

**CONSTITUTION  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR HUMOR STUDIES**

**Amended by online vote of the members, December 2011,  
according to proposed changes provided on the ISHS website.**

**ARTICLE I: NAME**

Section 1: The name of this society shall be "The International Society for Humor Studies" (ISHS).

**ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

Section 1: The purpose of the Society shall be to promote, stimulate and encourage the interdisciplinary study of humor; to support and cooperate with local, national, and international organizations having similar purposes; to organize and arrange meetings; and to issue and encourage publications concerning the purpose of the society.

Section 2: The Society shall conduct activities solely for scholarly purposes.

**ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1: There shall be two classes of Members: Regular Members and Associate Members.

Section 2: Membership is open to all those interested in the academic study of humor who subscribe to the payment of annual dues in accordance with Article VII. Regular members shall receive full membership benefits. Associate members shall receive membership benefits, except for regular subscriptions to the Society's journal and print publications.

Section 3: Membership shall not become effective until the Executive Secretary-Treasurer has received the year's dues, such dues establishing membership for each calendar year, and being based upon the production and distribution costs of the Society's journal, in accordance with Article VII.

**ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS**

Section 1: The officers of the Society shall be a President, Immediate Past-President, Convenor, Convenor-Designate, and an Executive Secretary-Treasurer.

The person submitting a proposal to host an international ISHS humor conference which is accepted by the Executive Board is designated as Convenor-Designate for the year before the Conference is held. This person serves as Convenor during the year that he or she hosts the conference. The President serves for two years, and then in the office of Immediate Past-President for two years. The terms of all offices held shall run concurrent with the calendar year/s. The office of Executive Secretary-Treasurer shall be filled by a qualified person nominated by the President and confirmed by a majority of the Executive Board (in accordance with ARTICLE V). Each Executive Secretary-Treasurer shall receive a five year appointment, which can be renewed. The editorial offices for the Society's Journal and Newsletter shall be filled in accordance with Article VIII Sections 1, 2 and 5.

Section 2: Resignation: Persons holding any of these offices shall serve their terms of office unless a) they, for whatever reason, decide that they can no longer satisfactorily carry out the duties of the office, in which case they shall submit, to the President or such other officer as may be appropriate and in writing, a statement of intent to resign, resignation to become effective thirty days following the date of receipt of such statement by the President; or b) the President or such other officer as may be appropriate shall, having received statements of consensus from a two-thirds majority of members of the Executive Board voting within a reasonable stipulated period of time, call in writing for an officer's resignation, which shall be effective immediately.

Section 3: The officers shall have the powers and duties customarily incident to their respective offices in similar organizations and/or societies, with the addition of such as shall be specifically delegated to them by the Executive Board, and these must include:

Section 3A: President: The President shall preside over the business of the Society and chair the meetings of the Executive Board. The President will give a presidential address at the annual ISHS conference and will have the option of working with the Convenor to plan a "President's Session" or a "President's Strand" for the conference. The President shall chair an annual business meeting of members, which shall take place during the general conference. In addition, the President shall actively work to further communication and enlightenment among humor scholars and to enhance respect and understanding for the academic study of humor.

Section 3B: Immediate Past-President: The Immediate Past-President shall assist the President and the Executive Board in conducting the business of the Society so as to ensure continuity, and shall also serve as Co-Chair of any Awards Committee (see Article IX Section 2). If the President is for any reason unable to discharge his/her duties, the Immediate Past President shall serve in that role until either the next biennial election or the outcome of nomination and election procedures to fill a casual vacancy held under Article X Section 1, whichever is the sooner.

Section 3C: Convenor: The Convenor is responsible for the Society's general conference and although he or she may request assistance and support from the ISHS President and from other members of the Society, the Convenor has final responsibility for both program matters and local host arrangements.

Section 3D: Convenor-Designate: The Convenor-Designate works with the Executive Board and the Convenor to learn what is involved in hosting the general conference and to make advance preparations.

Section 3E: Executive Secretary-Treasurer: The Executive Secretary-Treasurer shall keep and distribute to Society Members the minutes of Society meetings, including the meetings of the Executive Board; shall ensure that the membership is informed of the date and place of the annual meeting of members at least one hundred and twenty (120) days prior to that meeting; shall by mail or e-mail distribute every second year or as required under these Articles a list of nominations for election as the Society's officers and Executive Board members according to ARTICLE X; and shall be responsible for conducting the voting on these nominations and on any proposed amendments to the constitution of the Society in accordance with ARTICLE XI. The Executive Secretary-Treasurer shall promote membership, collect and disperse the Society's monies, and make available the Society's books for review by an "accountant of record," or by an individual or firm if appointed by the President in accordance with ARTICLE VI. The Executive Secretary-Treasurer shall report the financial status of the Society to the Members at their annual meeting at the conference and shall make that report available for inclusion in the Society's Newsletter or Journal.

