

# Phi Sigma Tau: International Honor Society in Philosophy

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## PHI SIGMA TAU CONSTITUTION

(As amended through November, 2003)  
(This printing, August, 2008)

### ARTICLE I — NAME

The official name of the Society shall be: “Phi Sigma Tau, International Honor Society in Philosophy.”

### ARTICLE II — PURPOSE

The objects of the Society shall be: (1) to serve as a means of awarding distinction to students having high scholarship and personal interest in philosophy; (2) to promote student interest in research and advanced study in this field; (3) to provide opportunities for the publication of student research papers of merit; (4) to encourage a professional spirit and friendship among those who have displayed marked ability in this field; and (5) to popularize interest in philosophy among the general collegiate public.

### ARTICLE III — STANDARDS

PHI SIGMA TAU, a membership organization, shall receive into its membership, irrespective of membership in or affiliation with other organizations, only those who attain its standards of high scholarship in philosophy and other subjects, and who give evidence of professional merit, proficiency, and distinction. Membership shall be conferred in strict accordance with the standards established by the Association of College Honor Societies. The sole basis of selection shall be the character and the scholastic or professional records of the candidate. Reception into membership shall be consummated without secret pledge or secret order training.

### ARTICLE IV — NEW CHAPTERS

**SEC. 1. Institutions in which Collegiate Chapters may be established.** A collegiate chapter may be established only at a baccalaureate degree granting institution (or its equivalent) of recognized collegiate or university level which regularly offers such courses in philosophy as to constitute a series commonly called a “philosophy major” or its equivalent. The institution must possess such qualifications as to justify confidence in the probable future success of a chapter of the Society in that institution: two necessary qualifications are that of accreditation by an approved national or regional accrediting agency, and adequate professional training and competence of the teaching staff in philosophy.

**SEC. 2. Petition and Questionnaire.** A group consisting of at least five persons applying for a charter shall send to the Executive Secretary a petition, properly filled out on the official form. Beyond the information supplied on the form, further information may be requested by the Executive Secretary. The petition and questionnaire shall be then sent to the Executive Council, which shall consider the merits of the institution and petitioning group. The Executive Secretary shall then transmit the petition to all active chapters, together with the recommendation of the Executive Council.

**SEC. 3. Voting upon Petitions.**

Clause 1— A favorable vote of three fourths of the number of

active chapters shall be required to grant a chapter.

Clause 2— Votes of a petition not received from chapters within thirty days from the mailing date of the petition shall be considered as favorable to granting the petition.

**SEC. 4. Installation of New Chapters.** New chapters shall be installed by one or more members of the Society, designated as Installing Officer(s). These officers shall be present and personally conduct the installation, except in extraordinary cases, when this requirement may be waived by unanimous vote of the Executive Council. The senior Installing Officer shall be nominated by the Executive Secretary and approved by the President.

**SEC. 5. Chapter Designation.** Normally a chapter shall be designated by the state, then the Greek letter designating the order of its establishment within the state.

### ARTICLE V — LAUREATE CHAPTER

There shall be one Laureate Chapter, election to which shall be vested with the Executive Council. Outstanding persons in the field of philosophy, irrespective of national boundaries, may be elected by unanimous vote of the Executive Council. Those elected to the Laureate Chapter shall be exempt from payment of all fees.

### ARTICLE VI — PROBATION AND WITHDRAWAL

**SEC. 1. Chapter Probation.**

Clause 1— A chapter may be placed on probation by action of the Executive Council in cases where warnings from the Executive Secretary have proven unfruitful.

Clause 2— A chapter which has ceased to function by reason of continued inactivity or loss of members may be officially declared inactive, and its charter suspended by vote of the Executive Council. The chapter will be declared “TEMPORARILY INACTIVE,” and will cease to receive Society publications and regular Society bulletins. The Executive Council, on recommendation from the Executive Secretary, shall have the power to restore the chapter to active status if and when the chapter demonstrates its ability to function satisfactorily.

**SEC. 2. Withdrawal of a Charter.** Following recommendations by the Executive Council, a vote of three fourths of the number of active chapters shall be required for withdrawal of a charter. Chapter votes not received within thirty dates from date of mailing by the National Office are considered as favorable to the charter withdrawal.

