

Colleagues:

With thanks to the Presbytery of Western North Carolina, whose work provided a strong base, the following job description for presbytery/synod moderators was developed in a workshop at the 2008 Moderators' Conference.

It is not intended as the perfect description, but as a template that provides some guidance as various presbyteries and synods consider creating or revising their own manual/standing rules descriptions of the position of moderator. It is expected that local customs and needs would result in different particulars of a job description, but the following seems to be a good place to begin the discussion.

Job Description:

In addition to the responsibilities outlined the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), especially but not limited to G-9.0202, G-9.0301 and G-11.0101c, a presbytery/synod moderator will be expected to:

1. Work at all times for the faithful and harmonious unity of the governing body, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit;
2. Preside over all governing body meetings, except when the vice-moderator/moderator-elect is requested to preside;
3. As the face of the governing body, represent the body on suitable occasions such as church openings, closings, celebrations, highlights of presbytery or congregational life, ecumenical or interfaith events, etc.;
4. Meet, as appropriate, with congregations/presbyteries, including those in conflict, and/or members to emphasize the spiritual unity and blessing of being a connectional church;
5. Work with the Stated Clerk, or group or body charged with the task, to draft the agenda for each governing body meeting, for approval by a coordinating council to be presented to the body;
6. Serve as chair of Presbytery administrative commissions to ordain and/or install a minister, unless by rule other methods are approved by presbytery for that purpose;

7. Work in collaboration with the executive, stated clerk and treasurer as they seek to fulfill the mission of presbytery/synod;
8. Serve on council (where they exist), with voice and vote;
9. Appoint investigating committees/administrative commissions when required by the Book of Order or rule;
10. Report at least annually to the governing body.

Some other suggestions:

- A) While the moderator is limited to a one-year term, it is often useful for the individual to serve as vice-moderator/moderator-elect during the year prior to his/her term. In the year following, many governing bodies choose to have the moderator serve as chair of council.
- B) It would be wise to require the vice moderator/moderator-elect to attend the Office of the General Assembly's Moderator's Conference. If the individual does not attend during that year, they should attend the conference held before their actual term begins.
- C) If the moderator, by virtue of position, serves on particular boards or entities of the governing body – i.e. trustees, councils, board of directors – those should be delineated in the description.

In addition to a job description, the workshop also produced the following list of qualifications that nominating committees should consider when selecting candidates:

Qualifications for Candidates:

1. A commitment to Christ;
2. Commitment to local congregations, the presbytery, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the church universal;
3. An elder or Minister of Word and Sacrament who has participated in the life of a presbytery and/or a congregation, such as serving on presbytery/congregational committees and attending presbytery meetings/worship attendance, during all or part of the previous three years.

4. Have previous experience in leadership roles, especially meeting management, including a secular environment.
5. A generous spirit and an even temperament.