Aaron Perkins, Russ Randle, Kai Ryan, Diane Sammons, Julia Ayala Harris, Susan Brown Snook, Rachel Taber-Hamilton, Eva Warren.

Members Not Present: Craig Loya, Vanessa Marrero.

Others Present: Ian Douglas, representative of the Presiding Bishop; Michael Glass, Chancellor to the President of the House of Deputies; Mary Kostel, Chancellor to the Presiding Bishop; Louisa McKellaston, liaison of Executive Council,

Molly James, Interim Executive Officer of General Convention; Kent Anker, General Counsel to the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS).

Frank Logue convened the Standing Commission at 10:00 a.m. and led opening prayers. He thanked the members for braving the very challenging travel conditions to attend the meeting. The members then offered check-in updates.

The members unanimously approved the Minutes of the February 27, 2025, meeting, as posted.

Frank then walked through the published Agenda:

Thursday, April 3

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| 8-9 am | Group Worship/Plenary |
| 9-11:30 am | Meeting of the full Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Check-In▪ Approve Minutes▪ Sub-committees<ul style="list-style-type: none">Title IVDatabaseDioceses Facing ChallengesLay AccountabilityCustodian Clean Up ChangesGeneral Convention Task Group |
| 12-1 pm | Group lunch |
| 1-2 pm | Break |
| 2-3 pm | Meeting of the full Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Continue from the morning as needed |

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3-5 pm Sub-committee meetings
6-7 pm Group Dinner

Friday, April 4

8-9 am Group Worship/Plenary
9-11 am Sub-Committee meetings
11 am-12 pm Meeting of the full Commission
 ▪ Check-in from sub-committees
12-1 pm Group lunch
1-2 pm Break
2-5 pm Sub-committee meetings
6-7 pm Group Dinner

Saturday, April 5

8-9 am Group Worship/Plenary
9-11:30 am Work continues in sub-committees
12-1 pm Group lunch
 Departures

The subcommittees then proceeded to report out.

Subcommittee on the Title IV Database. (Resolution A026 (Establishing a Database for Title IV Outcomes on the Office of Transitional Ministry Profiles of Clergy)): Eva Warren, Andrew Dumas, Anita Braden, Susan Brown Snook, Kent Anker (DFMS Chief Legal Officer). Anita Braden and Eva Warren explained the work the subcommittee plans to do during these meetings. She asked all to join small focus groups to meet for 20 minutes to explore and discuss the work the subcommittee has done since November. Each group will choose a “phase” section from the Memo the subcommittee circulated. Members will rotate. Each group needs to have a note-taker so the group can report out to the full group.

At 10:35 the small groups reported back.

Susan Brown Snook explained that in the design for the data base, the data base would not be “open.” Access would be restricted. Each diocese would have a designated person to make data base inquiries. If there were a match, the bishop could then personally access the material – but only if there is an active search in progress (except in the new bishop scenario where the new bishop needs to be informed about all clergy).

Section 1. Anita commented that the Resolution’s scope may be too broad. A question is whether *all* orders, accords, pastoral directions are in the data base.

Andrea reported out for her small group. They are inclined to make the list of reportable items broad if the data base is secure. Standards must be equal across all dioceses. They looked at how the information would be received and loaded. Diane Sammons said when the canon was initially enacted the goal was to get trend data in there, and to get guidance about sentencing

Commented [TL1]: If someone(s) has notes on the individual small group discussions, please send them to Tom.

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trends to help dioceses determine appropriate sentences. It was not intended, when enacted, to be a data base for the specifics of individual cases.

Section 2. Susan reported out. The group discussed and debated whether the data base should include interim information or only final information. Interim data could help in searches but might be unfair to respondents in cases. With only final information, more detail would be available. They suggested possibly placing just a “flag” when a proceeding is still pending.

Tom mentioned the discussion in his group about the distinction between a proceeding being concluded by a determination of the Church Attorney to proceed no further versus by a formal dismissal. The two happen at different stages.

Mike Glass articulated the meaning of dismissal – it is not an exoneration. It is not final, as the case could be revived later by a subsequent complaint.

Tom suggested that the Commission’s report develop a few good hypothetical Title IV cases to use to illustrate what the Commission found and what we propose.

Anita Braden said that her group discussed situations where the Title IV process was weaponized.

Nancy Cohen commented that complaints dismissed by an intake officer should not be in the data base. All agreed. This led to the question, should any interim information ever be placed in the data base?

Section 3. Andrew Dumas reported out for his group. They discussed who should get access to the data base and did not reach a consensus.

Section 4. Eva Warren reported out. Her group concluded that a more robust data base is needed to help identify trends, e.g., are more complaints filed against female clergy and bishops? Where should the data base reside, under whose monitoring and control? Canon IV.19.30, preservation of records, indicates the Archives for the purposes stated in that canon. The canon gives our Standing Commission a role – but not for access to the data base information. The canon does not provide for any public access. The small group noted that not all intake officers apply the canon’s reporting thresholds properly or consistently. I.e., some intake officers forward complaints to reference panels that should not go there, and some don’t when they should.

Kai Ryan posed three questions. 1. Are we trying to use the data base for two conflicting purposes? 2. Intake officers need more training, but complaints arrive and in some cases it is not clear that it is a complaint, or intended as a formal complaint. 3. Do we really mean that there will be a discrete computer server somewhere, unconnected to the Internet, or will it be a cloud system? Are we sure we can do this securely and professionally?

