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SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS, INC.®

June 2025 SIA Procedures Update: Region Conferences and Biennial Convention Frequently Asked Questions

During their June 2025 meeting, the SIA Board of Directors approved the following modifications to the SIA Procedures which affect region conferences and the biennial convention. We understand that changes to procedures can raise questions or concerns. To support you in navigating these updates, please review the following frequently asked questions.

WHAT'S CHANGING?

F. Procedures Governing Regions, 4. Conferences, Meetings, and Voting

Current Language	Revised Language
a. Each region shall hold at least one region conference annually at a time and place to be determined by region bylaws. Regions may hold their conferences in any of the following formats to be considered a region conference for the purpose of this procedure: face-to-face, audio or video conferencing, or live-streamed social media. Clubs must have the ability to interact with each other and with region leaders through real-time audio or chat features in a session or multiple sessions of all clubs in order to be considered a region conference.	a. Each region shall hold one face-to-face region conference during the odd-numbered year of each biennium, at a time and place determined by the region's bylaws. Each region has the option to hold a virtual region conference during the even-numbered year of the biennium.

G. *Conventions* now has an additional section:

7. The Biennial Convention will rotate between a face-to-face and a virtual event every other biennium, with face-to-face events rotating among the following three geographical macro-regions of the Federation in this order:

South American Macro-Region – comprises the America del Sur, Brazil, and Mexico/Centroamerica regions

North American Macro-Region – comprises all regions in Canada and the United States

Asian Macro-Region – comprises all regions in Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and Taiwan

WHAT INPUT DID MEMBERS PROVIDE?

In 2023 a survey was sent to 11,207 members, and 2,031 (or 18%) members responded. There were at least two members from each region who responded, with most respondents coming from the Northwestern, Founder, and Japan regions (which made up 11% of respondents). 24% of the respondents had been members of SIA for upwards of 26 years, and 21% had been members for 0-5 years. Here is a summary of what we learned:

67% of respondents attended region conferences, while 33% had not. 68% felt region conferences should be held annually, while 28% felt they should be held biennially. When asked, *“Currently, our procedures state that regions shall hold at least one region conference annually. In the future, if region conferences were required to be held biennially, with an option to be held annually at the region's discretion, how favorably would you view that change on a scale from 1 to 5?”* Respondents answered as follows:

- 10% - Very Unfavorable
- 13% - Unfavorable
- 34% - Neutral
- 30% - Favorable
- 13% Extremely favorable

SIA leadership were pulsed to delve into the time commitment and work associated with planning region conferences, evaluating our overarching event model, and assessing thoughts on costs. In April 2025, another survey was launched wherein the demographic was as follows:

- 2022-2024 Governors
- 2024-2025 Governors
- 2026-2028 Governors
- Region Treasurers
- Region Secretaries
- Region Chairs

The survey was sent to 269 SIA leaders, and 153 responded. We received responses from each region and each leadership role. While most of the respondents spend significant time planning

region conferences and note the rising costs of events as a significant challenge, 73% believe they should continue to be held annually.

Regarding cost, 85% believe holding a region conference and a biennial convention in the same year causes a financial strain on members. To offset the expenses of hosting region conferences 70% indicated their regions charge a Mandatory Region Conference Fee. However, 59% of the members surveyed indicate this Mandatory Region Conference Fee does not cause a personal financial strain, while 42% indicate it does cause a personal financial strain.

Finally, when we asked, “*How favorable do you feel about a shift to holding region conferences ONCE every two years?*” SIA leaders responded as follows:

- Very Unfavorable: 8%
- Unfavorable: 36%
- Neutral: 25%
- Favorable: 18%
- Extremely Favorable: 13%

Despite a desire to continue annual meetings, the survey results and cost/effort analysis point to the need for a more sustainable and inclusive model.

WHAT IS THE RATIONALE BEHIND THESE CHANGES?

Region Conference Frequency and Format. During a convention year, region conferences are held virtually only as an option; during a non-convention year, they are held face-to-face and are mandatory.

Rationale: While leaders respond that they want to host these meetings annually, they also express that they spend upwards of 50% of their time planning them, and 64% indicate that only 24% of members attend. Leaders indicate these meetings are expensive to attend annually from a member perspective.

SIA Biennial Convention Frequency and Format. SIA will continue to host a biennial convention. However, effective in 2030, the convention will be held virtually every other biennium.

Rationale. The current in person biennial convention model is not financially sustainable given the rising costs of events. From a member perspective, the engagement at this event is low—we cannot continue to justify the strain this event poses on our resources. Additionally, a virtual option would allow for more engagement and stronger participation from members who otherwise would be unable to attend a face-to-face convention.

ARE REGIONS REQUIRED TO HOLD A FACE -TO-FACE REGION CONFERENCE EVERY YEAR?

No, regions are not required to hold a face-to-face region conference every year. The only year in which regions are now required to hold face-to-face region conferences is during a non-convention year (odd year).

SIA discourages regions from holding region conferences annually based on member and leader feedback which indicates the financial strain these meetings pose to members, and the strain on region leadership resources to plan these meetings. Regions that feel strongly about continuing to hold region conferences annually are encouraged to hold them virtually during convention years (even years) to minimize the financial strain on members.

HOW WILL FUTURE CONVENTIONS BE HELD?

The SIA Board of Directors approved the following rotation for the convention that allows SIA to be more proactive in our planning and minimizing costs. It also allows SIA to move the convention across the federation so all members can access this critical member engagement and learning opportunity. Following shows the “macro regions” (composed of SIA regions) and the rotation for future biennial conventions.

CONVENTION	MACRO-REGION	CURRENT SIA REGIONS
50 th Biennial Convention - 2028	South American	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> America Del Sur Brazil Mexico/Centroamerica
51 st Biennial Convention - 2030	Virtual	Not Applicable
52 nd Biennial Convention - 2032	North American	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camino Real Central East Coast Desert Coast Eastern Canada Founder Golden West Midwestern North Atlantic Northwestern Peaks to Plains Sierra Nevada Sierra Pacific South Central Southern Western Canada

53 rd Biennial Convention - 2034	Virtual	Not Applicable
54 th Biennial Convention - 2036	Asian	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Japan Chuo• Japan Higashi• Japan Kita• Japan Minami• Japan Nishi• Korea• Philippines• Taiwan
55 th Biennial Convention – 2038	Virtual	Not Applicable