## **ARTICLE V: EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Section 1: Except as otherwise provided by these By-laws, the management of the affairs of the Society shall be vested in an Executive Board.

Section 2: The Executive Board shall consist of: the President, Immediate Past President, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, and four members-at-large, as voting members. The Executive Board shall also include the Editor of the Society's journal, HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research, the Newsletter Editor, the Convenor, the Convenor-Designate, and the Society's Historian/Archivist as non-voting ex-officio members. The President shall act as Chair of the Executive Board. Four voting members shall constitute a quorum of the Executive Board.

Section 3: Each second year, at the time of election of the incoming President, two Board members-at-large shall be elected for four-year terms of office.

Section 4: The Executive Board shall hold an annual Board meeting. The annual Board meeting shall be held at the Society's General Conference in years when the Conference is held. Members of the Executive Board are encouraged to be in close contact with each other on ISHS matters via e-mail and regular mail. The President bears a special responsibility for initiating e-mail communications with members of the Executive Board.

- Section 5: In the event that members of the Executive Board cannot attend the annual Board meeting, they may appoint another Executive Board member as their proxy to cast votes in their name. Such proxy appointments must be in writing and must be delivered to the Society's Executive Secretary in advance of the meeting.
- Section 6: In the event that an elected member of the Executive Board cannot fill his/her term of office, the Board member shall present his or her resignation to the President in writing. Upon the acceptance of such a resignation, the President shall appoint a Member to fill the vacant position on the Executive Board.
- Section 7: Except as otherwise provided by law and these Articles, decisions of the Executive Board shall be by majority vote of those members of the Executive Board voting. Decisions may be made either at a meeting or by e-mail.

#### **ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS**

- Section 1: There shall be an annual meeting of the Members of the Society at each year's general Conference. In the event that the Society does not hold its general Conference in a given year, the annual meeting of the Members of the Society shall be held at a place and time set at the discretion of the ISHS Executive Board. Prior to this meeting, the Board shall hold an annual Board meeting as required under ARTICLE V, Section 4. The President, in conjunction with the appropriate officers of the Society, shall designate the time and place of both meetings. The President, in conjunction with the Executive Secretary-Treasurer, shall arrange the order of business at these meetings.
- Section 2: The Executive Board of the Society shall present at the annual meeting of the Members a report on the last complete calendar year, verified by the President and Executive Secretary-Treasurer, or by a majority of the members of the Executive Board. The Executive Secretary-Treasurer shall make available to the meeting on request a current Membership list. This report shall be filed with the records of the Society and an abstract thereof entered in the minutes of the annual meeting of the Members at which the report is presented. The President may appoint an "accountant of record," who shall not be a member of the Board, to act as an auditor, and who shall examine the annual financial report prepared by the Executive Secretary-Treasurer under Article IV 3F prior to the annual meeting of the Members, and who shall express an opinion thereon in writing at the annual meeting of the Members.
- Section 3: The Board may sponsor other meetings or symposia which contribute to the purposes of the Society.

#### **ARTICLE VII: DUES AND FINANCES**

- Section 1: The amount of the annual Membership dues shall be determined from time to time by majority vote of the Executive Board, having regard to the production and distribution costs of the Society's journal and other publications. Differential dues may if necessary be approved by the Board for Members resident outside the USA and for other classes of persons such as students.
- Section 2: Membership dues are payable on the first day of each calendar year.

#### **ARTICLE VIII: PUBLICATIONS**

- Section 1: There shall be a Newsletter published on a regular basis, such basis to be determined from time to time by the Executive Board. The Editor of the Newsletter shall be appointed by the Society's President, upon the recommendation of the outgoing Newsletter Editor, and confirmed by a majority vote of the Executive Board.
- Section 2: The journal of the Society shall be Humor: International Journal of Humor Research, published by an appropriate publisher under a contract determined from time to time by the Executive Board, on the advice of the Editor of the journal. The founding publisher of the journal is "Mouton de Gruyter" Press. (In the case that the Association or the Publisher decides to terminate this agreement, it shall be done by giving one year's notice). Each new Editor of the Journal shall be appointed and confirmed by a majority vote of the Executive Board and serve at the discretion of the Board. The term of Editor shall be for five

years but may be extended by a majority vote of the Board. The appointment or reappointment of an editor should be conducted one year before the current Editor's term expires.