Eva – Regarding question 3 – The data base should not be in the cloud.

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Kent Anker said the data base will contain an extraordinary amount of personally identifiable information, but It could work in the cloud if done well.

Eva said that we need to update the canon (re: personally identifiable information) in order to do the robust level of tracking that people want to see, and in order to mandate compliance with the recent and emerging data protection laws and regulations responsibilities for clergy and bishops. She noted that the subcommittee is still discussing where the data base should reside. Resolution A026 says it should reside in the Transition Ministry office; the current canon specified the Archives. Neither may be optimum.

Mary Kostel said that the use of the database will not eliminate the need for informed, candid and appropriate bishop-to-bishop communications in searches. We should mention this in our report and comment on the need to make these conversations consistent, reliable and assure that they actually happen.

Mike Glass noted the need to boost clergy formation and professional development resources in the areas where valid complaints arise.

Frank asked the subcommittee when it plans to activate the other Title IV work on the Commission's plate. Anita replied that the Title IV data base subcommittee needs more time.

Diane raised concerns about posting confidential clergy information, e.g., medical information, which would violate HIPPA. Eva commented that HIPPA does not apply to the Church in this context. More discussion.

The Commission then moved to consider the report and comments of the subcommittee on Dioceses Facing Challenges.

Subcommittee on Dioceses Facing Challenges (Resolutions B007 and D071):

Carolyn Glosby, Scott Barker, Andrea McKellar, Ian Douglas, Vanessa Marrero, Nancy Cohen
Andrea McKellar reported out for the subcommittee. There is some good news on the Church in Haiti situation: a new Standing Committee has been elected. Trust-building is underway. The Rev. Chuck Robertson, a Canon to the Presiding Bishop, is in dialogue with the new Standing Committee. The subcommittee is also working on identifying the data elements for the balance of the "dioceses facing challenges" work.

Subcommittee on Lay Accountability (Resolutions A146, A147): Russ Randle, Craig Loya, Lynn Carter-Edmands, Aaron Perkins, Louisa McKellaston. Russ Randle reported out for the subcommittee. He noted that more than half of congregations have less than fulltime clergy. Ten percent have only supply clergy. A key question for the subcommittee, and for the Commission, is: Do we need to amend the canons to recognize that lay leaders are running a huge number of congregations? In the 10% cohort, at least, it really looks like the congregations are lay-led.

Ian Douglas said that under our canons, it is simple – a congregation has either a rector or a priest in charge. Everything else is, therefore, a lay-led congregation.

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Russ asked Ian what proportion of Connecticut congregations are lay-led? Ian replied, 30-40% - but some of them are in searches.

Kai Ryan commented that, for congregations in transition, this is temporary. For the others, it is indefinite, and some long-term.

Ian comments that most interims are, effectively, a priest in charge.

Lynn Carter-Edmands suggested the Commission propose adding “in charge” to “interim,” in the canon, i.e., “interim priest in charge.”

Russ. What do we need the canons to say?

Scott Barker reported that half of the congregations in Nebraska are lay led as we are defining it. In many there is no vestry, just a “committee of the whole.” Sometimes this happens because of vestry member term limits.

Mike Glass said that a priest in charge or rector has charge of three things: the congregation’s property, its employees and the liturgy. How do we reallocate those? Should we acknowledge this in the canons?

Russ asked, what do we expect these congregation to be doing? What are the leadership expectations and requirements for their lay leaders?

Nancy suggested we could learn what parishes in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America do in these scenarios.

Julia Ayala Harris observed that these lay leaders often feel unrecognized, ignored, not given resources – that there is no place for them.

Aaron Perkins asked, what if a congregation wants to be lay-led?

Tom. This tends to happen in dioceses with few resources of their own. This can result in a slow spiral down.

Kai asked, what to put in the TEC canons versus diocesan canons? How much should the TEC canons address and what should be left to diocesan canons?

Lynn mentioned the Anglican Church of England ‘s mixed ecology movement, which strives to have both traditional and new forms of Christian community coexist and thrive, seeking a diverse ecosystem of faith.

Russ said that we need to establish some positive expectations for these congregations, somehow, somewhere. We should find a way to celebrate these congregations; they shouldn’t be second class citizens.

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Scott commented that in Nebraska this is a century old thing. The Church has never been good at addressing this. Also, many of these congregations in Nebraska are joyfully lay-led.

The Commission broke for lunch, following which **Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe joined the members and shared his thoughts on the Commission's work.** He touched on the Rethinking General Convention Steering Committee, which emerged from Resolution D022 (Create a Task Force on the Legislative Process) and noted that while only two of the Steering Committee's 12 appointed members are from the Commission, subcommittees of the Steering Committee will involve Commission members. The Steering Committee has much work to do.

Regarding Title IV, Sean said that we need to functionally integrate some of our databases, make sense of them, including for transition ministry and disciplinary purposes. The Church wants this. Members discussed how to make use of a reinvented Title IV data base mandatory, and the challenges of getting a proposal through both Houses. Will the Archives host the data base? Sean said that for archival purposes the data will go there, but there is no way currently to search it; we will figure out where to house it for cu transition ministry and disciplinary purposes.

