

Saying The Same Thing, More Clearly

UNOS rewrite project making progress

Member surveys and other member feedback have long noted the complex wording and sometimes arcane organization of OPTN bylaws and policies. To address that concern, UNOS has begun the “rewrite” project, an initiative to rewrite OPTN bylaws and policies into plain language and to organize them logically.

UNOS has hired two employees, Leigh Kades and James Alcorn, who are dedicated to the rewrite project. Both have special skills in translating legal language into plain language while retaining the original meaning.

Leigh Kades, bylaws drafter in UNOS’ department of evaluation and quality (DEQ), is focusing on rewriting/reorganizing OPTN/UNOS **bylaws**. She has more than 10 years of writing and editing experience, which has included managing documentation and usability projects in the technical, legal and medical fields. Kades earned a master’s degree in professional writing from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

Supporting Kades’ efforts is DEQ’s assistant director, Suzanne Gellner, J.D., CHC; also providing input are HRSA representatives, UNOS’ OPTN/UNOS committee liaisons as well as Sharon Shepherd, DEQ compliance analyst, and other interested UNOS staff.

In addition to enhanced clarity, the bylaws rewrite project will include


- one searchable document with a hyperlinked table of contents and index
- reorganized appendices for easier access to information and
- more information presented in lists, tables and diagrams for easier reference.

James B. Alcorn, a policy analyst in UNOS’ department of policy, will focus on rewriting/reorganizing OPTN/UNOS **policy**. He came to UNOS from the Virginia State Board of Elections, where he organized and rewrote their 60 years of policies. He holds a law degree from the University of New Hampshire and a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Colorado in Boulder.

Assisting Alcorn in rewriting/reorganizing OPTN/UNOS policy is an interdisciplinary team of UNOS employees who will help distribute rewritten drafts to a larger group of UNOS staff. Next, the final draft will be distributed to an external advisory group that represents a cross-section of OPTN/UNOS members before the rewrite is submitted to the OPTN/UNOS board of directors for review.

In addition to the enhancements mentioned above (see bulleted list), the rewritten policies also will have

- a central location for all definitions
- a table of authorities for all policy cross references, tables and diagrams, and
- a new system to track policy changes.

A long-term benefit of all this? In addition to establishing clarity of language and organization in existing bylaws and policies, the rewrite project also will help establish standards for *future* bylaws and policies. 



James Alcorn (left) and Leigh Kades are rewriting/reorganizing OPTN/UNOS policies and bylaws, respectively.

 For more information on the OPTN/UNOS *bylaws* rewrite project, send an e-mail to bylawsrewrite@unos.org. For more information on the OPTN/UNOS *policy* rewrite project, send an e-mail to james.alcorn@unos.org.