

Constitution of Pi Sigma Alpha,  
the National Political Science Honor Society

**Revised, 2022**

ARTICLE I

Name and Purposes

SECTION 1. *Name.* The name of the organization shall be Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society (the “Corporation”).

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.

SECTION 3. *Constitution.* The Constitution may also be referred to as the Corporation’s bylaws and shall constitute the Corporation’s bylaws.

ARTICLE II

Membership

SECTION 1. *Categories.* There shall be several categories of membership in the Corporation including the following: student, faculty, and honorary. The only persons who shall be “members” pursuant to the definition of “members” under Section 29-401.02 of the Code of the District of Columbia shall be the chapter advisors. Persons other than chapter advisors identified as members shall only have the authority specifically provided herein. Chapter advisors may be referred to herein as either “Chapter Advisors” or “Statutory Members.”

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 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. The Corporation, chapters and persons associated with either shall not be permitted to apply social pressure on persons to accept membership.

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 their 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 person accepting membership status shall pay 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 Corporation 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 Corporation 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 for the remainder of their 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, 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 Council, in keeping with its powers under the 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 Corporation shall be considered or construed to create the status of a shareholder in any corporate entity, inclusive of the Corporation 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 Council.

### ARTICLE III

#### Council

SECTION 1. *Composition, Tenure, and Vacancy.* The affairs of the Corporation shall be governed by a Council which shall consist of the persons elected by the Statutory Members to serve on the Council and such other persons appointed to the Council in accordance with this Constitution. It is anticipated that the following persons will serve on the Council as Council members: the President; the President Elect; the Treasurer; the faculty advisor of the *Pi Sigma Alpha Undergraduate Journal of Politics*; the two most recent past presidents; and twelve additional persons. For the additional twelve Council members, six are to be elected each biennium for four-year terms. The other Council members shall serve terms concurrent with their

officer terms. The Executive Director shall serve as a non-voting member of the Council. When Council members are elected by the Statutory Members, Statutory Members shall indicate their nominations for officer positions. Officers and Council members shall serve until their successors take office after their election or appointment or until their earlier removal, resignation or death. The Council or the Statutory Members may fill any vacancy on the Council caused by death, resignation, removal or other inability to serve in accordance with this Constitution and applicable law. Council members who are elected to fill a vacancy shall serve on the Council until the next meeting of Statutory Members at which an election of permanent Council members takes place. Only members of the Corporation may be voting members of the Council. Persons who are members of the Council may be referred to herein as Council members or directors.

SECTION 2. *Powers.* The Council shall manage the affairs of the Corporation 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 Corporation.

SECTION 3. *Executive Committee.* There shall be an Executive Committee of the Council consisting of the President, President Elect, Executive Director, Treasurer, most recent past president, and three members of the Council elected by the Council, provided however that all members of the Executive Committee must be Council members.

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 except as prohibited by law. All actions taken by the Executive Committee shall be reported to the Council. If a person is removed from their Council/officer/member position, such person shall cease to be a member of any committee.

## ARTICLE IV

### Officers

SECTION 1. *Officers.* The officers of the Corporation shall include a President, a President Elect who will automatically succeed to the office of President upon completion of the President's term, a Treasurer, and an Executive Director. The Treasurer will be elected as an officer by the Council, for a period of four years. Officers whose duties are not specified herein shall perform duties typically expected of said role and as may be decided by the Council.

SECTION 2. *President and President Elect.* The first President and President Elect of the Corporation shall be elected by the initial Council. Future Presidents Elect shall be elected as officers by the Council for a period of two years. The President serves a two-year term and then serves in the role of past president for a period of four years.

SECTION 3. *Executive Director.* The Executive Director shall be elected by the Council and shall serve at the Council's pleasure. The Executive Director shall be generally responsible for the execution of the Corporation's day-to-day business, subject to policies established by the Council. As provided above, the Executive Director shall serve as a non-voting member of the

Council but shall automatically cease to be a non-voting member of the Council if they cease to be the Executive Director.

