



## **ORGANIZATIONAL BY-LAWS**

SIGMA PHI OMEGA

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC HONOR AND PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY  
IN GERONTOLOGY

REVISED BY-LAWS (Latest Revision 2.12.19)

### ARTICLE I: Name, Purpose, Motto, Colors, Emblem, Term of Existence

Section 1. Name. This organization shall be known as Sigma Phi Omega, The International Academic Honor and Professional Society in Gerontology, Inc., hereinafter in these By-Laws called the “Society.”

Section 2. Purpose. The purpose of the Society shall be to promote scholarship, research, professionalism, friendship, and service to older persons, and to recognize high attainment in the pursuit of academic excellence and professionalism in gerontology.

Section 3. Motto. The motto of the Society shall be “Excellence in gerontology.”

Section 4. Colors. The colors of the Society shall be blue and gold.

Section 5. Emblem. The Emblem of the Society shall be the diagonal display of the Greek letters representing Sigma Phi Omega.

Section 6. Term of Existence. The term of existence of the Society shall be perpetual.

### ARTICLE II: Chapters

Section 1. Criteria to Establish Chapters. Chapters may be established at institutions of higher education that have officially designated Gerontology or Aging Studies academic programs. These designated institutions may include colleges, schools, universities, or divisions. (Colleges are institutions of higher education and include community, junior, senior, and professional colleges or schools. Colleges must offer undergraduate and/or graduate gerontology programs of study leading to associate, baccalaureate, or graduate level degrees, certificates, or other credentials in gerontology in order to be eligible to establish a chapter.) No fewer than three individual members shall be necessary to establish a chapter.

Section 2. Chapter Designation. Each chapter shall be designated by its college/university/ international or virtual affiliation.

Section 3. Charter Chapters. Charter chapters will be those approved within two years of adoption of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Society (not later than December 1,1982).

Section 4. Petition to Establish Chapter. The petition to establish a chapter shall be sent to the international office of the Society for consideration by the Board of Directors (hereinafter referred to as the “Board”). If the petition is approved by two-thirds vote of the Board the chapter shall be established.

Section 5. Inactive Chapters. A chapter may be declared inactive when the college or unit in which the chapter is located has failed to initiate any new members into the Society for three consecutive years and/or the Chapter Advisor has not paid their membership for 12 consecutive months and not designated a replacement advisor.

Section 6. Reinstatement of Inactive Chapter. In the event that a chapter becomes inactive, the chapter must reapply to the Board for reinstatement. Reinstatement will require a two-thirds vote of the Board as stated in Article II, Section 4 and the payment of a reinstatement fee.

### ARTICLE III: Membership: Categories and Dues

Section 1. Membership Categories. The Society shall consist of student, faculty, professional, emeritus, and honorary memberships.

Section 2. Student Membership. The student membership shall consist of the following academic levels:

- 1) Undergraduate Associate of Arts Degree and Baccalaureate Degree Candidates in gerontology/aging studies or related fields. (Related fields means a concentration in gerontology or aging studies within a discipline or professional degree program other than gerontology);
- 2) Graduate Degree Candidates. Candidates for graduate degrees in gerontology or related field of study;
- 3) Certificate in Gerontology/Aging Studies Candidates. Certificate programs may be at the associate of arts, baccalaureate or graduate levels.

Section 3. Faculty Membership. Faculty involved in teaching, research and service in the field of aging in institutions of higher education are eligible for membership.

Section 4. Professional membership. The professional membership shall include those persons who possess at least an associate degree. They may have been elected into the society while they were students or did not have a chapter to affiliate with while they were in school. They shall exemplify high standards of professional service to older adults.

Section 5. Professional Members Rights & Privileges. Professional members shall have all the rights and privileges of active membership including the right to vote and hold

office.

Section 6. Emeritus Membership. The Emeritus member shall include those who have retired from their career OR have a minimum of 15 years paid membership into SPO. Members wishing to apply for Emeritus status shall complete an Emeritus application and submit it to the Board for consideration.