Sean commented that Title IV works reasonably well. We can introduce efficiencies. We need to reduce backlogs. We are making progress. We should pursue dispute resolution options. Also, cultural and training changes are needed to make people aware that some Title IV complaints should be going through Title III. Take a fresh look at conference panels? No binding effect except in matters of restriction. Not working as intended. Not particularly effective, in his experience.

Diane: better to train people how to use it; don't create a new dispute resolution structure. Expand conciliation.

Lynn: when is the first time a respondent can formally respond to the charges? SR: not the reference or conference panel.

Mary: This is delayed too long in many cases. Investigator can facilitate this.

Ian: In CT when the Bishop presents the complaint to the respondent, the respondent is given an opportunity to respond to the complaint; can bring an adviser/legal counsel.

Diane – In Newark, letter first goes to respondent then there is the meeting with the Bishop, respondent can bring an adviser or legal counsel.

Lynn – Should the canons spell this out?

Sean: He doesn't think so, better to enhance training for the diocesan level officials, IO, Bishop, Advisers. Make more resources, best practices available to dioceses, better than more canons. He commented that there is a place for some discretion for bishops, not rigidity.

Diane - Important for respondents to feel they had some early chance to state their defense or innocence.

Sean: We don't have a sufficient pool of available, competent advisers and defense counsel across the Church.

Size, scope and makeup of Executive Council. Bishop Sean said the Commission should look at this, commenting that Council is too large, is not functioning well enough, and is not really representative of the Church.

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He went on to suggest that the Commission take a fresh look at the 2018 Blue Book report of the Task Force on the Episcopacy. That report discussed how one becomes a bishop, and when a diocese chooses to call a new bishop (proposing a required diocesan “missional review” process). It also reviewed and reimagined the process of discernment for the episcopacy. We are not seeing candidates we should be seeing. This is not without controversy.

Eva noted that the average tenure of bishops has become shorter, putting more pressure on the pipeline.

Anita commented that a mandatory missional review can feel to the diocese as if it is being “graded.”

Tom Little asked if some struggling dioceses less freaked-out now that we’ve had some mutual mergers? Bishop Sean replied, yes - but merger is not the answer for all situations.

Haiti. Bishop Sean is in regular contact with the new Standing Committee in Haiti, working with the Standing Committee towards the establishment of an assisting provisional bishop. The situation, the dynamics, are extraordinarily complicated.

Russ asked about the possible consolidation of Title IV resources., saying that for many dioceses it is “amateur hour.” He mentioned the Title IV collaboration of the dioceses of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, and some others. Sean responded that this is an example, and one that doesn’t require TEC canonical changes. We need to build a stable of advisers, church attorneys and other Title IV resource persons to solve these and other efficiency and funding problems.

Bishop Sean thanked the Commission members for their attendance and diligence and left to join another interim body meeting.

Subcommittee on the Custodian of the Constitution and Canons – Clean-Up Project. Diane Sammons, chair of this subcommittee, explained the memo and supporting materials she and Sally Johnson shared recently. She described the charge of the subcommittee. Sally prepared a memo last year, and since then the list of clean-ups has grown substantially. Some will be proposed for action for the 2027 General Convention, some for later. Diane will propose some for action at this Commission meeting. Much but not all focus is on inconsistencies of language, e.g., council of advice vs. advisory council. The process requires a sharp and sustained focus on the text of the canons. The subcommittee will report out its proposals on Friday.

General Convention Reinvention Steering Committee. Frank reported briefly on the recent Alabama meeting of the Steering Committee, which was largely organizational but also looked at goals and focus areas. A consultant, Compass, is involved.

Nancy asked if the size and structure of Executive Council has now been passed to the Commission for its review and consideration. Yes, replied Frank.

At 4:48 p.m. the Commission recessed for the day and the subcommittees then broke out and met.

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Friday, April 4, 2025

Members Present: Scott Barker, Anita Braden, Lynn Carter-Edmands, Nancy Cohen, Andrew Dumas, Carolyn Glosby, Tom Little, Frank Logue, Andrea McKellar, Steve Pankey, Aaron Perkins, Russ Randle, Kai Ryan, Diane Sammons, Susan Brown Snook, Rachel Taber-Hamilton, Eva Warren.

Members Not Present: Craig Loya, Vanessa Marrero.

Commented [TL2]: I believe the attendance is correct. Some members left at some point in the morning. I did not write their departures down in my notes.

Others Present: Ian Douglas, representative of the Presiding Bishop; Louisa McKellaston, liaison of Executive Council; Michael Glass, Chancellor to the President of the House of Deputies.

Frank Logue convened the meeting and asked the subcommittees to report on their meetings of yesterday afternoon.

Subcommittee on the Custodian of the Constitution and Canons – Clean-Up Project. Diane Sammons presented the subcommittee’s redlined drafting proposals as revised by the subcommittee yesterday. The Commission members commented on them and suggested edits in some cases.

Amend Canons I.1.1.b and I.1.8.a. In two places in I.1.1.b and one place in I.1.8.a, the subcommittee proposes to strike “advisory council” and replace it with “council of advice.” After discussion, the members unanimously vote to approve the proposals as presented.

