

Concept Twelve

The Annual Meeting shall observe the spirit of COSA tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the fellowship it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

Each year, COSA delegates from around the world join the International Service Organization (ISO) of COSA board for the Annual Delegate Meeting. During this event, the board and delegates elect incoming board members and facilitate any other fellowship business that is due for discussion or resolution. With many individuals coming together for a short time during the meeting of the board and delegates, it is vital that those present adhere to the Traditions and Concepts that guide our groups and service work. No principle can be overlooked when COSA unity is at stake.

Generally, the rotation of service positions and the guarantee of traditional rights of decision, participation, and appeal will prohibit unqualified authority from developing. As Tradition Two reminds us, "Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." Even those individuals who prepare for the Annual Delegate Meeting and facilitate it are not in positions of ultimate authority over anyone in attendance. The meeting is a level playing field where all voices, especially those voices in the minority, are valued.

Conducting the Annual Delegate Meeting requires human, technical, and financial resources. In 2022, the fellowship decided to hold future Annual Delegate Meetings virtually, which will eliminate many of the financial costs. Because the work of the fellowship is ongoing, Seventh Tradition donations collected at the Annual Delegate Meeting that exceed the minimal cost of hosting the meeting can be directed toward fulfilling COSA's primary purpose of sharing the message with those who still suffer.

Concepts One and Two remind us to seek unity and a group conscience whenever possible. In addition, the board has adopted a detailed decision-making process that helps to ensure unanimity and avoid hasty decisions. The traditional rights of decision, participation, and appeal suggested in Concepts Three, Four, and Five also work to keep the balance of power evenly distributed. All delegates and board members who are present for the annual meeting have equal rights in the process of reaching a group conscience on behalf of our fellowship.

As members of the COSA fellowship, we need only the guidance offered in the spiritual principles of the program. There is no need for discipline or judgment during the Annual Delegate Meeting, even when emotions are intense and the discussion is passionate. We each know the value of keeping our own side of the street clean and making amends when we are wrong. We keep the focus of the meeting on COSA and issues affecting the fellowship, while

respecting our personal and communal anonymity, so that both personal and public conflict are naturally avoided.

The COSA Traditions remind us that “personal recovery depends upon COSA unity” and “our leaders...do not govern.” The inverted triangle that illustrates our service structure emphasizes the democratic, self-governing framework of our fellowship. Whether we are gathered in a local meeting or the Annual Delegate Meeting, we are all equals with no experts present. Regardless if one is a newcomer or an old-timer, the principles of our fellowship apply to all with uniformity. Much of our service work is accomplished via committees or groups that are led by trusted servants who do not dictate or manage the tasks at hand. We focus on our common experience and we find hope and healing in COSA, one day at a time.

While it is especially important that the tenets expressed in Concept Twelve be observed at the Annual Delegate Meeting, the real power of this Concept is found when it is honored consistently at all times by the board, our board committees, local groups, and ultimately, by the fellowship as a whole.