

# I·S·H·R

International Society for the History of Rhetoric

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Rhetoric · Rhétorique · Rhetorik · Retorica · Rhetorica · Retórica

## INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF RHETORIC CONSTITUTION

### Article I: Name.

Adopted 30 June 1977, Zurich, Switzerland. Amended 2 September 1985, Oxford, England. Amended 24 July 1993, Turin, Italy. Amended 3 October 1994, Edinburgh, Scotland. Amended 27 July 2019, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA. Amended 25 July 2025, Copenhagen, Denmark.

The name of this organization shall be the International Society for the History of Rhetoric.

### Article II: Purpose.

The purpose of this Society is to promote the study of both the theory and practice of rhetoric in all periods and languages and the relationship of rhetoric to poetics, literary theory and criticism, philosophy, politics, religion, law, and other aspects of the cultural context. This is the exclusive purpose of the Society and it shall be accomplished by the Society only in a charitable manner. The Society is not concerned with the furthering of practical rhetorical skills as such.

### Article III: Membership.

**A.** Membership in the Society is open to any individual subscribing to its aims.

**B.** Membership dues shall be paid to the Society's fiscal agent as designated by the Council or to the Treasurer. There shall be three classes of membership: *Life members*; *regular members*, and *student members*. *Honorary members*, not to exceed a grand total of ten at any time, may be elected, on nomination by the Council, by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at a General Business Meeting. The Council shall determine the dues charged of each class of members, but the amount of dues of any class shall not be increased more often than once in four years without approval of a majority of the members present and voting at a General Business Meeting.

**C.** The Treasurer, with the consent of the President, or the Council, by majority vote, shall have the power to waive membership fees in unusual circumstances, such as the inability of individual members to transmit membership dues across national boundaries.

### Article IV: International Representation.

The international nature of the Society shall in so far as possible be reflected in the nomination of its officers and Council members, in membership of all committees, and in the choice of successive sites for biennial meetings.

## **Article V: Officers.**

**A.** Officers of the Society shall be a *President, a Vice-President, a Secretary-General, and a Treasurer.*

The President and Vice President shall be citizens of different countries.

**1.** The President shall be the chief executive officer of the society, responsible for its welfare and for its relations to other learned societies.

**a.** The President shall serve one non-renewable term of two years. At the close of each Biennial Conference the Vice-President shall succeed to the office of President.

**b.** The President shall preside at meetings of the Council and at General Business Meetings, shall designate the chair of all committees, and shall exercise such other powers as the membership may from time to time determine by majority vote of those present and voting at a General Business Meeting.

**c.** In the absence of the Secretary-General, the President may appoint a member of the Council to act as Recorder at meetings of the Council and General Business Meetings. Either the Secretary-General or the Recorder shall post the minutes of the Council and of the General Business Meetings on the ISHR web site.

**d.** The President shall present a report to the Council and to the General Business Meeting dealing with the activities of the Society during the previous two years.

**e.** The President shall nominate to the Council for its approval names of members of a Local Committee and of a Program Committee for each Biennial Conference. The President may appoint, without Council approval, ad hoc committees to make recommendations to the Council on a particular matter.

**f.** In the event of a serious disruption of international communication the President and the Treasurer, acting together if possible, separately if necessary, shall take such steps as they deem necessary to advance the purposes and safeguard the assets of the Society.

**2.** The Vice-President shall perform the functions of the President in the absence or incapacity of that officer, shall serve one two-year term, and shall succeed to the presidency without election. The Vice-President shall be elected by a majority of members present and voting at a General Business Meeting in accordance with procedures described in Article VIII below. In the event of the death, resignation, or incapacity of the Vice-President to succeed to the presidency, the Council shall nominate one or more candidates for President to the General Business Meeting and one of these shall be elected by a majority vote of members present and voting.

**3.** The Treasurer shall be elected by the membership, having been nominated by the Nomination Committee for a term of four years and may be reelected for successive terms. The Treasurer shall, either personally or through a fiscal agent approved by the Council, collect, safeguard, and distribute the funds of the Society according to the provisions of this constitution, shall present reports to meetings of the Council and to the General Business Meeting and serve as needed as an officer of the Society. The question of accepting the Treasurer's report shall be put to the members present at the General Business Meeting, and if a majority of those present and voting approve, it shall be accepted

4. On nomination by the Nominating Committee, the membership shall elect a Secretary-General to serve for a term of four years and may be reelected for successive terms. The Secretary-General shall maintain the records of the Society, record and distribute minutes of all Council and General Business Meetings, facilitate communication with the Society's publics, and serve as needed as an officer of the Society.

#### **Article VI: Council.**

The Council shall exercise such powers of election, nomination, confirmation, and decision as described in this constitution, shall approve in advance arrangements for Biennial Conferences, and shall advise the President and other officers.

A. The Council shall consist of the following voting members: The President; The Vice-President; The Treasurer; The Immediate Past-President; The Secretary-General; The Editor of *Rhetorica*; twelve additional members, serving four-year terms, six to be elected every two years. Such persons serving remaining terms may subsequently be elected to serve one full term on their own.