Amend Canon I.1.b. This canon addresses what happens when the President of the House of Deputies dies, resigns or is unavailable. The subcommittee found that the existing language in places was inconsistent, unclear, or both. The members fully discussed and debated the subcommittee’s draft, and offered revisions, including inserting a cross-reference to Canon V.4. The pertinent text, as proposed to be revised, was:

In case of ~~resignation, death,~~ absence, or inability, of the President, the Vice-President shall perform the duties of the office until the President *resumes the office. In case of a vacancy, by death, resignation, total and permanent disability, or as otherwise defined in Canon V.4, in the office of the President, the Vice President thereupon becomes the President until* adjournment of the next meeting of the General Convention. In case of ~~resignation, death,~~ absence, or inability of the Vice-President, the President shall appoint a Deputy of the opposite order, ~~upon the advice and consent of the lay persons, presbyters and deacons of the Executive Council,~~ *from the President who shall perform the duties of the office until the Vice-President resumes the office. In case of a vacancy, by death, resignation, total and permanent disability, or as otherwise defined in Canon V.4, in the office of the Vice President, the President shall appoint a Deputy of the opposite order from the President, upon the advice and consent of the lay persons, presbyters and deacons of the Executive Council, the Deputy thereupon becomes the Vice-President until adjournment of the next meeting of the General Convention.*

After further discussion, the members voted unanimously to approve the proposal, as amended.

Amend Canon I.1.1.h. The subcommittee presented the rationale and explained the choice of language for its proposed amendment to Canon I.1.1.h. The “explanation” portion of the amendment reads:

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Explanation. This proposed change gives the ability for a new President of the House of Deputies to be elected if both the offices of President and Vice President are vacant. The lay and clergy members of Executive Council are the body that can best represent the House of Deputies in such a circumstance.

h. In case of a vacancy, by death, resignation, total and permanent disability, or as otherwise defined in Canon V.4, in the office of the President and Vice-President during the recess of the General Convention, the Secretary of the House of Deputies shall perform such ad interim duties as may appertain to the office of President until the next meeting of the General Convention or until such disability is removed, the lay and clergy members of the Executive Council shall elect a President of the House of Deputies, provided the candidate meets the qualifications and completes a background check in accordance with the House of Deputies' and Joint Rules of Order.

The subcommittee explained the proposed changes to the text of the canon.

Russ asked, does the term “qualifications” include being a Deputy? Thet consensus was ‘yes.’ Mike Glass asked if Executive Council is the best body to elect the replacement? Another member asked, should only the General Convention-elected Council members vote? Currently, the Secretary of the House of Deputies fills the office *ad interim*. An alternative might be to use the Joint Standing Committee on Nominations to select nominees.

The text of the proposal, as suggested to be amended, was:

h. In case of a vacancy, by death, resignation, total and permanent disability, or as otherwise defined in Canon V.4, in the office of the President and Vice-President during the recess of the General Convention, the Secretary of the House of Deputies shall perform such ad interim duties as may appertain to the office of President until the next meeting of the General Convention or until such disability is removed, the lay and clergy members of the Executive Council shall elect a President of the House of Deputies, provided the candidate meets the qualifications and completes a background check in accordance with the House of Deputies' and Joint Rules of Order.

After further discussion, Mike Glass asked if action on the draft could be set aside until he could confer with President Harris. The Commission members agreed to that.

Amend Canon I.1.1.i. Frank presented this proposal. The subcommittee’s proposed change would enable the Presiding Officers to appoint an Acting Secretary or a Secretary of the House of Deputies in the case of some form of temporary or permanent incapacitation. He said the reference to Canon V.4 should be inserted here also. Mike questioned having the Presiding Bishop involved in this specific context. There was agreement about this concern. Is “acting” the wrong word? “Interim?” As so amended, the members unanimously approved the proposal:

~~I.1.1.i If, during recess, there is a vacancy~~ *In case of a vacancy, by death, resignation, total and permanent disability, or as otherwise defined in Canon V.4, shall occur* in the office of Secretary of the House of Deputies, the duties thereof shall devolve upon the First Assistant Secretary, or, if there be none such, upon a Secretary *pro tempore* appointed by the President of the House, or if the office of President be also vacant, then by the Vice President, and if both offices be vacant, then by the

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~~members from the House of Deputies of the Joint Committee on Planning and Arrangements for the next General Convention, appointed by the preceding General Convention. the President of the House of Deputies shall appoint a Secretary, who shall hold office until a successor is elected. In case of temporary inability of the Secretary to act, from illness or other cause, the same official shall appoint an Acting Secretary who shall perform all duties of the Secretary until the Secretary is able to resume them.~~

Amend Canon I.1.1.j. Frank presented this subcommittee proposal and noted the reference to Canon V.4 should be inserted here as well. This proposed change to Canon I.1.1.j would provide a process for the Presiding Officers to fill a temporary or permanent vacancy in the offices of the Secretary of the House of Deputies and Secretary of General Convention. As revised with the Canon V.4 reference, the members unanimously approved the proposal:

I.1.1.j. At every regular meeting of the General Convention, the Secretary elected by the House of Deputies shall, by concurrent action of the two Houses of the General Convention, also be made the Secretary of the General Convention, who shall have responsibility for assembling and printing of the Journal of the General Convention, and for other matters specifically referred to the Secretary and shall serve until a successor is elected. *In case of a vacancy, by death, resignation, total and permanent disability, or as otherwise defined in Canon V.4, in the office of Secretary of the General Convention, the President of the House of Deputies and the Presiding Bishop shall appoint a Secretary, who shall hold office until a successor is elected. In case of temporary inability of the Secretary to act, from illness or other cause, the same officials shall appoint an Acting Secretary who shall perform all duties of the Secretary until the Secretary is able to resume them.*

Amend Canon I.2.3. Diane explained that this proposal would substitute “Council of Advice” for “Advisory Council” in a subsection of the canon on the Presiding Bishop. For at least the past 20 years the Presiding Bishop’s advisory group has been known as the “Council of Advice.” The current text, however, uses “Advisory Council.” It should be changed to match the long-term practice. The members unanimously approved the proposal.

