



Bylaws

Mission

The mission of the Association of College Honor Societies is to build a visibly cohesive community of national and international honor societies that promotes the values of higher education; fosters excellence in scholarship, leadership, service, and research; and adheres to the standards of honor society excellence.

Article I—Name

The name of this organization shall be the Association of College Honor Societies, hereinafter referred to as the Association.

Article II—Purposes

The Association is a community of honor societies banded together to provide leadership and a unified voice to forge a strong shared image by:

1. Acting as the coordinating agency for college and university honor societies.
2. Providing for the consideration of matters of mutual interest, such as administrative concerns, establishment and maintenance of scholastic and other standards, membership costs, and functions of honor societies, and encouraging and facilitating collaboration and cooperation among honor societies with similar goals, so that they may better meet the needs of the honors community.
3. Defining honor societies of the several types and to classify existing societies into their proper categories under these definitions.
4. Cooperating with college and university faculties and administrative officers in developing and maintaining high standards and useful functions within honor societies which are organized or seek to be organized.
5. Collecting, publishing, and distributing information and data of value to honor societies, colleges, universities, and publishers of directories and journals.
6. Encouraging in its member societies the promotion of excellence in scholarly achievement and such core values as honor, integrity, character, and leadership.

Article III—Members

Member societies of the Association shall be national or international and general or specialized honor societies which are primarily associations of collegiate chapters whose purposes are to recognize and encourage superior scholarship and/or leadership achievement in some broad or specialized field of study at either undergraduate or graduate levels and which meet the following minimal standards:

Section 1. Member societies of the Association must be non-profit organizations under Section 501(c)3 of the United States Internal Revenue Code.

Section 2. General Honor Societies. A general honor society is one which receives into membership persons from a broad field of study in one or all schools and colleges of an institution who have achieved high scholarship and who fulfill such additional requirements of leadership as the society has established. A general or broad field of study may cross all disciplines or be within one area with related but distinct units. A broad field of study is one in which a systematic development of the mind and of cultural values are acquired through instruction, training, example, and experience.

A. Grade Eligibility. General Honor Societies which base eligibility (1) primarily upon scholarship shall elect undergraduates who rank not lower than the highest twenty percent of their class in overall scholarship. General Honor Societies which base eligibility (2) primarily upon all-around leadership shall elect from the entire institution undergraduates who rank not lower than the highest thirty-five percent of their class in overall scholarship. The cumulative scholastic record of the student as interpreted by the institution where membership is to be conferred shall be the basis for computing scholastic eligibility for the purpose of classification in ranks.

B. Categories of Honor Societies. General Honor Societies are classified by class standing; (1) General Upper Division, (2) General Lower Division, and (3) General Graduate.

C. Election. Election to membership in General Upper Division Honor Societies shall be held not earlier than the completion of 50 percent of the total hours/credits required for the degree [e.g.; if a degree requires the completion of 120 credits/hours, the student must have completed 60 semester hours of credits/hours]. Persons elected to membership in general Lower Division Honor Societies (1) shall have accumulated the number of credit hours used by the institution to designate full-time status with at least 12 hours in courses leading to the associate degree or (2) shall have accumulated at the close of any curricular period during the freshman year the number of credit hours used by the institution to designate full-time status. Persons elected to membership in General Graduate Honor Societies shall have accumulated the number of graduate credit hours used by the institution to designate one full-term equivalency for one academic term.

Section 3. Specialized Honor Societies. A specialized honor society is one which receives into membership persons who have demonstrated high scholarship within a specialized or given field of study of a school, college, or larger unit of a university or within a field of study of a two-year college.

A. Grade Eligibility. Specialized honor societies which elect persons actively interested in a specific field shall elect only those who have demonstrated superior scholarship in this field. Undergraduates who are elected shall rank not lower than the highest thirty-five percent of their class in general scholarship. The cumulative scholastic record of the student as interpreted by the institution where membership is to be conferred shall be the basis for computing scholastic eligibility for the purpose of classification in ranks.

B. Categories of Honor Societies. Specialized Honor Societies are classified by class standing: (1) Specialized Upper Division, (2) Specialized Lower Division, and (3) Specialized Graduate.