Designations of Emeritus membership include:

Emeritus Member and Emeritus Fellow. All former Board members, Chapter Presidents, and Chapter Advisors will receive the Emeritus Fellow designation. All other members will receive Emeritus Member status upon Board approval. Members granted Emeritus status shall be designated as Emeritus Member or as Emeritus Fellow by the Board after reviewing the members Emeritus Application. Dues go to President's Paper Award.

Section 7. Honorary Members. Honorary membership shall include the following:

- 1) Individuals who have given evidence of distinguished scholarship and/or have rendered distinguished service to the field;
- 2) Honorary members do not pay dues and shall not have the right to vote or hold office;
- 3) Nominations for honorary membership shall be submitted in writing to the Board of the Society. A two-thirds vote of the Board is necessary for an affirmative decision.

Section 8. Charter Members. Charter members of the chapter shall consist of all members who were elected to membership within one year of the date the initial chapter charter is granted.

Section 9. Change of Residence/Chapter Affiliation. Active members of the Society who change residence shall be entitled to affiliation with another chapter within the same respective membership category.

Section 10. Annual Dues. Periodically the Board of Directors will review the amount of annual dues payable to the National Office by its members. Any recommended change shall be subject to ratification by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Board of Directors before they will be implemented.

Section 11. Payment of Dues. Dues shall be payable annually with the membership. Members will be notified by email one week out from expiration date. Members will receive a second notification 1 minute after membership expiration. At that time, the member can renew membership. Membership must be active to serve in office and vote in Society business.

Section 12. Termination of Active Membership. When any member fails to pay his/her dues following a period of three (3) months after the scheduled due date, he/she will be notified of his/her delinquent status. Individuals wishing reinstatement of their active status may pay

their dues at any time during the 12 months following expiration. After 12 months, the member will be removed from the chapter.

#### ARTICLE IV: Eligibility for Membership

Section 1. Categories of Membership Eligibility. The following shall be deemed eligible for election by the chapter to active membership of the Society: students (undergraduate and graduate), faculty, professionals, emeritus, and individuals meeting the requirements for honorary membership.

Section 2. Undergraduate Students. Student enrolled in a gerontology or aging studies program leading to an associate of arts or a baccalaureate degree or award of a certificate or other credential in gerontology are eligible candidates for election into the Society provided they satisfy the following requirements:

- 1) They shall be in at least their second term of enrollment;
- 2) They shall have maintained an overall scholarship average of 3.3 or better (using a 4.0 as highest) while enrolled in their gerontology/aging studies program;
- 3) They shall have shown capacity for and commitment to leadership and achievement in gerontology and their related fields of professional study.

Section 3. Graduate Students. Students who are enrolled in gerontology/aging studies or related fields leading to graduate and professional degrees and/or professional certificate programs in gerontology/aging studies are eligible candidates for election into the Society provided they satisfy the following requirements

- 1) They shall have completed the equivalent of not less than one full academic term of courses as approved by the degree-granting institution;
- 2) They shall have maintained an overall scholarship average of 3.5 or better (using 4.0 as highest) while enrolled in the program of study;
- 3) They shall have shown capacity for and commitment to leadership and achievement in the field of gerontology/aging studies and their related professional areas.

Section 4. Faculty Members. Faculty eligible for membership shall consist of those individuals who have given evidence of distinguished scholarship and service to the field of gerontology and who teach or do research in the field of gerontology/aging studies at their respective institutions.

Section 5. Professional Members. The following shall be deemed eligible for professional membership in the Society: Professionals, with at least an associate degree and who may not

have had an available chapter when they were a student as well as student members who have graduated with a minimum of an associate degree. All professional members will exemplify high standards of service to older persons

Section 6. Emeritus Members. Designations of Emeritus membership include: Emeritus Member and Emeritus Fellow. All former Board members, Chapter Presidents, and Chapter Advisors will receive the Emeritus Fellow designation. All other members will receive Emeritus Member status upon Board approval. Members granted Emeritus status shall be designated as Emeritus Member or as Emeritus Fellow by the Board after reviewing the members Emeritus Application. Dues go to President's Paper Award.