Amend Canon I.4.7. Frank said this proposal would make consistent the requirements for all aided Dioceses to report to Executive Council and update the language to reflect the current budget process. He noted that the subcommittee proposes to depart from the language Sally Johnson proposed, in order to not inappropriately single out the Missionary Diocese of Navajoland. Since Article XI of the Constitution defines “Diocese” to include “Missionary Diocese,” Navajoland does not need to be singled out here. It was suggested to use “block grant” language as that is the wording used in the TEC budget documents. This would read “designated as a block grant in The Episcopal Church budget.” The members parsed the language some more. Steve Pankey read the text of the proposal, as amended:

Sec. 7. a. ~~Every Missionary Bishop or, in case of a vacancy, the Bishop in charge of the jurisdiction, receiving aid from the General Convention Budget, shall report at the close of each fiscal year to the Council, giving account of work performed, of money received from all sources and disbursed for all purposes, and of the state of the Church in the jurisdiction at the date of such report, all in such form as the Council may prescribe.~~

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~~b. The Ecclesiastical Authority of every Diocese receiving aid from the General Convention Budget shall report at the close of each fiscal year to the Council, giving account of the work in the diocese supported in whole or in part by that aid.~~

The Ecclesiastical Authority of every Diocese receiving aid funds designated as block grants in The Episcopal Church Budget shall report at the close of each fiscal year to the Council, giving account of work performed, of money received from all sources and disbursed for all purposes, and of the status of the Church in the jurisdiction at the date of such report, all in such form as the Council may prescribe.

The members unanimously approved the proposal, as amended.

Amend Canon III. 9.4(e). The draft explanation for this proposal is that it “clarifies the discretion a bishop maintains regarding Letters Dimissory for a priest who moves to the bishop’s jurisdiction without a cure.” The premise is that a bishop has very broad discretion whether or not to accept Letters Dimissory but should not refuse acceptance for prohibited discriminatory reasons. Frank said the subcommittee recommends changing the draft proposed by Sally and Diane by revising a different canon – III.1.2, and explained the subcommittee concluded that 9.4(e) was a better location for the proposal. He then walked through the proposed substitute language.

Kai offered that this prohibition might already be covered in Canon III.2.1. Russ noted this could be a basis for a Title IV complaint – although it would be a tough case to prove. The members discussed the “without a cure” piece and the reasons why a priest seeks acceptance of Letters Dimissory. Kai voiced concern about limiting discretion in unintended ways. Lynn commented that some Bishops don’t accept letters for incoming associate rectors; they condition acceptance on a year’s residency. Mike said some dioceses require a year’s residence before a priest may have the vote at diocesan convention. Susan suggested that the heading to the canon is not all that helpful. Kai said the canon is all about access.

The proposal was discussed and Following discussion, the members approved the proposal unanimously, as amended:

III.1.2. No person shall be denied access to the discernment process or to any process for the employment, licensing, *canonical residence*, calling, or deployment for any ministry, lay or ordained, in this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, immigration status, national origin, sex, marital or family status (including pregnancy and child care plans), sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disabilities or age, except as otherwise provided by these Canons. No right to employment, licensing, *canonical residence*, ordination, call, deployment, or election is hereby established.

Amend Canon III.9.11. Frank presented the amendment, which would correct an inadvertent (presumably) error that occurred when the canon was amended in 2012. The mistake was simply striking the word “until” rather than leaving it in place. The proposed amended is:

III.9.11. If a Priest submitting the writing described in Section 8 or 9 of this Canon be the subject of information concerning an Offense that has been referred to an Intake Officer or a Respondent in a pending disciplinary matter as defined in Title IV of these Canons, the Ecclesiastical Authority to

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whom such writing is submitted shall not consider or act upon the written request unless and *until* the disciplinary matter shall have been resolved by a dismissal, Accord, or Order and the time for appeal or rescission of such has expired.

Following a brief discussion, the members approved the proposal unanimously, as amended.

Subcommittee on Lay Accountability. Russ Randle presented the subcommittee's proposal to revise Canon I by adding a new section 15, saying the subcommittee took to heart the comments made at the Commission's November 2024 meetings – to avoid putting this in Title IV and to not overlook the need to enhance support and resources for lay persons leading congregations.

Russ explained the rationale for whom the canon would apply to. Steve asked why all members of the Vestry are not included. Russ said they focused on the officers, who have greater duties and responsibilities. Nancy supported adding all Vestry members. Susan suggested expanding the language to cover other roles, perhaps all elected and appointed lay officer at the diocesan level. There was consensus in favor of both suggestions.

Russ explained the benefit of including an affirmative statement in support of resources. Susan suggested using "should" instead of "must" in this context, to avoid putting an unfunded mandate in the canon. Russ agreed.

Russ finished walking through the proposal and encouraged Commission members to offer comments and suggestions. Nancy suggested adding, at the end of c., "and each other."