### ARTICLE VII — NATIONAL OFFICERS

**SEC. 1. Election and Terms of Office.**

Clause 1— The national officers of the Society shall consist of a President, Vice-President, and Executive Secretary.

Clause 2— These officers shall be elected from graduate members of the Society. Elections shall be held either at a Convention or by mail ballot distributed to all active chapters. A nominating

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committee shall seek nominations from the Executive Council and from active chapters.

Clause 3— Terms of office for the officers shall be indefinite, but nomination and elections may be called by a majority of active chapters at any time following a term of office which exceeds three years. If there are no nominations for a period of three years, the names of all members of the Executive Council shall be submitted to all active chapters for reconfirmation. Officers assume duties on July 1 of the year following their election.

SEC. 2. **Duties of the President.** The President shall perform all duties usually assigned to that office.

SEC. 3. **Duties of the Executive Secretary.** The Executive Secretary shall be charged with the general supervision of chapter and Society affairs, shall keep records of the Executive Council proceedings, shall keep records pertaining to all chapter activities and business, and is also responsible for the Society's archives. S/he shall collect all national fees, and make all disbursements. S/he shall also submit financial reports to the Executive Council following each fiscal year (July through June), and shall send copies of these reports to the advisors of all active chapters. S/he shall also serve as business manager of all Society publications.

SEC. 4. **Ad-Interim Elections.** If for any reason the office of the President should fall vacant, the Vice-President shall immediately succeed in this office until the next meeting of the Executive Council, when the Council shall elect a President to complete the term. Should any other office become vacant, nominations for filling the same shall be made by the President, and voted upon and elected by the Executive Council.

## SEC. 5. **Executive Council.**

Clause 1— The Executive Council shall consist of the three National Officers and four other members to be known as Area Council Representatives. The retiring President shall automatically become one of these Representatives, and shall serve until his/her successor qualifies by reason of retirement from office. The three additional Representatives shall be elected by the Executive Council, and their terms expire with the term expirations of the National Officers.

Clause 2— The Executive Council shall meet on call from the National Office at such times and places (or by conference telephone connection) as the Council shall determine.

Clause 3— The President of the Society shall serve as the chairperson of the Executive Council, and the Vice-President shall serve as vice-chairperson.

Clause 4— Any member of the Council may submit a motion, which must be voted on by the Council.

## ARTICLE VIII — CONVENTION

### SEC. 1. **Convention Arrangements.**

Clause 1— Unless otherwise provided by the Executive Council, the Convention shall be held in the city of which the President is a resident.

Clause 2— A Convention of the Society shall be held when called by unanimous vote of the Executive Council. The time and general arrangements for the Convention shall be determined by the Executive Council.

Clause 3— The President of the Society shall designate a Convention Chairperson, who shall select a Convention Committee. This Committee will be charged with all local arrangements and the Convention program, in consultation with the Executive Council.

The President and Executive Secretary shall be, ex officio, members of the Convention Committee. The Executive Secretary shall serve as secretary to the Convention.

SEC. 2. **Votes in the Convention.** Each active chapter shall be entitled to three votes, and each chapter may send from one to three official convention delegates. A chapter may divide its votes in any manner desired, and Convention business will be conducted by voice vote unless there is one or more objections.

SEC. 3. **Power of the Convention.** The Convention shall be the supreme governing power of the Society while in session, and its actions shall require no further confirmation. Its powers include, but are not limited to, election of national officers, amending the Constitution and By-Laws, and acting upon all matters brought before it by active chapters or by the Executive Council.

SEC. 4. **Quorum at the Convention.** Chapters unable to send official delegates to the Convention may designate one official delegate attending the Convention from another chapter, or one member of the Executive Council to vote on their behalf. Notification of all such proxies must reach the National Office no less than fifteen days prior to the opening of the Convention.

SEC. 5. **Delegate Expenses.** Six months prior to a National Convention, the Executive Council shall inform all active chapters of the extent of any subsidy available to each chapter. In the event that subsidies are available, chapters at great distance from the Convention site will be given preference.

## ARTICLE IX — PROCEDURES FOR RECEPTION OF CHAPTER MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES

Each chapter shall accept and use the official procedures for reception of members and chapter associates. Changes in the procedures may be made only on approval by the Executive Council. The official procedures shall be those approved by the Council in accordance with Article XII below.

