

Executive capture of Mensa's disciplinary system

American Mensa's disciplinary process does not conform to the requirements Mensa international places on all National Mensas' process, in that there is no provision for any appeal at all, while MIL bylaws 13.3 requires there to be an "independent appeals procedure." Thus, AML's hearings are under the tight control of the Hearings Committee who, by AML bylaws IX(5)(a) are by default the three most recent past AMC chairs. It should also be noted that one of these three is also the chair of MIL's International Standards Committee, which is charged with ensuring each National Mensa conforms to MIL requirements. I do not doubt that the Hearings Committee works more comfortably for the lack of the required appeals process. Its decisions remain secret and unexamined, on pain of expulsion from Mensa.

But not only does our process not meet MIL requirements, it does not even follow our own bylaws! The AMC Chair, possibly the past several Chairs, have inserted themselves into the Hearings Committee in contravention of the bylaws. Observe:

The bylaws of American Mensa define three committees

- The American Mensa Committee, or AMC, in Article III
- The Election Committee, in Article VI, which is to be appointed by the AMC
- The Hearings Committee, in Article IX, whose membership is defined with elaborate precision in subsection 5b of that article.

(The bylaws also say that the AMC may appoint an Executive Committee, other standing action committees, and advisory committees.)

The important thing to note is that there are two committees that are not defined, created or appointed by the AMC, and those are the AMC itself and the Hearings Committee.

Article IV defines the duties of the various members of the AMC. None of those duties has any connection to the Hearings Committee.

Appendix 1 of the Actions Still in Effect (ASIES) "is intended for the use of the AMC in establishing new committees." Thus it is not applicable to the Hearings Committee since it is not new and the AMC does not establish it. Most of what is in

Appendix 1 has, quite properly, never been applied to the Hearings Committee: the AMC does not appoint members or the chair of the Hearings Committee (section I), nor periodically review it for necessary changes and updating (section V). The Hearings Committee not only isn't an AMC committee, it is not treated as one under Appendix 1. This is correct.

But there is a misapplication of ASIES Appendix 28: AMC Job Descriptions. Under Chair, item 7 says "Serves as a member ex officio of all AMC committees and task forces." As shown above, the Hearings Committee is *not an AMC Committee* (and it is not a task force). The chair should not be on it. Even if one mistakes the Hearings Committee for an AMC committee, an ASIE cannot override the Bylaws, which are utterly explicit about the membership of the hearings committee: no AMC member is eligible. And yet, the details

page for the hearings committee

has this. Bylaws be damned!

This is not a mere liaison role, since she is listed again as the liaison to the Hearings Committee.

Participant(s)	Position
Lori J Norris	ExOfficio

Why? To always be in the know, and to direct the outcomes that are politically required, perhaps by anonymously adding another charge when a complaint is too weak to stand?

Added note: after this exposé was shared with MPoIM, the chair quietly had the committee detail page updated to remove herself as a participant. The author considers this a tacit admission of guilt.

Committee detail page for Hearings Committee, saved Feb. 3, 2025.

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Hearings Committee

Committee Description

A member may be suspended from specific activities, offices, positions or functions, for a specified time, or suspended from membership for a specified time, or expelled from membership, for acts inimical to the society. No member shall be suspended or expelled from American Mensa, Ltd. except following a fair and impartial hearing by the Hearings Committee at which hearing the member shall have the right to present his/her case. A decision by the Hearings Committee to suspend or expel a member from American Mensa, Ltd., shall require the concurrence of the American Mensa Committee.

Committee Chair(s)	Location
Deborah L Stone	Bow, NH

Committee Member(s)	Location
LaRae Bakerink	Poway, CA
Timmy King	Green Cove Springs, FL

AMC Liaison(s)	Location
Lori J Norris	Tacoma, WA

Participant(s)	Position
Lori J Norris	ExOfficio

Staff Liaison(s)	Location
Greta Zeimetz	National Office