Eva noted that in a., it does not state that it is the diocese that should offer the resources. Or the Church. Discussion of slim resources in many dioceses. Russ – if everyone is responsible then no one is responsible. Discussion about meaning of "pastoral care" phrase.; too ambiguous? Some suggest removing the phrase, others oppose that. Russ emphasized that the subcommittee sees this as involving mutual obligations. These lay officers are giving a lot of themselves and deserve support. Susan commented that we should be careful to not establish unreasonable expectations that the diocese and bishop can't always fulfill.

Kai suggested that d. doesn't belong there as written; shouldn't the congregation provide at least some of the pastoral care? Eva described an example where members of a congregation, including its officers, were advised they could contact the priest at a neighboring congregation for pastoral care. Louisa said that in her diocese, the neighboring priest model wouldn't work in the rural areas. Kai noted that the Title III canons on the life and work of priests do not establish pastoral care as an obligation.

Under c., Nancy expressed concern about the "in charge of" language.

Russ moved the discussion to .e., .B., and .C. He would make the suspension and removal piece, D., a separate canon. Ian asked if using "only" would trump a diocesan canon or parish bylaws? Russ said we could clarify this – that these procedures are not in lieu of diocesan canons or parish bylaws. Susan noted that "or ecclesiastical authority" should be added to the end of D.a.

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Nancy noted that at the end of C.a., we should add “of the congregation.”

Russ asked for any additional comments on D. If a lay person is excommunicated, should that trigger termination from lay offices? Members offered E. 5 comments and suggestions. In D.ix, would sexual harassment outside of the context of the congregation be covered here? Should it? The members discussed this but reached no clear consensus. Aaron asked whether ix. is covered in .x? Russ reminded that this is for egregious situations requiring immediate action.

Eva questioned the reference to the employment laws of the diocese. Would these allow for too much variation across the Church?

Susan asked, should we add incompetence, inability to perform?

Russ moved the discussion to E. Louisa suggested adding “or ecclesiastical authority” in E.a.

Ian commented on the last paragraph of A. Is it needed, should it be edited a bit? Russ will take it back to the subcommittee for further review.

Kai asked if E. could be a burden on Standing Committees? She suggested trying to get input from Standing Committees. Russ – could it be a Standing Committee elsewhere in the Province? Kai suggested the possibility that it could be some other body designated by the Standing Committee. Russ suggested sticking with the Standing Committee but permitting diocesan canons to designate some other body. There was positive reaction to the suggestion.

Frank reviewed Commission’s progress to this point and asked for suggestions on the work for the afternoon and Saturday morning. On Saturday there will not be a quorum. A decision on the Saturday agenda was deferred to later in the day. The members agreed to hold their next meeting, all-remote, for June 4, Wednesday, at 3:00 p.m. Eastern.

Subcommittee on the Title IV Database. Eva and other members of this subcommittee presented the latest draft of their proposal. The proposal covers the database’s purpose, structure, benefits to key stakeholders, key features and who can receive reports. Following extensive discussion, questions and edits, Eva moved that the Commission approve the subcommittee’s April 4, 2025, Title IV database proposal, and authorize the subcommittee to proceed with implementing the proposal in consultation with DFMS leadership, and to report its progress regularly to the Commission. The motion was approved unanimously. A copy of the approved proposal is attached to these Minutes.

The Commission recessed until 1:00 p.m. Central time, when it reconvened to take up its afternoon business.

The size, scope and makeup of Executive Council. Frank led a fully engaged discussion of the structure and function of Executive Council.

Under Canon I.4.d the membership of Executive Council consists of 40 voting members and five members with seat and voice, but no vote:

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Canon I.4.d.

The Executive Council shall be composed (a) of 20 members elected by the General Convention, of whom four shall be Bishops, four shall be Presbyters or Deacons, and 12 shall be Lay Persons who are confirmed adult communicants in good standing (two Bishops, two Presbyters or Deacons, and six Lay Persons to be elected by each subsequent regular meeting of the General Convention); (b) of 18 members elected by the Provincial Synods; (c) of the following *ex officio* members: the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies; and (d) the Chief Operating Officer, the Secretary of the General Convention, the Treasurer of the General Convention, the Chief Financial Officer of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, and the Chief Legal Officer of the Executive Council, all of whom shall have seat and voice but no vote. Each Province shall be entitled to be represented by one Bishop or Presbyter or Deacon canonically resident in a Diocese which is a constituent member of the Province and one Lay Person who is a confirmed adult communicant in good standing of a Diocese which is a constituent member of the Province, and the terms of the representatives of each Province shall be so rotated that two persons shall not be simultaneously elected for equal terms.

The following summarizes the extensive discussion on the topic.

Louisa, a current Council member: There is some confusion among Council members about its role.

Russ: By its size, isn't a board, it's a legislature.

Kai – Let's describe what it does. What she hears about Council doesn't seem to align completely with the canon. e.g., some say the Council is authorized to speak for the Church.

Russ: There is some utility for that, to assist the Office of Government Affairs efforts.

Andrea: Canon I.4.1.c seems to give Council relatively broad authority: "c. Council shall exercise the powers conferred upon it by Canon, and such further powers as may be designated by the General Convention, and between sessions of the General Convention may initiate and develop such new work as it may deem necessary."

Tom: Is there an accepted narrative describing its current function and role?

Ian: I led an orientation session for new Council members. It was recorded and may be available.

