

# CONSTITUTION OF PI SIGMA ALPHA

**Revised, 2011**

## ARTICLE I

### Name and Purposes

SECTION 1. Name. The name of the organization shall be Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society.

SECTION 2. Purposes. To recognize excellence in academic achievement by college and university students in the fields of political science, government, international and public affairs; to stimulate scholarship and interest in political science; to promote worthwhile curricular and extracurricular activities related to political science; to promote civil dialog; and to engage in any other activities that further these purposes.

## ARTICLE II

### Membership

SECTION 1. *Categories.* There shall be three categories of membership in the society as follows: student, faculty, and honorary.

SECTION 2. *Student Membership.* Student members shall be initiated by a local chapter from among such undergraduate or graduate students of the institution in which the chapter is located as may meet the following qualifications.

a. For undergraduates:

1. completion of at least one-half the credits required for the baccalaureate degree;
2. completion of fifteen quarter hours or ten semester hours of work in political science including at least one designated by the institution to be an upper-level course;
3. maintenance of an average grade of "B" or higher in all courses in political science, and maintenance of general scholarship to place such students within the upper third of their class; and
4. fulfillment of such additional academic requirements as may have been prescribed by the local chapter.

b. For graduate students:

1. completion of at least nine graduate credits in political science with no grade lower than a B; and

2. fulfillment of such additional academic requirements as may have been prescribed by the local chapter.

The Chapter Advisor shall certify the eligibility of student initiates and shall advise student officers of the chapter of same. No election of initiates shall be necessary. Membership in Pi Sigma Alpha shall be conferred solely on the basis of eligibility standards specified in this Constitution and in the bylaws of the chapter, and shall be irrespective of membership in or affiliation with any other organization or association. Chapters may not discriminate on any basis prohibited by law.

SECTION 3. *Faculty Membership.* Any member of the faculty of the administrative department, school, or division in which a local chapter is located may be initiated into faculty membership by the chapter. Faculty members shall possess all the privileges and have all the responsibilities of student membership. No election is necessary for faculty membership. Faculty members serving as Pi Sigma Alpha Chapter Advisors shall be granted membership gratis by the National Office.

SECTION 4. *Honorary Membership.* Any person of recognized ability and achievement in the field of political science may be elected an honorary member by any local chapter by two-thirds vote of the voting members, a quorum being present.

No more than two honorary members may be elected by any local chapter in any one year. Honorary membership may also be conferred by the National Office. Honorary members shall possess all the privileges of active membership. No person who is otherwise eligible for student membership at his or her institution but for deficiency of minimum qualifications elsewhere stated in this Article shall be eligible for honorary membership in any chapter.

SECTION 5. *Subsequent Membership.* All persons duly initiated to membership (other than honorary) in any institution who are subsequently enrolled as students or are serving as faculty members in a different institution at which a chapter is located shall be deemed members of that chapter.

SECTION 6. *Fees and Dues.* Each member shall pay through the chapter such initiation fees and annual dues as may be set by the Council. Nothing in this Section shall prohibit chapters from charging additional fees for chapter purposes.

SECTION 7. *Pins, Keys, and Other Membership Materials.* The Society may adopt the design of pins, keys, and other symbols of membership which shall be available for purchase on such terms and under such conditions as the National Office or the Council may determine. The Council shall promulgate rules or guidelines for chapters and their members with respect to proper use of the name, symbols, and/or other indicia of the Society under terms of license.

SECTION 8. *Membership Status in the National Organization.* A student whose eligibility is formally certified by a local chapter and for whom the National Office has issued a membership certificate shall be considered a member of Pi Sigma Alpha for the remainder of his or her natural life, except that:

- a. membership is not transferable to any other person;

b. membership may be formally terminated by the member by the tender of a written notice of resignation from the Society, delivered to the National Office and effective from the date of receipt of the notice;

c. membership may be revoked at any time by the Executive Council, in keeping with its powers under Article III of this Constitution, upon a showing and consideration of cause. Said revocation will be effective upon the final Council vote, regardless of whether a member is timely notified of the action.