Section 3: Other publications may be approved from time to time if considered desirable by the Executive Board.

Section 4: All Regular Members shall receive an annual subscription to the Society's journal and to the Newsletter and other official publications of the Society, subject to the current financial status of the Society. Associate members shall receive the Society's electronic publications, but not a regular subscription to the Society's journal and other print publications.

Section 5: The Editor of the Society's journal shall appoint as necessary a Book Review Editor, who serves at the Journal Editor's discretion.

Section 6: The Editor shall appoint and terminate the appointment of persons to a standing Editorial Board designed to assist in the production and dissemination of a journal of high academic standing.

#### **ARTICLE IX: COMMITTEES**

Section 1: Standing Committees:

Nominating Committee: The two officers of the Executive Board retiring in an election year (the Immediate Past President and the Immediate Past Chair/Convenor), together with the two retiring members-at-large of the Executive Board will constitute the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee is responsible for the preparation of a list of nominees and supporting statements for the elected positions of the Society in accordance with ARTICLE IV, Section 1, ARTICLE V, Section 3, and ARTICLE X.

Section 2: Ad Hoc Committees: The Convenor may appoint ad hoc committees for such purposes as oversight of the conference program, to assist in getting grants for supporting attendance, or awarding scholarships at the general conference. At their discretion, the President and the Immediate Past President and the Convenor may constitute an Awards Committee to devise awards or select recipients of awards designed to promote the study of humor.

#### **ARTICLE X: NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

Section 1: The Nominating Committee shall present a list of at least two nominations for each position of incoming officer and Executive Board member in the appropriate years to the Executive Secretary-Treasurer for elections which shall be held after the general conference and meeting of Members, but before the close of the calendar year. The Executive Secretary-Treasurer shall distribute a ballot to each eligible Member, containing the list of nominees and positions and allowing no less than thirty (30) days before the close of the ballot. Additional nominations may be made in writing to the Executive Secretary-Treasurer by any ten (10) Members of the Society at any reasonable time prior to the distribution of the ballots, provided that the candidate's written permission is received.

Section 2: In the case of the death or resignation of a President or an elected Board Member-at-Large (as described under Article IV, Section 2), balloting to fill the open position may be done at any time with appropriate notice by mail or e-mail, or at the annual meeting of Members, in which case nominations may be accepted both from the Nominating Committee and from the floor if the individual is present and agrees to be nominated.

Section 3: Except as provided for in Section 1 above, the voting in all elections for officers and Board members shall be accomplished by mail or e-mail, continue for at least 30 days, and end on a date set by the Executive Secretary-Treasurer. The ballot distributed by the Executive Secretary-Treasurer shall include, but not be limited to: (a) a list of candidates for each office or Board member position, and (b) a brief statement by each candidate expressing his or her qualifications for the office, a summary of his or her publications, and a report of his or her professional activities. It may include other pertinent

information on candidates and offices, as long as the additions are the same for each candidate for each office.

Section 4: For all mail elections, the Executive Secretary-Treasurer shall keep a record of all votes cast for President and Board Member-at-Large, and at the end of the balloting period, shall count the votes for each open position. The Presidential candidate and two Board Member candidates who receive the most votes cast for their respective open offices shall be declared the winners of those offices.

#### **ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS**

Section 1: Amendments to these Articles shall be accomplished by a two-thirds majority of the Members of the Society voting on such changes.

Section 2: Voting shall be accomplished by mail or e-mail ballot to ensure that to the extent possible each Member has an equal opportunity to voice an opinion. The deadline for return of ballots shall be 30 days from the postmark on the date of mailing.

Section 3: Amendments may be proposed by: (a) a majority of the Executive Board, (b) a majority of Members present at an annual meeting of the Members, or (c) by any ten (10) Members of the Society, when presented in writing to the Executive Secretary-Treasurer.

Section 4: Ballots shall be distributed to all Members of the Society who are in good standing by the Executive Secretary-Treasurer. Ballots shall include a summary of the arguments in favor of or opposed to the changes in questions.

#### **ARTICLE XII: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

Section 1: Roberts Rules of Order, Revised shall govern the procedures of Society meetings, except where such rules manifestly conflict with ISHS Articles, in which case, ISHS Articles take precedence.