Eva noted that in the Joint Standing Committee on Nominations report there is a summary of Council's role and authority.

Diane: The length of Council's meetings makes it hard for many to serve on it.

Ian: The Presiding Bishop's concern is that Council is a constituency-based board, and is too large.

Russ: There are concerns that simply eliminating Provincial electees would cut the racial and other diversity of Council.

Tom: Is it an interim legislature?

Ian: No, but culturally it is perceived by many that way.

Russ: Council is in session as a board and then as a something else.

Nancy: Council oversees execution of General Convention's policies, per the canon - it doesn't create its own policies.

Tom: At times, a Council vs. Presiding Bishop authority debate can be at issue.

Ian: Canon I.4.1.c, third clause, is the key; it does give Council authority to do new things.

Ian – Council recently amended its Bylaws to reduce the number of its standing committees.

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Diane: Other than Council's size, what problem are we trying to solve?

Nancy: Doing too many new things?

Russ: It's the size. Also, during the pandemic, Council was critical to decision-making. We need Council to have more flexibility to respond to unanticipated events.

Rachel Taber-Hamilton mentioned duplication of efforts – the indigenous boarding schools' issue was addressed in one way by Council and in another way by General Convention.

Eva: Similar thing happened when Council voted a "Gaza" resolution and General Convention passed a different one.

Kai: The canon gives Council oversight of the General Convention Office staff. Is this a good idea?

Eva asked, what's an "emergency?"

Aaron: There are Council liaisons to interim bodies, who work hard to give Council the benefit of that work and help make Council high performing.

Frank asked for volunteers for an Executive Council subcommittee, and the following members volunteered and were appointed: Nancy, Rachel, Andrea, Aaron, Russ, Ian, Louisa, Andrew. The subcommittee will focus on the size and composition of Council, and role and authority of Council (and its executive committee). And, also, its role in responding to "emergencies," its relationship to General Convention and its place in the overall governance of the Church.

Ian noted that the 2015 General Convention revised Canon I.4.1 substantially, including the new subsection c., following the recommendations in Resolution A004, a proposal from the Task Force for Reimagining The Episcopal Church (TREC) related to restructuring Council. He said the TREC report is critical to the Commission's work in this area. TREC recommended reducing Council to 21 members. We all should read that report.

Diane asked, is there any reason to think the will of the General Convention is to reduce the size of Council – notwithstanding the Presiding Bishop's view?

Tom: We have a strong demand for geographical diversity across the Provinces.

Kai: Instead, perhaps use a model with representatives from large dioceses and small dioceses.

Susan: Could have General Convention elect them all, provided there must be at least one from each Province?

Frank informed the members that the Commission's fall meetings would be held on October 1-3 (travel September 30) at the Maritime Center, Baltimore, Maryland.

Tom mentioned the Commission's role as reviewer of canon proposals from other interim bodies and said he would reach out to the interim bodies to remind them of this.

At this time, some members had to depart for the airport. Eva assumed the chair and said that since there is much in the 2018 Blue Book report of the Task Force on the Episcopacy (posted to the Commission's Teams site), we would use the rest of the afternoon to explore that.

Discussion of the 2018 Blue Book Report of the Task Force on the Episcopacy

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Ian, who chaired the Task Force, and Tom, who was its Secretary, summarized the significant points made in the report, which covered the College for Bishops; the Presiding Bishop's Office of Pastoral Development, the confusion around the meaning of "Assistant Bishop," "Assisting Bishop," and "other variations; the role of transition and search consultants; the history and current meaning of the missionary episcopate; 2018 General Convention Resolution D004 about dioceses in transition (and also Resolution A002 from the 2015 General Convention; should a diocese in transition (or one about to be in transition) be required to undertake a missional review and, if so, when?

Andrea said that the subcommittee on Dioceses Confronting Challenges would take up and review issues involving discernment for the episcopate, missional reviews and the Office of Pastoral Development.

The members discussed the missional review topic. Kai commented that the discernment, profile, search and election processes take a long time. When should a missional review happen? Perhaps as part of the process of developing a diocese's profile (although some profiles paint too rosy a picture)?

Eva suggested more discussion about the College for Bishops.

Ian said that the College is now in the search mode for a leader and will be doing its own visioning review as part of that; that should provide us with useful information.

Susan suggested revisiting how the members of the College's governing board are chosen. Currently it is a self-perpetuating board. There was consensus that this should be looked at. Scott, a former member of the College's board, commented that the board has become pretty diverse now, with bishops, priests, deacons and lay members. He added that the board is functioning well now.

Kai suggested including missional review work in the training programs for new bishops. It was noted that under Canon III.12.1, the House of Bishops controls the bishop formation curriculum. Russ asked what the curriculum looks like, and Ian pointed him to the College's website, <https://www.collegeforbishops.org>.

The discussion turned to the topic of "bishop as principal missionary" (historically, "chief missionary"). Ian explained that this foundational principle emerged in the Church in 1835. This is imbedded in the College for Bishop's curriculum, and all bishops are expected to make missionary work vital to their episcopacies. Eva supported digital missionary work and Lynn mentioned affinity group missionary work.

Kai pointed out that the Church doesn't have enough parttime or provisional bishops. There was consensus on this, and on the need to change it – to develop a pool of missionary bishops who are adept and gifted at facilitating growth in Church membership. This could be very effective. Andrea said she had worked with two provision bishops and stressed the need for good training for that very challenging role.