No category of membership in the Society shall be considered or construed to effect the status of a shareholder in any corporate entity, inclusive of the Society's and shall not entail any corporate grant of power, authority, or legal status other than as may be enumerated in this Constitution or provided by subsequent action of the Executive Council

## ARTICLE III

### Council

SECTION 1. *Composition, Tenure, and Vacancy.* The affairs of the society shall be governed by a Council which shall consist of the President; the President Elect; the Executive Director; the Newsletter Editor; the three most recent past presidents; and twelve members elected by the membership, six to be elected each biennium for four-year terms. Officers and Council members shall serve until their successors take office after their election or appointment. The President shall fill by appointment any vacancy in the Council caused by death, resignation, or other inability to serve or by lack of a sufficient number of past presidents. Only members of the society may be members of the Council.

SECTION 2. *Powers.* The Council shall manage the affairs of the society and shall act in the capacity of a Board of Directors. The Council shall adopt such resolutions as may be appropriate for the governance and furtherance of the purposes of the society. The Council shall have the power: to contract for all necessary materials and services in connection with the management of the society, including the employment of auditors; to delegate powers and duties to officers and employees of the society; to provide for the business and conduct of annual and special meetings; and to issue and distribute the society's Newsletter and other publications; and to engage in all other decision-making for the Society as may be necessary and proper to fulfill the Council's fiduciary duty to it.

Any decision of the Council may be reversed by a majority vote of the membership at its Biennial Meeting.

SECTION 3. *Executive Committee.* There shall be an Executive Committee of the Council consisting of the President, President Elect, Executive Director, Newsletter Editor, most recent past president, and two members of the Council appointed by the President.

The Executive Committee shall have the power to exercise all the functions of the Council between annual meetings and when the Council is not in session. All actions taken by the Executive Committee shall be reported to the Council.

## ARTICLE IV

### Officers

SECTION 1. *Officers.* The officers of the society shall be a President, a President Elect who will automatically succeed to the office of President upon completion of the President's term, and an Executive Director.

SECTION 2. *President and President Elect.* The first President and President Elect of the society shall be selected by the initial Council. Future Presidents Elect shall be elected by the membership at the regular biennial convention of the society, as outlined in Article V of this Constitution, for a period of two years.

SECTION 3. *Director.* The Executive Director shall be appointed by the Council and shall serve at the Council's pleasure. The Executive Director shall be generally responsible for the execution of the society's business, subject to policies established by the Council.

SECTION 4. *Committees.* The Council may establish committees and boards for various purposes. Chairs and members of the boards and committees shall be appointed by the President.

SECTION 5. *Vacancy.* In case of death, resignation, or inability of the President to perform the duties of such office, the President Elect shall immediately succeed to the office of President and shall be President for the remainder of the vacant term unless that term is less than six months, in which case such person shall serve out the unexpired term and two additional years. In case of an interim vacancy in the office of President Elect, the incumbent President shall appoint a Nominating Committee which shall forthwith proceed to nominate and the Council shall elect a new President Elect to serve until the end of the next biennial meeting. The next biennial meeting of the members may confirm the Council's action by electing the President Elect to the office of President, or may take such other action as in its discretion the situation may require, to the end that there shall be in office at all times both a President and a President Elect.

## ARTICLE V

### Nominations and Elections

SECTION 1. *Nominating Committee.* The President shall appoint a Nominating Committee not less than sixty days prior to each biennial meeting. The Nominating Committee shall consist of the three most recent past presidents able and willing to serve thereon and ~~not more than~~ two additional members designated by the President. If there are not three past presidents available, the President may appoint a sufficient number of other members to complete the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall present nominations for officers and Council members at the biennial meeting of members.

SECTION 2. *Nominations by members.* Additional nominations may be made from the floor by any member at the time the Nominating Committee makes its report.

SECTION 3. *Voting.* All nominations shall be voted on either by separate vote for each office or by slate. Each chapter of the Society shall be entitled to one vote. The nominee receiving the highest number of votes for each office shall be declared elected and shall thereupon take office.