C. Election. Persons elected to membership in Specialized Upper Division Honor Societies shall have completed at least 37.5 percent of the total hours/credits required for the degree [e.g.; if a degree requires the completion of 120 semester hours of hours/credits, the student must have completed 45 hours/credits]. Persons elected to membership in Specialized Lower Division Honor Societies shall have accumulated the number of credit hours used by the institution to designate full-time status with at least 12 hours in courses leading to the associate degree. Persons elected to membership in Specialized Graduate Honor Societies shall have accumulated the number of graduate credit hours used by the institution to designate one full-term equivalency for one academic term.

Section 4. *Research Honor Societies.* A Research Honor Society is one that receives into membership persons who have demonstrated achievement in a field of pure or applied science. Standards for membership shall be set to include initial research success and noteworthy achievement as an original investigator.

Section 5. *Classes of Member Societies.* There shall be two classes of member societies:
A. Active voting member societies shall meet all requirements for membership in the Association.

B. Associate nonvoting member societies shall meet all requirements for membership except those regarding age or size as specified in Article III, Section 8.

Section 6. *Election of a Society to Membership.* Election to membership shall be by a four-fifths affirmative vote of the Council voting.

Section 7. *Dues, Fees, and Assessments.* The amount of any dues, fees, or assessments for any class of membership in the Association shall be established by the Council. The dues year shall be the same as the fiscal year.

Section 8. *Standards and Requirements for Society Membership.* For membership in the Association, a society shall conform to the following minimal standards:

A. To ensure that all Association members have developed a proven record of exhibiting excellence in scholarship, service, programs, and governance, a society shall have existed as a national organization for at least ten years before becoming an active voting member of the Association and for at least five years before becoming an associate nonvoting member of the Association. Further, a society shall have met all the standards for affiliation continuously for at least one full year.

B. Election of persons to membership in a member society shall be conferred solely on the basis of character and specified eligibility, and shall be irrespective of membership in or affiliation with other organizations and associations. No solicitation or propaganda, such as rushing or social pressure, shall be used to ensure invitation to or acceptance of membership. Invitation to membership must be from an official chapter. Chapters shall not discriminate on any basis prohibited by law.

C. A society shall have ten or more active collegiate chapters located in two or more geographic areas of the United States. An active collegiate chapter shall be defined as one which holds elections to membership at least annually, except in national emergencies, and includes active student members. An inactive chapter shall be one in which no elections have been held for two or more consecutive years.

D. Collegiate chapters of societies shall be established, maintained, or reactivated only in U.S. colleges and universities that grant the associate, baccalaureate, or higher degrees and that are accredited by one of the following accrediting agencies: the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the Northwest Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities; and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Two-year vocational, technical, and career institutions offering general or specialized programs which lead to career opportunities shall not be eligible, except those institutions accredited by the aforementioned regional accrediting agencies. No society shall grant a charter to a chapter in any institution which fails to meet fully the standards and requirements of the Association. Formal chartering of campus chapters shall require approval by a petition from the institution and, if appropriate, the college/department. Official action of the governing body of the honor society is also required.

E. Societies that allow for the establishment of collegiate chapters at non-U.S. institutions of higher learning shall be responsible for determining that such institutions meet and maintain the Association's standards and requirements with regard to the mission and quality of eligible institutions.

F. To further the purposes of this organization, the organizing instrument for each society must specifically state that the society is organized on a membership basis. This structure is necessary to ensure that the interests of individual members are advanced. Further, the organizing instrument and bylaws of a society must assure democratic participation in the society's governance. At a minimum, individual members of each society shall have the right to elect all members of its governing board, either in an individual or representative capacity, and shall have the power to adopt, amend, or repeal policies of the society. At least once every four years, a member society shall take the following actions, either at a national convention or through an equivalent democratic process; conduct elections of members of its governing board; establish authority for control of the affairs of the society; and present a report of national finances covering the period since the immediately preceding financial report. Each requirement set forth in this subsection (F) shall be addressed in the organizing instrument and/or bylaws of a society.

G. Admission fees and dues charged by a society shall not be more than is deemed reasonable by the Council of the Association.

H. By December 1, each society shall submit to the Association an annual report, which shall include society contact information, the most recent financial statement that includes the society's annual operating expenses, and such other information as may be requested by the Board of Directors.

I. Each society shall furnish the Association with a current copy of its constitution and/or bylaws, and shall report annually any amendments to that document by December 1 to accompany the annual report.

Section 9. Resignation. A member society desiring to resign from the Association shall submit such resignation in writing to the Association office.