SECTION 4. *Committees.* The Council may establish committees of the Council and advisory boards or non-Council committees for various purposes. Chairs and members of committees of the Council shall be elected by the Council. Committees or boards that are not committees of the Council may be appointed by the President or Council.

SECTION 5. *Vacancy.* In case of death, resignation, removal 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.

Only the Council has the authority to remove officers, and the Council may do so with or without cause. In addition, the Council has the sole authority to fill vacancies among officer positions. A person who is elected to fill a vacancy shall serve in such position until such officer's death, resignation, retirement, removal, disqualification, or until their successor is elected and qualified.

## ARTICLE V

### Council and Officer Nominations and Elections

SECTION 1. *Nominating Committee.* The President shall appoint a Nominating Committee not less than sixty days prior to each annual meeting at which there will be an election; this committee shall not be deemed a committee of the Council/Council Committee. The Nominating Committee shall consist of the two most recent past presidents able and willing to serve thereon and three additional members designated by the President. If there are not two 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 open officer and Council member positions at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting of Statutory Members if applicable.

SECTION 2. *Nominations by Statutory Members.* Additional nominations may be made from the floor by any Statutory 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 position or by slate. Each Statutory Member of the Corporation shall be entitled to one vote. Statutory Members vote to elect Council members; provided however that Statutory Members shall be given the opportunity to suggest which Council members shall hold which office. Council members vote to elect all officers. The nominee receiving the highest number of votes for each position shall be declared elected and shall thereupon assume such position.

SECTION 4. *Removal.* Either the Statutory Members or the Council may remove any Council

member, with or without cause, in accordance with the notice and other requirements specified in applicable law.

## 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 Corporation'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 Section 1;

- 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 Corporation and its good name and which, after notice, has not been remedied;
- d. or any other reason deemed sufficient by the Council in the Council's sole discretion.

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

### Statutory Member Meetings

SECTION 1. *Annual Meetings.* An annual meeting of Statutory Members for the transaction of such business as may properly come before the meeting shall be held at such time and place as the Council shall determine.

SECTION 2. *Special Meetings.* Special meetings of the Statutory Members may be called by any two officers or the Council, or by at least 15% of the Statutory Members, and shall be held at such time and place as may be specified by such order.

SECTION 3. *Notice of Meetings; Waiver.* Written notice of all meetings of Statutory Members shall be given not less than 10 nor more than 60 days before the date of the meeting to each Statutory Member entitled to vote at such meeting. The notices of all meetings shall state the place, if any, date and hour of the meeting, the means of remote communications, if any, by which Statutory Members and proxy holders may be deemed to be present in person and vote at such meeting and, in the case of a special meeting, the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called. Any notice shall be effective if given by a form of electronic transmission consented to by the Statutory Member to whom the notice is given. Notice of any meeting need not be given to any Statutory Member who shall, either before or after the meeting, submit a waiver of notice or who shall attend such meeting, except when the Statutory Member attends for the express purpose of objecting, at the beginning of the meeting, to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened.

SECTION 4. *Action by Consent in Lieu of a Meeting.* Statutory Member action may be taken without a meeting if all the Statutory Members consent thereto in writing (including by electronic transmission), and the writing or writings are filed with the records of the Corporation, except as otherwise provided by law, the articles of incorporation or this Constitution.

SECTION 5. *Quorum and Manner of Acting.* Except as otherwise provided by law, a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Statutory Members shall consist of at least 30 of the Statutory Members then serving and entitled to vote at the meeting, present in person or by proxy. An act of the majority of the Statutory Members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Statutory Members, except as otherwise specified by law.