## **WORKING RULES APPENDED TO THE ISHS CONSTITUTION**

Adopted by the ISHS Executive Board and subject to amendment by the Board from time to time.

### **GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE ISHS CONFERENCES (Revised January 2012)**

#### **A. OBJECTIVES**

1. The International Society for Humor Studies shall hold a general Conference that supports the advancement of humor research in all academic and professional disciplines.
2. As far as practical, conference sites shall be representative of the ISHS membership, the majority of whom live in North America. Until the membership profile changes, this means that at least half of the conferences should be held in North America. In odd-numbered years, preference will be given to conference proposals from the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean; in even-numbered years, preference will be given to proposals from regions such as Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and Australia. In the even-numbered years, an effort should be made to move between the different regions of the world outside of North America. If for a particular year no acceptable conference proposal is received, the Society may omit meeting that year.

#### **B. PROCESS**

1. At each annual meeting of the Executive Board, the Board will entertain proposals for conferences three years into the future. The Board will endeavor to make a decision on a conference site shortly after its annual meeting to allow conference organizers the opportunity to begin their plans as early as possible.
2. The Executive Board will answer questions and offer informal advice to people interested in proposing conferences more than three years in the future. However, each Board will leave decisions on conferences in particular years to the appropriate Executive Board elected to make such decisions. Thus the 2008 Executive Board normally would make a commitment only for the 2011 meeting, and so on.
3. Individuals who wish to host an ISHS Conference should consult with the Executive Secretary-Treasurer to obtain the guidelines and procedures for submitting a Conference proposal. The Executive Secretary-Treasurer will make available in either paper or electronic form (or both) at least one proposal from a previous year for guidance.
4. Conference proposals should be submitted to the Executive Secretary-Treasurer well in advance of the Board's annual meeting, typically held in June or July, and should include the following information:
  - The name of the proposed Conference Convenor along with that individual's curriculum vita, showing scholarly contributions in humor studies
  - A description of the conference site
  - An outline of a conference program with dates of sessions and descriptions of notable presentations, activities, and/or events
  - An overview of the planned registration process with a fee schedule for members, nonmembers, and students
  - Tentative information about housing, costs, meals, etc.
  - A revenue-cost analysis showing how registration fees and other sources of income will cover anticipated Conference expenses
  - Procedures for refereeing and selecting papers
  - Procedures for making awards and grants
  - Letters of support from proposed host agency or institution
  - Letters of support from any cooperating agencies, institutions and/or individuals
5. The ISHS Executive Secretary-Treasurer will notify the individual(s) selected to host an ISHS Conference shortly after the Board makes its decision.

### **C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CONFERENCE CONVENOR AND ORGANIZERS**

1. The one person selected as the Conference's Convenor shall serve a three-year term as an ISHS officer (i.e. as Convenor-elect, Convenor, and Past Convenor). Conference convenors should work with the ISHS President and the Executive Secretary-Treasurer to communicate with the media and scholars in such a way as to help promote humor studies. A Convenor may elect to share his/her responsibilities with a Co-Convenor, but this will not increase any of the voting rights of the office of Convenor on the Executive Board or any other ISHS governing body.
2. The Conference Convenor must develop the Conference so that it is completely self-supporting, with the host institution doing whatever is feasible to keep costs low so as to encourage attendance. Conference organizers are entirely responsible for the funding of their ISHS Conference, and under no circumstances will ISHS accept liability for any financial losses sustained by conference organizers.
3. The President and Executive Secretary shall establish a Conference Advisory Committee to assist Conference Convenors in their development of the general Conference. The Convenor shall consult with the Committee to maintain expected standards.
4. The Conference Convenor shall serve as the Chair of the ISHS Awards Committee which shall include the ISHS Executive Secretary-Treasurer, two additional ISHS Board members, and an organizer of an ISHS endorsed seminar or workshop. This Committee will decide on the Scholarly Contribution and Graduate Student Awards to be presented at the Conference.
5. At the completion of the general Conference, the Conference Convenor shall provide a written final report on the Conference to the ISHS Executive Secretary-Treasurer. This final report should provide the following information on the Conference:
  - An overview of the Conference program, including notable presentations, awards, events, and activities
  - An accounting of Conference participants, including the numbers of ISHS members, nonmembers, students, volunteer, and journalists who attended
  - A financial analysis, showing the income received from all sources and the particular and overall Conference expenses
  - A description of media coverage
  - An assessment of the Conference's successes and challenges

### **D. RECOGNITION**

Because of the heavy work involved in organizing and hosting a conference, the International Society for Humor Studies, its officers and the Executive Board shall do whatever they can to show appreciation to the Convenor and to record that appreciation formally such that it contributes to promoting the individual's long-term career goals.