Section 10. Suspension/Expulsion for Nonpayment. If a member society fails to pay dues, fees, or assessments, membership in the Association shall automatically terminate under uniform rules, procedures, and conditions established by the Board of Directors.

Section 11. Suspension/Expulsion for Cause. Membership of a society in the Association may be suspended or terminated by the Council for cause. Sufficient cause for such suspension or termination of membership may be violation of these Bylaws or any lawful rule or practice adopted by the Association, or other conduct deemed by the Council to be prejudicial to the best interest of the Association. Charges or complaints regarding a member society may be submitted in writing to the Executive Director or President by any member of the Council and, when submitted, shall be investigated by the Board of Directors. A statement of the charges shall be sent by a means that includes obtaining a signed receipt [e.g.; USPS Certified Mail, FedEx, UPS, etc.] to the last recorded address of the member society, accompanied by notice of the time and place of the meeting at which the charges are to be considered. At least thirty days' notice shall be given, and the member society shall have the opportunity to be represented in person or to be represented by counsel and to present any defense to such charges before action is taken by the Council. The member society must notify the Executive Director at least 21 days in advance of the meeting if the member society decides to be represented by counsel. The Council may adopt such rules as may be necessary to assure due process to the member society. The decision for suspension or termination shall be by a four-fifths affirmative vote of the Council at the Annual Meeting.

Section 12. Reinstatement. Any member society having resigned from membership or having forfeited membership for failure to pay dues, fees, or assessments, may be reinstated upon application to the Board of Directors through the Executive Director, upon meeting such uniform terms and conditions as may be established by the Council, and by a four-fifths affirmative vote of the Council.

Article IV—Council

Section 1. Council. The Council shall be the policy-making body of the Association, subject to these Bylaws and the laws of the state or commonwealth in which the Association is incorporated.

Section 2. The voting members of the Council shall consist of one representative, preferably the executive, from each active voting member society, selected by that society to serve a term of one year or until a successor is selected.

Section 3. Annual Meeting. The annual convention of the Association shall be known as the Annual Meeting, and shall be held at a time and place the Board of Directors shall determine, and at which time the Council shall meet.

Section 4. Official Call. The official call to the Annual Meeting giving the time and place of the meeting(s) of the Council shall be mailed or sent electronically to the address of record of each member society at least 30 days in advance of the Annual Meeting.

Section 5. Quorum. A quorum for the transaction of business at meetings of the Council shall be the official representatives of a majority of the active voting member societies of the Association.

Section 6. Representatives of the associate nonvoting member societies shall have the privilege of the floor, but without vote. The Council may, at its discretion, invite to its meetings representatives of other organizations, to have the privilege of the floor, but without vote.

Section 7. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Council shall be called by the President upon written request of three-fourths of the members of the Board of Directors or two-thirds of the active voting member societies. Such special meetings shall be held within fifty days of such request. The time and place of a special meeting shall be mailed or sent electronically to the address of record for each member society. Not less than five days' notice of a special meeting shall be given, and only that business specified in the call may be transacted.

Section 8. Board Report. The Board shall provide to the Council an annual report showing the following information for the fiscal year immediately preceding the date of the report: summary of actions; assets and liabilities as of the end of the fiscal year; the principal changes in assets and liabilities; the expenses or disbursements of the Association, for both general and restricted purposes; the number of members of the Association as of the date of the report, together with a statement of increase or decrease in such number, and a statement of the place where the names and addresses of current members may be found.

Article V—Board of Directors

Section 1. Composition. The Board of Directors shall consist of seven directors elected from among the voting members of the Council at the Annual Meeting to serve staggered three-year terms or until their successors are elected and the Executive Director as ex-officio without vote. An elected director may not serve more than two consecutive terms. The Board shall consist of two General society representative, two Specialized society representatives, and three At-Large representatives.