B. The Council shall meet at least once in every two years, normally on the first day of the Biennial Meeting, and may meet at additional times on call of the President. When Council approval is needed for actions or appointments during intervals between Council meetings, the President may conduct a vote by electronic ballot, but all such ballots must be confirmed at the next regular meeting of the Council. Electronic ballots must include the votes of at least fifteen members of the Council to be considered valid.

C. Minutes of all meetings of the Council shall be taken by the Secretary General or Recorder provided for in *Article V A.4.* above and shall be distributed to all members of the Council electronically.

#### **Article VII: Meetings.**

The Society shall hold a Biennial Conference in alternate years at a site approved by the Council on recommendation of the President. During each Biennial Conference, normally on the last day of the Conference, there shall be a General Business Meeting of members of the Society. The agenda of the General Business Meeting shall include the report of the President, the report of the Treasurer for the approval by the members, the report of the Secretary-General, and the election of officers and members of the Council, as well as additional items requested by the Council. The agenda for the General Business Meeting shall be determined by the President and posted electronically at least 24 hours in advance. Additional items for discussion and vote may be placed upon the agenda by petition of any 5 members present, delivered to the President in advance of the scheduled hour of the General Business Meeting, except that provisions of this constitution shall only be amended as hereinafter provided. The requirement of advanced petition for the addition of items to the agenda is not intended to preclude questions from the floor by any member or any officer of the Society.

#### **Article VIII: Elections.**

A. Immediately after the General Business Meeting the Council shall nominate three persons to serve as members of the Nominating Committee for the election to take place in two years. The three candidates shall be citizens of three different countries. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. Members of the Society present shall then vote by preferential ballot for three of the candidates

nominated and the three with the highest total of votes shall be elected, except that if nominations from the floor have produced two candidates from any one country, only the one with the higher number of votes shall be elected. If only three candidates have been nominated, election may be by voice vote.

**B.** The Nominating Committee shall consist of the three persons elected as described above and of the immediate Past-President, ex officio. The President of the Society shall designate one of these four persons to be Chairman of the Nominating Committee.

**C.** The Nominating Committee shall invite members of the Society to propose candidates for Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary-General, and for membership on the Council and from among these and others of their own choice shall nominate at least one candidate for Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary-General, and for each vacancy to occur on the Council. The Nominating Committee shall determine that each candidate nominated is willing to serve, shall publish its slate of nominations to the Council at least three months in advance of the next Biennial Conference.

**D.** Upon publication of the nomination of the Nominating Committee, additional nominations may be made by petition to the President signed by any ten members of the Society.

**E.** At its meeting at the beginning of each Biennial Conference the Council shall review all nominations made by the nominating Committee and by petition and shall make such additional nominations as it may see fit. The Council may, at its option and by two-thirds vote of those present and voting, endorse one candidate for Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary-General, and not more than three candidates for election to the Council. In making additional nominations and in endorsing candidates the Council shall seek to broaden international representation among the slate of candidates and among officers to be elected.

**F.** At least twenty-four hours before the General Business meeting, the President shall post electronically a list of all candidates nominated for Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary-General, and for vacancies on the Council indicating how many are to be elected, which candidates, if any, have been endorsed by the Council, and the citizenship of each candidate nominated. From among candidates nominated for Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary-General, one shall be elected by majority vote of the members present and voting. From among candidates nominated for the Council a number shall be elected equal to the number of vacancies on the Council by preferential voting by members present and voting. Election shall be by written ballot, except that if the number of candidates nominated does not exceed the number of candidates to be elected the election may be by voice vote.

#### **Article IX: Publications.**

**A.** The Society shall issue a journal, *Rhetorica*, and such other publications as the Council may from time to time authorize.

**B.** The Editor of *Rhetorica* shall be elected by the Council on nomination by the President for a term determined by the Council. The Editor shall name and consult an Editorial Committee which shall be international in membership and representative of the varied interests included in the Society.

#### **Article X: Activities.**

Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the Society shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purpose of the Society. In particular, the Society shall not attempt to influence legislation or participate to any extent in a political campaign for or against any candidate for public office.

**Article XI: Languages.**

The official languages of the Society shall be English, French, German, Italian, Latin, and Spanish.

**Article XII: Assets.**

**A.** No part of the net earnings of the Society shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, officers, or other private persons, except that the Society shall be authorized to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purpose set forth in *Article II*.

**B.** In the event that the Society is dissolved, assets shall be distributed to one or more charitable causes.

**Article XIII: Amendments.**

Any provision in this constitution and bylaws may be amended on recommendation of the Council during a General Business Meeting by a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting. In addition, 10 or more members may petition for an amendment by presenting the proposed wording of such a change to the President in advance of any meeting of the Council. The Council shall review the proposed amendment and shall transmit it to the next General Business Meeting together with a recommendation for or against its approval or together with a substantive proposal. The proposed amendment or the substitute shall require an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting to be adopted. Whenever the constitution and bylaws are amended, the complete text of the constitution and bylaws as in effect shall be published within one year.