Ian noted that the House of Bishops elects missionary bishops.

Susan said that she would not want an outside missionary bishop coming into her diocese to evangelize for the Church. Better for the diocesan bishop to engage a missionary priest to do missionary work in the diocese. Kai and Ian concurred with this.

Lynn asked whether this was analogous to a Canon 9 priest.

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Aaron asked why this work necessarily needs to be done by a bishop, and he sees no compelling reason for it being only for bishops.

Ian said we don't have enough retired bishops to do this particular work.

Kai suggested that the College for Bishops might be able to address this gap in some manner.

Tom asked whether the Navajoland experience might shed some light on the missionary role of bishops.

Susan asked whether the Task Force looked at impairment issues. Ian said that a different task force looked at that, proposed changes to the impairment canon (III.12.10), and that the canon was amended in 2018. It wasn't clear that there would be capacity among the subcommittees to address this.

The members renewed their discussion of the role and function of Executive Council and expressed resolve to address the questions raised by Presiding Bishop Rowe yesterday.

Tom mentioned that there was a Task Force on Provinces which issued a Blue Book report in 2018. He will post it to the Commission's Teams General, Past Reports, folder.

Following comments about the meeting, by acclamation the members adjourned the meeting at 5:20 p. Central time, noting that the meeting room would be available for members to use in the morning to continue discussions and review subcommittee items.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas A. Little, Assistant Secretary

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**Proposal for Title IV Database
As Approved by the Standing Commission on Structure,
Governance, Constitution and Canons
April 4, 2025**

Purpose

The Title IV Database is intended to achieve the following purposes:

1. Provide statistical information about Title IV cases across the church, to be reported periodically to the church without identifying information about particular cases.
2. Provide information about particular clergy who are in transition for new positions, transferring canonical residency, or being licensed in a new diocese, which bishops could access to get information about (1) “flags” regarding ongoing Title IV cases involving applicants, (2) interim actions affecting the clergy’s ability to do ministry, such as a restriction on ministry or administrative leave, or (3) finalized cases that resulted in an Accord or Order.
3. Allow bishops new to their episcopacy to access a full report on all canonically resident and licensed clergy in their diocese.

The database will begin with more simplified information. More information may be added later as experience with the database increases. This database may achieve the purposes outlined in current Canon IV.19.30 but will not be housed in the Archives and will go beyond the purposes of that canon.

Structure of the Database

The database will be housed in a manner that is NOT accessible to the internet, and is encrypted, secured with multi-factor authentication, with limited access. It will be held in the custody of a churchwide officer to be determined. When a question arises about a clergy person in transition, a designated, authorized transition officer will query the database officer and receive an answer that (1) there is no report on file for that person or (2) there is a report on file. If there is a report on file, the bishop can then query the database officer and receive the full report.

Benefits to Key Stakeholders

- To bishops – new episcopacy, search processes in their congregations, retention of memory past the availability of the bishop involved

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- To dioceses – bishop elections, internal trends, search process (clergy/bishop), training gaps, infrastructure strengthening
- To congregations – better assurance of good candidates in search processes
- To respondents – clear information about completed cases, with unsubstantiated cases able to be described as such.
- To complainants – permanent records of substantiated and completed processes
- To clergy – preventive training for areas where charges often arise
- To the wider church – better knowledge of trends over time, internal and external transparency

Key Features

- Privacy: The database will have strict access control and not be available to the internet to avoid hacking concerns. Names of victims and witnesses can be redacted.
- Reports will be made to the database when
 - (1) a bishop wishes to flag an ongoing situation and request a phone call (this status can only remain in effect for 3 months and can be actively renewed up to 15 months after initial intake);
 - (2) interim actions are taken such as administrative leave or restriction on ministry;
 - (3) cases are resolved with an Accord or an Order.
- Information that can be included:
 - Name and diocese of respondent
 - Date of initial intake report and of actions taken
 - Whether this is a flag of an ongoing situation
 - Interim action taken (restriction on ministry or administrative leave)
 - Final text of an Accord or Order (with redaction of personal information if appropriate)
 - Description of other outcome

(optional) Procedures and Requirements

Each diocese must authorize a transition officer to make initial inquiries to the database. Bishops and transition officers must be trained in procedures for use of the database.

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Canons should be created making the use of the database a requirement, both for providing information to the database and for checking the database during clergy transitions.

Information will be kept in the database permanently.

Statistical reports will be released to the public periodically based on information in the database. Bishops may be sent annual questionnaires to augment information available for those statistical reports. For instance, such annual questionnaires could collect information on number of cases involving clergy of particular gender, racial, or sexual identities. It could also collect information on numbers of “frivolous” or dismissed complaints.

Who Can Receive Reports

The following parties can be authorized to receive reports:

- Presiding Bishop and President of the House of Deputies who are considering candidates for employment or appointment
- Diocesan Bishops, or Ecclesiastical Authorities in cases where there is no Diocesan Bishops, who are reviewing clergy applying for searches in their dioceses or ordination processes, Diocesan Bishops who are new to their diocese and would like a full report on their diocese’s clergy
- Designated representatives of bishop election nomination committees, chancellors, and Standing Committees researching candidates for episcopal elections
- The Executive Officer of General Convention for purposes of vetting candidates for nomination to churchwide elective offices