

# International Society for the History of Rhetoric Constitution

Adopted 30 June 1977, Zurich, Switzerland  
Amended 2 September 1985, Oxford, England  
Amended 24 July 1993, Turin, Italy  
Amended 3 October 1994, Edinburgh, Scotland

**Article I: Name.** 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.**

1. Membership in the Society is open to any individual subscribing to its aims.
2. Membership dues shall be paid to the Society's fiscal agent as designated by the Council or to the appropriate National Treasurer for transmission to the fiscal agent. 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.
3. At two year intervals the Secretary-General, if one has been appointed, or the Editor of the Newsletter, if there is no incumbent Secretary-General, shall collect from each member and shall publish the following information about each member: preferred title; full name; academic degrees; academic position; area of research or interest.
4. 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.**

1. Officers of the Society shall be a President, an International Vice-President, and a Treasurer. The President and Vice President shall be citizens of different countries.
2. 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 International 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. The President shall appoint a member of the Council to act as Recording Secretary at meetings of the Council and General Business Meetings. The Recording Secretary shall circulate copies of the minutes of the Council and of the General Business Meetings to the officers and Council members. In addition, the Recording Secretary shall, upon request, provide a copy of the minutes of any meeting of the Council of any General Business Meeting to any member of the Society.
  - 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 and including a financial report prepared by the Treasurer. 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.
  - 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 particular matter.
  - F. In the event of a serious disruption of international communication, prolonged for six months or more, 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.
3. The International 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 International 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 International 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.
4. The Treasurer shall be elected by the council for a term of two 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, and shall biennially present a report through the President, to the General Business Meeting for the approval of the members present as provided in Section 2.D above.
5. On nomination by the President, the Council may elect a Secretary-General to serve for such term of office as the Council may determine. The Secretary-General, if one is appointed, shall maintain the list of members and the records of the Society, shall encourage and facilitate correspondence among members, shall seek to enlarge membership in the Society, and shall be responsible for the issuance of the Newsletter, but the Editorship of the Newsletter may be delegated to another person with the approval of the Council. The Secretary-General shall investigate and recommend to the President possible sites for future Biennial Conferences and shall cooperate with the President in long-range planning for the development of the Society.
  6. If no Secretary-General is appointed, the President shall nominate and the Council shall elect an Editor of the Newsletter.

**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.

1. The Council shall consist of the following voting members: The President; The International Vice-President; The Treasurer; The Immediate Past-President; The Secretary-General, if one has been elected, or the Editor of the Newsletter; The Editor of Rhetorica; 12 additional members, serving four-year terms, six to be elected every two years. The election of these Council members shall be conducted as set forth in Article VIII below. Members of the Council shall not be re-nominated or reelected of a second successive term on the Council, but they may be nominated, elected, or appointed to other positions listed above as conferring Council membership. In the event of a vacancy on the Council the President shall nominate and the Council may elect a person to serve out any remaining term in office.
2. 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 mail ballot, but all such ballots must be confirmed at the next regular meeting of the Council.
3. Minutes of all meetings of the Council shall be taken by the Recording Secretary provided for in Article III. Section C, above and shall be distributed to all members of the Council.

**Article VII: Meetings.** The Society shall hold a Biennial Conference in 1985 and in alternate years thereafter at a site approved by the Council on recommendation of the President.

1. 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, 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 at least 24 hours in advance at a place conspicuous to members attending the Biennial Conference. 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.**

1. Immediately after the ratification of this Constitution and at the same General Business Meeting, and biennially thereafter, 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.
2. 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.
3. The Nominating Committee shall, through the Newsletter, invite members of the Society to propose candidates for International Vice-President and for membership on the Council and from among these and others of their own choice shall nominate at least one candidate for International Vice-President 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 in the Newsletter at least three months in advance of the next Biennial Conference, and shall transmit its nominations to the Council.
4. 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.
5. 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 International Vice-President 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.

6. At least twenty-four hours before the General Business meeting and at a place conspicuous to members present at the Biennial Meeting the President shall post a list of all candidates nominated for International Vice-President 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 International Vice-President 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.**

1. The Society shall issue a journal, *Rhetorica*, a Newsletter, and such other publications as the Council may from time to time authorize.
2. 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.
3. The Editor of the Newsletter shall be the Secretary-General, or a person designated by the Secretary-General with the approval of the Council, or if the office of Secretary-General is vacant, shall be elected by the Council on nomination of the President.

**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.**
1. 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.
  2. In the event that the Society is dissolved, assets shall be distributed for one or more charitable purposes.

**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 in the Newsletter within one year.

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