Section 7. Honorary Members. The following shall be deemed eligible for honorary membership in the Society: Persons who have given evidence of distinguished scholarship and who have rendered distinguished service to the field of gerontology may be nominated to honorary membership in the Society by any chapter or any member of the Board. Nominations, including qualifications of the nominee, shall be submitted in writing to the President of the Society at least three months prior to the annual meeting of the Society. The President shall transmit any such nominations and credentials to the members of the Board at least one month prior to the annual meeting.

#### ARTICLE V: Initiation of New Members

Section 1. Qualified candidates for membership in the Society shall become members upon meeting the criteria as defined by the individual chapter By-Laws and national membership eligibility requirements.

Section 2. Notice of Election to Chapter Membership. Notice of election to chapter membership shall be made in writing by the chapter president to all candidates.

Section 3. Initiation Procedures. Successful candidates for membership shall be initiated by the respective chapter, using procedures established by the Board and available to all chapter contact persons at [www.sigmaphiomega.org](http://www.sigmaphiomega.org).

Section 4. Membership Certificate and Pin. A membership certificate and pin shall be issued to each member at the time of official initiation. The certificate shall be signed by the International president, the Chapter president, and the Chapter Contact or official so designated.

#### ARTICLE VI: International Officers: Number, Term of Office, Duties; Board Composition and Duties

Section 1. Number and Term of Office. The international officers shall consist of a President, either a President-Elect or an Immediate Past-President, Secretary, Treasurer, International/Virtual Representative, three Board Members-at-Large, Student Representative and, when available, an Emeritus Fellow Representative. Officers shall take office immediately at the conclusion of the annual meeting and serve through the end of their multi-

year term. The President shall be elected each odd-numbered year. The person shall serve as President-Elect during the year of election, as President for two years, and as Immediate Past-President the year after his/her presidential term is completed. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected for two-year terms in alternate years. Three Board Members-at-Large shall be elected to serve staggered three-year terms with one Member-at-Large elected to the Board each year. The International/Virtual Representative will be appointed in even-number years and will serve on the Board for 2 years. The Emeritus Fellow Representative will be appointed in odd-number years and will serve on the board for 2 years.

Section 2. President Duties. The President shall provide leadership of the Society and perform those duties which pertain to the office of the presidency, including Board correspondence and recruitment of new chapters and members. The President shall appoint all committees except the Nominations and Elections Committee, which is chaired by the Past-President. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees except the Nominations and Elections Committees.

Section 3. Past-President Duties. The Past-President shall work closely with the President to ensure a continuity of leadership. The Past-President serves as Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee. The Past-President is also responsible for reviewing the organizational bylaws and proposing any amendments deemed necessary.

Section 4. President-Elect Duties. The President-Elect shall perform the duties of the President in his/her absence. The President-Elect shall work with the President on program activities at the national meetings and shall serve closely with the President for a smooth transition to the presidency after the initial term of office. The President-Elect serves as Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee.

Section 5. Secretary Duties. The Secretary shall keep records of the Society's business and distribute the minutes of the Board meetings within one month after each Board meeting. The Secretary will also perform related duties as assigned by the Board.

Section 6. Treasurer Duties. The treasurer shall keep records of monies received by and expended on behalf of the Society; and report the financial status of the Society at the annual business meeting and meetings of the Board. The treasurer shall file all IRS forms prior to deadlines as determined by the IRS. The monies, books and vouchers shall at all times be under the supervision of the Board and subject to its inspection and control.

Funds may be drawn upon the signatures of the Treasurer, President, or designated agent of the Society. At the completion of the Treasurer's term of office, all books, monies and other property shall be delivered to the Treasurer's successor.

Section 7. Treasurer-Elect Duties: The Treasurer-Elect shall perform the duties of the Treasurer in his/her absence. The Treasurer-Elect shall work with the Treasurer on financial activities at the national meetings and shall serve closely with the Treasurer for a smooth transition to the Treasurer after the initial one-year term of office. The Treasurer-Elect will serve as Co-Chair of the Finance Committee with the Treasurer and will not serve as a voting member of the Board until transition to the role of Treasurer after one year as Treasurer-Elect.

Section 8. Members-at-Large Duties. Three Board Members-at-Large will serve staggered three-year terms with one Member-at-Large elected to the Board each year.

