

## Why does NIRSA have regions?

NIRSA uses a regional structure to facilitate engagement among members and potential members at a more local, or geographically concentrated level. Throughout NIRSA's history, the regional structures have been an important and successful structure for member recruitment, retention and engagement, as well as delivery of professional development, networking, leadership development and other programs and services.

## Do regions ever change?

From time to time, the Association finds it prudent to change the regional composition to continue to achieve the goals for the regional structure and/or expand NIRSA's effectiveness in a particular geographic area.

## What is being proposed?

The NIRSA Board proposes to remove the details of NIRSA regions (the listing of which state/province/country lie in which regions) from the NIRSA Bylaws.

## Why is this being proposed?

We would like our Association to be nimbler in serving member needs, have a process that thoroughly vets any regional change, and have the decision made by members who stand to be most impacted. This better facilitates having well-informed voters and has the best interests of the whole association in mind.

The NIRSA Board has been approached by states and provinces that wish to either change regions or form a new region. Currently, the specific make-up of the NIRSA regions is detailed in the NIRSA Bylaws, and any change in the bylaws requires the issue to be presented to the full NIRSA membership for a vote. By removing the specific make-up of the regions from the Bylaws, the NIRSA Board of Directors will be able to make decisions on requests regarding regional composition in accordance with Association policy.

A change to regional configuration is most concerning to the members that are directly impacted; however, because the current process entails a vote of all members, the decision is ultimately dictated by a majority who are not directly impacted by the request or fully educated on the rationale for the change. This is not good governance for our association.

### **Will there be requirements for regional composition?**

Yes. The proposed NIRSA policy states that current regions must meet two requirements:

1. Consist of a minimum of 5 U.S. states, or Canadian provinces/territories.
2. Have a minimum of 150 professional members and 10 institutional members.

### **Is there any flexibility on the requirements for regional composition?**

A new region that does not meet the stated requirements may be approved by the Board, subject to a timeline to meet the requirements and/or in a provisional status with certain regional privileges restricted until such requirements are met.

### **Will there be a defined process for changes to be made to regional configurations?**

Yes! Association leaders have been working on this since June 2014. The NIRSA Board has worked with the Regional Realignment Task Force, Canadian Region Task Force, NIRSA Bylaws Committee, and the Member Network to develop a policy to be enacted if the Bylaws amendment passes. The new policy details a process for any state, province, or country to make a proposal to change regions. The policy also details a process for a country or group of countries to make a proposal to establish a new region. The policy is available at [nirsa.org](http://nirsa.org)

### **Under the new policy, what does a state or province have to do to change regions?**

The process outlined in the new policy requires a written proposal to be submitted that outlines the rationale for the change, input from regional leaders, and a petition of support from members in the affected area. The Member Network will review the proposal and provide members an opportunity to comment. The final decision for the change will then be made by the NIRSA Board of Directors.

**Under the new policy, what does a country have to do to establish a new region?**

The process outlined in the new policy requires a written proposal to be submitted to the NIRSA Board. If the Board decides it is in the best interest of NIRSA to consider a new region, a task force will be appointed to execute the process to establish a new region. The process includes consideration of the options, alternatives and impacts of establishing a new region outside the United States.

**What happens to Canada if the proposed Bylaws amendments are accepted?**

If the Bylaws amendments are approved by Members, the Board will use the new policy and process to formally establish Canada as a region. The Canadian Region Task Force has completed the process outlined in the proposed policy for establishing a new region to the satisfaction of the Board by providing the required supporting materials requested by the new process. This includes: financial, leadership, and member engagement implications on affected regions; input from the Member Network; demonstrated member engagement through a petition of support; and a proposed timeline for implementation.

**What happens to Montana if the proposed Bylaws amendments are accepted?**

Leaders in Montana have submitted a request to the NIRSA Board to realign with Region VI. If the Bylaws amendments are approved by Members, the Board will direct Montana to use the process outlined in the proposed Regional Realignment Proposal Process.

**What happens if a proposal to change regions is denied?**

If the NIRSA Board declines the proposal, the requestor must wait 18 months from the date of the original proposal to submit again.

**Will the same process be used for a state to move regions and for a country to become its own region?**

They are similar, but not identical. Two separate processes have been defined: one for the realignment of currently existing regions and another for the formation of a new region. There are many similarities in the required steps, but a key difference is that process to establish a new region is intended for one or more countries to form a new region. Additionally, the process to establish a new region may be initiated by the NIRSA Board or come from Members. When a new region is formed, the Board has discretion on how quickly they will need to meet the regional composition requirements.

**What happens if the Bylaws amendments do not pass?**

We will continue with the current language which specifically states how U.S. states and non-U.S. countries are assigned to the six regions. We will remain without a policy or process for countries to petition to establish a region or for states to petition to changes regions. While a policy and process could be developed it would have to include vote of all members for any regional composition changes. This would significantly hamper NIRSA's ability to be nimble and responsive to meet the evolving needs of the campus recreation professionals.