Section 2. Powers and Duties. The Board of Directors shall have general supervision of the Association between meetings of the Council, shall administer the policies, programs, and activities of the Association as formulated by the Council; shall employ an Executive Director to be responsible for the operation of a national office; shall develop governing policies that concern goals, executive limitations, board process, and board/executive relations; and is vested with full power to conduct all business of the Association between meetings of the Council. The Board of Directors shall be subject to the orders of the Council, and none of its actions shall conflict with action taken by the Council. The Board of Directors shall arrange the order of business for the Annual Meeting, shall cause to be bonded all officers and employees entrusted with property, real and personal, belonging to the Association, cause the accounts of the Association to be audited annually, submit to the Council for adoption a budget for the next fiscal year, approve such amendments to the budget as may be necessary or appropriate, review the reports of officers and committees of the Association and any recommendations and resolutions to come before the Council and to make recommendations thereto, adopt rules and regulations for the conduct of the affairs of the Association, and perform such other duties as are prescribed or permitted by the laws of the state or commonwealth in which the Association is incorporated for a board of directors or by these Bylaws and the policies adopted by the Council.

Section 3. Regular Meetings. There shall be at least one regular meeting of the Board of Directors which shall be called by the President at the time and place of the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Section 4. Special Meetings. Special meetings may be called by the President with the approval of a majority of the members of the Board of Directors, and shall be called upon the written request of a majority of the members of the Board of Directors. Not less than five days' notice shall be given except for meetings which may be called during the Annual Meeting. Business shall be limited to that which is mentioned in the call. The expense of

attendance of members of the Board of Directors at special meetings other than those held during the Annual Meeting may be budgeted by the Association.

Section 5. Quorum. A majority of the members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum.

Section 6. Voting by Mail or Conference Call.

A. Mail Ballot. Any question may be submitted in writing to the Board of Directors for determination in lieu of a meeting of the Board of Directors. If one-third of the members challenge the mail ballot on the grounds that insufficient information is available for proper consideration of the question, the question will be postponed to the next meeting of the Board of Directors. A report of any action taken by mail ballot shall be verified and made a part of the minutes of the next meeting of the Board of Directors.

B. Conference Call. Members of the Board of Directors may participate in a meeting of the Board of Directors through conference telephone or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time, and such participation shall constitute presence in person at the meeting.

Article VI—Officers

Section 1. Officers. The officers of this Association shall be a President, a Vice President, and a Secretary. The officers shall perform the duties prescribed by these Bylaws and by the parliamentary authority adopted by the Association.

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Council and the Board of Directors, serve as an ex-officio member of Board committees except the Nominating Committee, and provide leadership to the Board of Directors. Upon completion of term of office, the President shall automatically receive the honorific title of President Emeritus.

The Vice President shall have the powers of and perform the duties of the President during any absence or disability of the President, and shall fill the vacancy until the President can resume the duties of that office or until the annual election of officers.

The Secretary shall act as recording secretary of the Council and the Board of Directors and shall perform other such duties as prescribed in these Bylaws or as directed by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Elections. The officers shall be elected by the Board of Directors from among their own number to serve terms of one year or until their successors are elected. No officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

Section 3. Vacancies. Should the office of Vice President or Secretary or other director become vacant, these shall be filled by appointment by the Board of Directors to serve until the next Council.

Section 4. Resignation. Any elected officer or director may resign by submitting that resignation in writing to the Board of Directors.

Section 5. Removal for Cause. Any member of the Board of Directors may be removed for cause. Sufficient cause for such removal may be violation of these Bylaws, or any lawful rule, practice, or procedure adopted by the Association or other conduct deemed by the Council to be prejudicial to the best interests of the Association. For removal of a director for cause, it shall be necessary for the Council to hold a formal hearing. A statement of the

charges shall be sent by a means that includes obtaining a signed receipt [e.g.; USPS Certified Mail, FedEx, UPS, etc.] to the recorded address of the director, accompanied by notice of the time and place of the meeting at which the charges are to be considered. At least thirty days' notice shall be given, and the director shall have the opportunity to appear in person or to be represented by counsel and to present any defense to such charges before action is taken. The director must notify the Executive Director at least 21 days in advance of the meeting if the member society decides to be represented by counsel. The Council shall adopt such rules as may be necessary to assure due process to the director. The decision for removal shall be made by a four-fifths affirmative vote of the Council at the Annual Meeting.

Article VII—Executive Director

The Executive Director shall be employed by and serve under the direction of the Board of Directors as the chief executive officer of the Association. The Executive Director shall implement policies and programs of the Council and Board of Directors; be responsible for relations with members and external groups; supervise and manage the offices of the Association and engage all employees; serve as custodian of properties, deeds, records, and archives belonging to the Society and hold, invest, and disburse monies according to policies established by the Board of Directors; and coordinate and expedite work of the Council, Board of Directors, and committees.