Section 9. Student Representative. A student who is registered for undergraduate, graduate or professional studies at an academic institution may become the student representative of SPO. When students apply for the open board member position they must indicate that they are members of an academic program and a current member of SPO. Students must commit to at least one year of service as an executive board member and may continue on the executive board for no longer than 3 consecutive years in the same position, unless the SPO executive board grants an extension. The student representative is provided with the privileges of being a member of the executive board, holding an executive vote, attending the annual executive board meetings each spring, and conference calls throughout the year. The student representative maintains the SPO social media pages.

Section 10: International-Virtual Representative Duties. The International/Virtual Representative will be appointed in even-number years and will serve on the Board for 2 years.

Section 11: Emeritus Fellow Representative Duties. The Emeritus Fellow Representative will be appointed by the Board in odd-number years and serve on the board for 2 years.

Section 12. Board Composition and Duties. The composition of the Board shall include the President, Past-President or President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Student Representative, International/Virtual representative, Emeritus Fellow Representative, and three Board Members-at-Large. The Board shall be the governing body of the Society. It shall transact all business relating to the Society and shall meet at the annual meeting and as often as deemed necessary in order to conduct the business of the Society.

Section 13. Board Vacancies. Whenever a vacancy occurs from among the elected members of the Board of Directors as a result of death, resignation, or other cause, it shall be filled without undue delay by a simple majority vote by e-ballot of the remaining members of the Board of Directors, unless otherwise stated in the organizational Bylaws. The election shall be held within sixty (60) days after the occurrence of the vacancy. The person chosen by the Board of Directors shall hold office until the next regularly scheduled election.

Section 14. Removal of Board Members. Any member of the Board of Directors may be removed for cause, including non-attendance, at any time, by a vote of two-thirds(2/3) of the designated active chapter contacts of the society. Vacancies so created shall be filled in accordance with Section 9.

## ARTICLE VII: International Office

Section 1. International Office: Function. An international Office shall be established by the Board to issue charters to new chapters, make arrangements for the installation of chapters, keep records of members of the Society and issue new member certificates and pins. The international Office prepares an annual report on the Society's activities and status for the Board and chapter contacts. It handles inquiries and correspondence necessary to assure excellence in service to members.

## ARTICLE VIII: Nominations and Elections

Section 1. Nominations and Elections Committee. The Nominations and Elections Committee is chaired by the Past-President or the President-Elect and has two additional members appointed by the President with approval of the Board. The Committee must pre-contact each nominee to ensure acceptance of the nomination.

Section 2. Election Ballot. The national Secretary shall prepare and electronically forward to each chapter contact an e-ballot for election prior to the annual meeting. A majority of votes cast shall elect the national officers.

Section 3. Chapter Voting. Each chapter shall have one vote. To be acceptable, e-ballots must be received within 14 days from the date on which the e-ballot is electronically communicated to the chapter contact by the national Secretary.

Section 4. Notification of Election Results. National officers elected shall be notified immediately in writing of their election and shall take office at the conclusion of the annual meeting and serve through the end of their multi-year term.

## ARTICLE IX: International Committees

Section 1. Standing Committees. The International President, as soon as possible after elections, shall appoint the following standing committees of the society: Annual Program Committee (President as Chair); Nominations and Elections Committee (Immediate Past-President or President-Elect as Chair); Membership and Marketing Committee (Secretary as Chair); Finance Committee (Treasurer as Chair); Awards Committee (President as Chair), and Student Committee (Student Board Member as Chair). All Committees will maintain a notebook with an annual calendar of scheduled activities, minutes documenting committee conference calls and meetings, and any other relevant materials.

Section 2. Ad Hoc Committees. The President shall appoint ad hoc committees as are deemed necessary by the President and/or the Board in order to accomplish special assignments.

Section 3. Annual Program Committee. The Committee will develop the SPO Presidential Symposium; encourage SPO members to attend Society sessions, and serve as reviewers for Society sessions, including student submissions.

Section 4. Nominations and Elections Committee. This committee will prepare a slate of candidates for the Society to fill open board positions. The slate must be approved by the Board and voted on by the membership.