## **WORKING RULES APPENDED TO THE ISHS CONSTITUTION**

Adopted by the ISHS Executive Board and subject to amendment by the Board from time to time.

### **PROCEDURES FOR THE SELECTION OF ISHS AWARDS (Adopted October 2005)**

#### **A. OBJECTIVE**

Each year ISHS shall endeavor to recognize outstanding scholars and promising graduate students conducting research in humor studies with either a Scholarly Contribution or a Graduate Student Award.

#### **B. SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTION AWARDS (SCA)**

- 1. Eligibility:** SCAs shall be awarded to scholars who have made outstanding contributions to humor research through high quality publications, conference presentations, and other scholarly activities. Particular consideration will be given to researchers doing important work but lacking international recognition due to limited opportunities to travel or to publish outside of their region of the world.
- 2. Process of Selection:** The ISHS Awards Committee shall invite and consider formal nominations (including self-nominations) from ISHS members for the Scholarly Contribution Award. Each nomination must include an outline of the nominee's merits that warrant the award as well as a list of referees who could attest to the nominee's scholarship. Upon its review of nominees, the ISHS Awards Committee shall present its recommendations to the Society's Executive Board for final approval, and the Board shall notify SCA recipients in advance of the Society's general Conference. To receive their award, SCA recipients must give a plenary address at the Society's general conference.
- 3. Award:** In addition to a plenary session of their work, SCA recipients shall receive (1) a certificate of achievement, (2) a stipend to cover their Conference registration fees, and (3) waived fees to designated ISHS-endorsed seminars and workshops. SCA recipients may also receive additional grants depending on the Society's resources.

#### **C. GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS (GSA)**

- 1. Eligibility:** GSAs shall be awarded to graduate students working toward masters or doctoral degrees and doing noteworthy research within humor studies. All ISHS graduate student members, planning to attend the Society's general conference, shall be eligible for this award. As part of their conference application, interested students must submit (1) a letter of intent to compete for a GSA, (2) a description of their research program within humor studies, (3) a presentation proposal, and (4) all required registration materials and fees.
- 2. Process of Selection:** The ISHS Awards Committee shall review each applicant's materials and, based on merit, select students from different disciplines to receive Graduate Student Awards. The Awards Committee shall present its recommendations to the ISHS Executive Board for final approval, and the Board shall notify GSA recipients of their awards in advance of the Society's general Conference.
- 3. Award:** GSA recipients shall present their work at a special session of the general conference and shall receive (1) a certificate of achievement, (2) a stipend to reimburse their Conference registration fees, and (3) waived fees to designated ISHS-endorsed seminars and workshops (i.e., Summer School and Symposium on Humor and Laughter; European Workshop on Humor Studies). GSA recipients may also receive additional grants depending on the Society's resources.

#### **D. FUNDING**

To provide stipends and grants to SCA and GSA recipients as well as other humor scholars in need of assistance, ISHS shall maintain a scholarship fund. Each year, ISHS shall invite its members to support this fund with a contribution when they submit their dues. Based on all annual contributions, the ISHS Executive Secretary-Treasurer shall determine the number and the size of any stipends that may be made available in a given year

#### **E. NUMBER OF AWARDS**

The number of Scholarly Contribution and Graduate Student Awards shall depend on available funding and be limited to a combined total of four awards per year. In any given year, the Society may give any combination of the two types of awards or no awards at all. However, when funding allows, the Society's Awards Committee should make a good faith effort to provide at least two awards each year.

**F. ISHS AWARDS COMMITTEE**

The ISHS President shall appoint each year four members to serve on the ISHS Awards Committee. These Committee members shall include:

- the year's Conference Convenor, who shall serve as Chair,
- two ISHS Board Members, other than the Conference Convenor, and
- one active ISHS member, who regularly coordinates ISHS-endorsed workshops or symposia.

The Committee shall also include the ISHS Executive Secretary-Treasurer as an *ex officio* member, responsible for advising the Committee on scholarship resources. The Awards Committee shall review all nominations for ISHS awards and shall make Award recommendations, subject to final Executive Board approval.