SECTION 4. *Mail Ballots.* The Council may provide for election by mail or electronic mail ballot to each chapter in any year in which it is impossible to hold a biennial meeting. Space shall be provided on the ballot for writing in the names of additional candidates. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes for each office shall be declared elected and shall thereupon take office.

## ARTICLE VI

### Chapters

SECTION 1. *Qualifications.* A local chapter may be established at any college or university granting the baccalaureate or higher degrees, which is accredited by a regional or national accrediting association whose accreditation is acceptable to the Council, and which offers a major sequence of courses in political science through an appropriate administrative department, school, or division of the institution, and which conforms to other requirements established by the Council. Establishment of chapters outside the United States shall be in accordance with the provisions of this Article, except that the Council may make such modifications as are appropriate in applying the accrediting association clause of this Section.

SECTION 2. *Petitions.* All petitions for the establishment of a new local chapter shall be sent to the Executive Director whose duty it shall be to determine eligibility for membership. If the petition is approved by the Executive Director, in consultation with the Executive Committee, a charter will be issued to the petitioning school.

SECTION 3. *Officers.* Each local chapter shall have a president, a vice-president, and other officers chosen in accordance with principles and procedures established by the chapter's constitution or bylaws. Chapter Advisors shall inform the National Office of the names of chapter officers in an annual chapter report or by other means.

SECTION 4. *Advisor.* Each chapter shall designate by vote of its membership or have designated by appropriate administrative authority, according to the custom of its host institution or department, one member of the faculty of the administrative department, school, or division of the institution at which the chapter is located to act as Chapter Advisor. The National Office shall be informed of the name of such Advisor.

SECTION 5. *By-Laws.* Each chapter may make such by-laws, not inconsistent with this Constitution, as it may deem advisable. The Council shall be the final authority in determining if a chapter's bylaws are consistent with the Society's Constitution and policies.

SECTION 6. *Reports.* Each local chapter shall report to the National Office annually by a date specified by the National Office on the number of active members of the local chapter, the financial condition of the chapter, and other such information as may be requested by the Executive Director.

SECTION 7. *Revocation of Charter.* A chapter charter may be revoked or suspended by the Council:

- a. for failure to maintain standards of membership set forth in Article I;
- b. for failure to induct new members for a period of three or more consecutive years.
- c. For chapter or member conduct that has demonstrated a potential for damage or danger to the Society and its good name and which, after notice, has not been remedied.

Nothing in this section shall prohibit or impair the ability of the Council to reinstate a chapter charter which has previously been revoked or suspended, once the chapter has remedied the problem which gave rise to the revocation or suspension.

## ARTICLE VII

### Meetings

SECTION 1. *Biennial Meeting.* A biennial meeting of the Society shall be held at a time and place designated by the Council. Whenever possible, the biennial meeting of the Society shall be held every even-numbered year at the time and place fixed for the annual convention of the American Political Science Association. The Executive Director shall notify the chapters of the time and place of the meeting of members of the society at least ninety days before the date set for the meeting. Each chapter may send to any meeting such number of members as it may deem appropriate, but each chapter shall be entitled to only one vote.

SECTION 2. *Meetings of the Council or Executive Committee.* Meetings of the Council or Executive Committee shall be held upon written notice to be mailed or emailed not less than fifteen nor more than forty days before the date of the meeting. Meetings shall be at the call of the President, or of any five members of the Council, or of three members of the Executive Committee.

SECTION 3. *Waiver.* Any person entitled to vote at any meeting of members, or of Chapter representatives, or of the Council, or of the Executive Committee, may waive notice of the time, place, and purpose of such meeting either before or after the date of such meeting, and any action taken or resolution adopted thereat shall, upon such waiver, be as valid as though notice had been given.

SECTION 4. *Action without Meeting.* Any action or resolution required or permitted to be taken or adopted at any meeting of the chapter advisors, Executive Committee or Council, may be taken or adopted without a meeting if a consent in writing setting forth such action or resolution is signed by a majority of a quorum of such advisors, Executive Committee or Council, unless otherwise proscribed by law.