## ARTICLE VIII

### Council and Council Committee Meetings

SECTION 1. *Meetings of the Council and Committees.* Meetings of the Council and Council Committees (including the Executive Committee) shall be held upon written notice to be mailed or emailed: (i) with respect to Council Committee meetings, two days' notice; and (ii) with respect to the Council not less than ten days' notice. Meetings shall be at the call of the President, or of any five members of the Council, or in the case of a Council committee, any three members of such committee.

SECTION 2. *Waiver.* Any person entitled to vote at a meeting covered under this Article, 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. Attendance or participation in a meeting will constitute waiver unless the participant at the beginning of the meeting, or promptly upon arrival, objects to holding the meeting or transacting at the meeting and does not thereafter vote for or assent to action taken at the meeting

SECTION 3. *Action without Meeting.* Any action or resolution required or permitted may be taken or adopted at any meeting covered under this Article if a consent in writing setting forth such action or resolution is signed by all members of the respective body, unless otherwise proscribed by law.

SECTION 4. *Quorum and Manner of Acting.* Except as otherwise provided by law, a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Council or a Council Committee shall consist of a majority of the persons then serving on the applicable body and entitled to vote at the meeting participating electronically or in-person. An act of the majority of the persons at a meeting (whether electronically or in-person) at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the applicable body, except as otherwise specified by law.

## 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 Corporation and its Council shall abide by District of Columbia Official Code 290301.01 et seq., otherwise known as the D. C. Non-Profit Corporation Act ("the Act") and other applicable laws, where and to the extent that the Act and other applicable laws prescribe or proscribe specific conduct or performance. To the extent that the Act and other applicable laws allow the Corporation 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/other applicable laws specifically determine a course of action, choice, or behavior the Corporation must choose, the decision of the Council as the fiduciary body of the Corporation shall be controlling. The Council shall have the power to dissolve the Corporation 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 Corporation.

SECTION 3. *Fiscal Year.* The fiscal year of the Corporation 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 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 Corporation, 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 the Corporation. The Council shall have full, formal, and final powers of review for the purposes of this Article. 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 Corporation.

## 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. *Consideration Process- Council.* In order for an amendment to the Constitution to be made, either the Council (as described in this Section 2) or the Statutory Member (as described in Section 3 below) consideration process will be followed. Prior to considering a proposed Constitutional amendment, the Council will post a copy of the amendment on a site available to members/chapters and give chapters and members a chance to submit comments.

The comment period shall be no less than 30 days. After the comment period is over, the Council may amend the Constitution in accordance with the Constitution and applicable law.

SECTION 3. *Consideration Process- Statutory Members.* In order for an amendment to the Constitution to be made by the Statutory Members, the process in this Section 3 must be followed. Prior to considering a proposed Constitutional amendment, the Statutory Members will cause a copy of the amendment to be posted on a site available to members/chapters/Council and give such parties a chance to submit comments. The comment period shall be no less than 30 days. After the comment period is over, the Statutory Members may amend the Constitution if 75% of the Statutory Members at a duly called meeting, at which a quorum is constituted, approve the amendment or if all of the Statutory Members approve the amendment by unanimous written consent as described in Article VII.4.

## ARTICLE XII

### Miscellaneous

#### SECTION 1. *Records and Reports.*

- a. The Corporation shall keep as permanent records minutes of all meetings of the Statutory Members and the Council, a record of all actions taken by the Statutory Members and the Council taken without a meeting, and a record of all actions taken by a committee of the Council on behalf of the Corporation.
- b. The Corporation shall maintain appropriate accounting records.
- c. The Corporation or its agent shall maintain a record of its membership list, in a form that permits preparation of a list of names and addresses of all Statutory Members, in alphabetical order by class, showing the number of votes each Statutory Member is entitled to cast.
- d. The Corporation shall maintain its records in written form or in any other form of a record.
- e. The Corporation shall keep a copy of the following records at its principal office: (1) its Articles of Incorporation or Restated Articles of Incorporation and all amendments to them currently in effect; (2) its Bylaws or Restated Bylaws and all amendments to them currently in effect; (3) the minutes and records described in Subsection a of this Section for the past three (3) years; (4) all communications in the form of a record to Statutory Members generally within the past three (3) years, including the annual financial statements to be furnished to Statutory Members for the past three (3) years pursuant to § 29.413.20 of the Act; (5) a list of the names and business addresses of its current directors and officers; and (6) its most recent biennial report delivered to the Mayor of the District of Columbia.
- f. The Corporation shall comply with the director and Statutory Members inspection

record requirements of §§ 29-413.02 to 29-413.05 of the Act.