Section 5. Membership and Marketing Committee. The Membership and Marketing Committee will work to make the Society more visible and to attract eligible members. Specific roles and responsibilities include providing input on the content and design of the brochure, newsletter, website and other organizational products.



Section 6. Finance Committee. This Committee will review records of monies received by and expended on behalf of the Society, project the Society budget for the upcoming year, develop proposals for increasing Society revenues, and make recommendations for addressing any financial concerns that may arise.

Section 7. Awards Committee. This Committee is charged with soliciting nominations from the Society for awards being offered, developing selection criteria, reviewing applications to judge merit and selecting the award recipient.

Section 8. Student Committee. This Committee is charged with coordinating with the Annual Meeting partner to enhance opportunities for student scholarship, participation in professional forums, and development of student sessions.

ARTICLE X: Chapter By-Laws, Chapter Contact, Officers and Responsibilities and Filing of Chapter Annual Report

Section 1. Chapter By-Laws. Each chapter shall develop By-Laws in compliance with those of the Society.

Section 2. Election of Chapter Officers and Submission of Officers' Names to National Office. The Chapter shall elect officers to carry out the official business of the chapter and the Society. These officers may be elected using procedures as stated in Article VIII of these By-Laws. Following the election of chapter officers, the chapter shall report to the International office the names and addresses of the chapter officers.

Section 3. Responsibilities of Chapter Officers and Installation of New Members. The chapter officers shall be responsible for planning an activity calendar for the year which shall be distributed to all chapter members.

There shall be an installation of new members of the chapter at least once a year. Procedures for the installation of new members of the chapter are outlined and available from the International Office.

Section 4. Duties of Chapter Contact. Each chapter shall have a designated Chapter Contact that shall be responsible for all correspondence between the International Office and chapter members. The Chapter Contact must be a faculty member of the Chapter and maintain an active SPO membership. The Chapter Contact may delegate the authority for correspondence to one of the Chapter officers, however, all correspondence must be sent through the Chapter Contact's office. The Chapter Contact, or designated delegate, shall order and receive certificates and pins, and be responsible for distributing them to new members in a timely manner, and in all cases within the academic term in which they were received.

Section 5. Duties of Chapter Secretary. The Chapter Secretary, through the office of the Chapter contact, shall report the names and addresses of its officers after each election and whenever there is a change in the officers or Chapter Contact of the chapter for any reason. The Chapter Secretary shall also send an annual report to the International Office.

Section 6. Filing of Chapter Annual Report With International Office. The International Office sends the Annual Report Form to the Chapter Contact by March 15. Each chapter shall file an annual report of its activities with the International Office by April 30. A chapter that fails to submit an annual report by the filing deadline forfeits its annual rebates.

ARTICLE XI: The Annual Meeting

Section 1. Annual Meeting Time and Place. A meeting of the Society shall be held annually at such time and place as may be determined by the Board

Section 2. Chapter Representative at Annual Meeting. Each active chapter shall be entitled to one vote by a duly appointed representative or the Chapter Contact. The chapter representatives attending the annual meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Section 3. Credentials Committee Duties. A credentials committee shall be appointed by the Society President to oversee and validate the proper representation of chapters. Any misrepresentation of the membership by chapters shall be brought before the Board for its action.

ARTICLE XII: Parliamentary Authority

Section 1. Robert's Rules of Order. The rules contained in the latest revised edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Society in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the By-Laws of the Society.

ARTICLE XIII: Amendments

Section 1. Votes Required to Amend By-Laws. Amendments to the By-Laws shall require an affirmative vote by the majority of the Board and an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the total number of active chapters.

Section 2. By-Laws Amendment Procedures. Amendments to the Bylaws of Sigma Phi Omega may be proposed by the Board or by any active chapter for review by the Board and membership. All amendments shall be presented to each active chapter through electronic communication with supporting rationale and opportunity for comments and input. Balloting on all amendments shall be by e-ballot. To be acceptable, e-ballots must be received within 14 days from the date on which the e-ballot is electronically communicated. The proposed amendment shall go into effect if and when it receives favorable action by two-thirds of the total number of active chapters.

ARTICLE XIV: The Society Year

Section 1. Business and Fiscal Year. The Society's business and fiscal years shall be from June 1 through May 31.