SECTION 5. *Special Meetings.* The President or Council may call special meetings.

## ARTICLE VIII

### *Quorum*

SECTION 1. *Number Constituting Quorum, Majority Vote.* Ten members of the Council, three members of the Executive Committee, and the representatives of thirty chapters at a regular or special meeting of the society shall respectively constitute a quorum. All action shall be by majority vote of members, Council members, or members of the Executive Committee as the case may be, present unless otherwise required by law or this Constitution.

## ARTICLE IX

### *Financial and General Business Provisions*

SECTION 1. *Fees.* Initiation and other fees shall be set by the Council

SECTION 2. *Incorporation.* As an incorporated nonprofit organization within the District of Columbia, the Society and its Council shall abide by District of Columbia Official Code ss290301.01 et seq., otherwise known as the D. C. Non-Profit Corporation Act (“the Act”), where and to the extent that the Act prescribes or proscribes specific conduct or performance. To the extent that the Act allows the Society to prescribe its own structure, officers, normal business procedures and/or activities, this Constitution shall prevail with enumerated terms of same. In the event neither this Constitution nor the Act specifically determines a course of action, choice, or behavior the Society must choose, the decision of the Council as the fiduciary of the Society shall be controlling. The Council shall have the power to dissolve the Society in accordance with the Act and/or to reincorporate it by lawful means in any other jurisdiction within the United States as it determines necessary to be in the best interests of the Society.

SECTION 3. *Fiscal Year.* The fiscal year of the Society shall be determined by the Council.

## ARTICLE X

### *National-Chapter Relationship; Dispute Resolution*

SECTION 1. *Supremacy of the National Constitution and Interpretation Thereof.* This Constitution and all administrative, executive, legislative and/or judicial rules or decisions duly and properly made pursuant to or under it by the Council, Executive Committee and/or Executive Director shall be considered controlling in all matters affecting the Society, and in particular any question of supremacy and/or power of preemption of any local chapter policy,

rule, local constitution or bylaw or other action. No chapter shall initiate, sustain, or conduct material actions to re-implement any program, policy, bylaw, or local chapter rule or regulation that has been determined to violate the national Constitution of Pi Sigma Alpha, The Council shall have full, formal, and final powers of judicial review for the purposes of this Article except as membership review is provided in Section 3 thereof. Said powers shall extend to the Executive Committee in those situations or circumstances in which the Council cannot act with reasonable dispatch, in compliance with Article III, Section 3 of this Constitution. The Council will make reasonable efforts to protect procedural due process rights of an affected chapter or member in so acting, which shall include at a minimum the right of said chapter or member to be notified in writing of pending council action and the right to provide an in person or written defense prior to final adjudication. Reasonable attempts by the Council to notify, and provision of time to respond, shall be considered to protect and comply with these rights.

SECTION 2. *Validity.* All questions affecting the validity of any chapter constitutional provision, rule, regulation, action, or bylaw shall be decided by the Council, and may be considered either by the Council of its own accord or upon the bringing of a question, resolution, or formal complaint by any chapter, member, officer, or administrator of the Society. A decision by the Council shall be final unless submitted to the membership under Section 3 hereof.

SECTION 3. *Submission to Membership.* In the event any chapter is aggrieved by a decision of the Council under Sections 1 or 2 of this Article, such chapter may, by notice to the Council within 30 days after a decision, require that the decision of the Council be reviewed by the membership at its next Biennial Meeting.

## ARTICLE XI

### *Amendments*

SECTION 1. *Proposals.* Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by the Council or by petition to the Executive Director of not less than ten chapters.

SECTION 2. *Ratification.* Within sixty days after the submission of a proposal to amend this Constitution in accordance with Section 1 hereof, the Executive Director shall circulate a ballot on such amendment by mail or electronic mail to the local chapters. An amendment to the Constitution shall not be effective unless a majority of those chapters voting within sixty days of the date of mailing of the ballot shall approve such amendment.