SECTION 2. *Indemnification and Insurance.* Unless otherwise prohibited by law, the Corporation shall indemnify any director or officer, any former director or officer, any person who may have served at its request as a director, officer partner, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other entity whether for profit or not for profit, and may, by resolution of the Council, indemnify any employee against any and all expenses and liabilities actually and necessarily incurred by them or imposed on them in connection with any claim, action, suit, or proceeding (whether actual or threatened, civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including appeals) to which they may be or are made a party by reason of being or having been such director, officer, partner, employee or agent; subject to the limitation, however, that there shall be no indemnification in relation to matters as to which they shall be adjudged in such claim, action, suit, or proceeding to be guilty of a criminal offense or liable to the Corporation for damages arising out of their own negligence or misconduct in the performance of a duty to the Corporation.

The Corporation shall indemnify a director or officer to the extent the director or officer was successful, on the merits or otherwise, in the defense of any proceeding to which the director or officer was a party because the director or officer was a director or officer of the Corporation against reasonable expenses incurred by the director or officer in connection with the proceeding.

Amounts paid in indemnification of expenses and liabilities may include, but shall not be limited to, counsel fees and other fees; costs and disbursements; and judgments, fines, and penalties against, and amounts paid in settlement by, such director, officer, or employee. The Corporation may advance expenses to, or where appropriate may itself, at its expense, undertake the defense of, any director, officer, or employee; provided, however, that such director, officer, or employee shall undertake to repay or to reimburse such expense if it should be ultimately determined that they are not entitled to indemnification under this Article or the Act.

The provisions of this Article shall be applicable to claims, actions, suits, or proceedings made or commenced after the adoption hereof, whether arising from acts or omissions to act occurring before or after adoption hereof.

The indemnification provided by this Article shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which such director, officer, or employee may be entitled under any statute, Bylaw, agreement, vote of the Council or otherwise and shall not restrict the power of the Corporation to make any indemnification permitted by law.

The Council may authorize the purchase of insurance on behalf of any director, officer, employee, or other agent against any liability asserted against or incurred by them which arises out of such person's status as a director, officer, employee, or agent or out of acts taken in such capacity, whether or not the Corporation would have the power to indemnify the person against that liability under law.

In no case, however, shall the Corporation indemnify, reimburse, or insure any person for any taxes imposed on such individual under chapter 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as now

in effect or as may hereafter be amended (“the Code”). Further, if at any time the Corporation is deemed to be a private foundation within the meaning of § 509 of the Code then, during such time, no payment shall be made under this Article if such payment would constitute an act of self-dealing or a taxable expenditure, as defined in § 4941(d) or 4945(d), respectively, of the Code. Moreover, the Corporation shall not indemnify, reimburse, or insure any person in any instance where such indemnification, reimbursement, or insurance is inconsistent with § 4958 of the Code or any other provision of the Code applicable to corporations described in § 501(c)(3) of the Code.

If any part of this Article shall be found in any action, suit, or proceeding to be invalid or ineffective, the validity and the effectiveness of the remaining parts shall not be affected.

SECTION 3. *Loans to Directors.* No loans shall be made by the Corporation to its directors or officers; provided, however, that this Section shall not apply to (1) an advance to pay reimbursable expenses reasonably expected to be incurred by a director or officer; (2) an advance to pay premiums.