Article VIII—Committees

Section 1. Board Standing Committees shall be established by the Council. Special Committees shall be established by the Council or the Board of Directors. The Chairs and members shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Board of Directors, unless stipulated otherwise elsewhere in these Bylaws. The Board Standing Committees of the Association shall be:

A. The Bylaws Committee shall study issues referred to it by the Council or the Board of Directors and amendments submitted by individual members or committees and prepare appropriate amendments for consideration by the Board of Directors and the Council.

B. The Nominating Committee of five members shall be elected by the Council, two in even years and three in odd years. Candidates for the Nominating Committee shall reflect the diversity of the membership. It shall be the responsibility of this Committee to nominate candidates for directors and for the Nominating Committee to be filled at the Council Meeting. The Committee chair shall be elected annually by the Committee from among the five members. A member of the Nominating Committee may not be nominated for any vacancy without resigning as a member of the Nominating Committee. Before the election, additional nominations from the floor shall be permitted.

C. The Committee on Standards and Definitions shall study issues related to standards and definitions of honor societies and recommend principles to guide the Council in its work, and shall examine compliance of constitutions and/or bylaws of member societies with respect to Association standards and make recommendations to the Board of Directors and the Council.

D. The Long Range Planning and Strategic Issues Committee shall evaluate the goals and objectives of the Association and make recommendations for changes as deemed necessary.

E. The Program Committee shall prepare the Annual Meeting agenda and program in consultation with and with the approval of the Board of Directors.

F. The Committee on Eligibility and Admissions shall correspond with organizations in order to determine their interest in affiliation with the Association and shall assist in the development of petitions for membership. It shall review objectives, governance, and activities of student organizations to determine eligibility of such societies for admission into the Association and shall make recommendations to the Board of Directors and the Council.

G. The Committee on Public Information shall publicize the Association and its Annual Meeting by distributing news releases to representatives of member societies and appropriate associations and agencies, and shall promote the objectives and interests of the Association to other organizations and to the public through exhibits, exchanges, printed materials, and other appropriate means.

H. The Association Management Committee shall study tax developments and new regulations, keep abreast of association management trends in non-profits, and inform the Board of Directors and the Council of changes pertinent to member societies.

Article IX—Indemnification

The Association shall have the power to indemnify any person who is or was a Council representative, officer, Board of Directors member, employee, or agent of the Association or who is or was serving at the request of the Association as a delegate, director, officer, employee, or agent of another association, society, corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, to the full extent permitted by law. The Association may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of such persons against any liability asserted against him or her and incurred by him or her in any such capacity or arising out of his or her status as such, whether or not the Association would have the power to indemnify him or her against any such liability. Such persons shall not be personally liable for monetary damages for any action taken unless the person has breached or failed to perform the duties of the office and the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct, or recklessness. Exception: The above shall not apply to the responsibility or liability of a person pursuant to any criminal statute or the liability for the payment of taxes pursuant to federal, state, or local law.

Article X—Fiscal Year

The Board of Directors shall determine the fiscal year.

Article XI—Net Earnings/Activities/Dissolution

Section 1. The Association is a nonprofit organization that will be financed under a general plan which may include, without limitation, member dues and assessments, contributions from the general public, fund raising activities, loans and grants from third parties, and income from investments, as shall be deemed necessary and appropriate to further the purposes of the Association.

Section 2. The Association is organized exclusively for charitable educational purposes, including receiving and administering funds and making distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Section 3. Upon the dissolution of the Association, the Council shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the Association, dispose of all of the assets of the Association exclusively for the purposes of the Association in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operating exclusively for charitable, education, religious, or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, as the Council shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the Association is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

Article XII—Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Association in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws and any special rules of order the Association may adopt.

Article XII—Amendment of Bylaws

These Bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the Council by a two-thirds affirmative vote provided that a copy of the proposed amendment has been sent to each member society and each member of the Board of Directors at least thirty days prior to the meeting, or without notice at any meeting of the Council by a three-fourths affirmative vote.

Adopted February 22, 1992

Amended February 20, 1999

Amended February 18, 2000

Amended February 16, 2001

Amended February 15, 2002

Amended February 24, 2006

Amended February 17, 2012

Amended February 15, 2013

Amended February 13, 2015

Amended February 12, 2016

Amended February 02, 2018