## ARTICLE X — CHAPTER BY-LAWS

Each chapter shall prepare and submit for approval to the Executive Secretary a set of by-laws. Any changes in these by-laws shall be approved by the Executive Secretary.

## ARTICLE XI — INSIGNIA

SEC. 1. **Emblem.** The emblem of the Society shall be a pentagon with the letters, "Phi Sigma Tau," placed in the center. Each of the five angles shall contain a symbol representing each of the five streams of world thought: Chinese, Indian, Islamic, Hebrew, and Greek.

SEC. 2. **Key.** The key shall display the emblem of the Society, and shall be worn only by its duly initiated members. Form, design, and price of keys shall be designated by the Executive Council. Purchases of keys shall be transmitted through the Executive Secretary.

SEC. 3. **Seal.** The seal of the Society shall be the reverse side of the Athenian Silver Tetradrachma (B.C. 480-400), bearing the owl, olive spray, and small crescent. The margin of the seal shall carry the legend, "Phi Sigma Tau, 1930."

SEC. 4. **Colors.** The colors of the Society shall be white and purple, the latter identified as 84-24-7 by the International Printing Institute Code.

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## ARTICLE XII — CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP

SEC. 1. **Classifications.** Society membership, other than in the Laureate Chapter, shall include four classifications: active, alumni, sustaining, and honorary.

SEC. 2. **Chapter Associates.** Chapters may optionally establish a classification of persons known as chapter associates. Such persons shall be chosen from among those who do not meet all the requirements for chapter membership, but who have indicated a genuine interest in philosophy, and who wish to share in the work of the chapter. Affiliated chapter associates shall not be considered members of the Society. By option of the local chapter, associates may be required to pay local fees; but they shall pay no fees whatever to the national organization.

### SEC. 3. **Active Membership**

Clause 1— Undergraduate students are eligible for active membership if they have completed three semesters, five quarters, or the equivalent of the college course, rank in the upper 35% of their class, and have completed (or are registered in) at least two semester courses (or three quarter courses) in philosophy with a mean overall grade which is greater than the second highest grade of the working scale.

Clause 2— Graduate members are eligible if they (a) meet the requirements for undergraduates, or (b) have completed at least one third of the residence requirements of the Master's Degree with a mean grade of at least half in the highest scale of the working scale, and half in the second highest grade.

Clause 3— Teachers of philosophy above the rank of graduate assistant are eligible for membership, as are teaching and research staff members of departments closely related to philosophy where such persons have indicated an active interest in the problems and progress of philosophy.

Clause 4— Chapters shall also have the privilege of electing to active membership a limited number of nearby residents whose scholastic qualifications, professional achievement, and interest in the Society are high. Privileges, obligations, fees, and dues for such members shall be identical with those of other active members.

Clause 5— Members in good standing, transferring from one institution to another which has a chapter, or such members who move into the vicinity of a chapter, may affiliate with the latter as active members by making application to the chapter. The receiving chapter shall notify the National Office of the transfer.

### SEC. 4. **Alumni Membership.**

Clause 1— When a member ceases active affiliation with a chapter, s/he shall be designated an alumnus(-a) member.

Clause 2— The status of resident graduate members may be changed from active to alumni membership by favorable vote of three quarters of members present at a regular chapter meeting.

Clause 3— At the installation of a new chapter, properly qualified alumni of the institution may be received as charter members, and subsequently voted to alumni membership. Alumni unable to be present at an installation may be received into the Society as charter members through correspondence with the Executive Secretary.

Clause 4— Membership in the National Alumni Chapter shall be open to all alumni members. Nonalumni members may apply for membership in the Alumni Chapter through the National Office, according to standards established by the Executive Council. National Alumni Chapter members in good standing shall receive DIALOGUE and the PST Newsletter, as well as other national bulletins as shall be determined appropriate by the Executive Secretary.

Dues for the National Alumni Chapter shall be determined by the Executive Council on an annual basis (Sept. through Aug.).

Clause 5— Alumni members, including members of the National Alumni Chapter, shall not vote in local chapter ballots, nor serve as chapter officers. All other local chapter activities are open to them, in accordance with the by-laws of the local chapter.

### SEC. 5. **Honorary Membership.**

Clause 1— Anyone who has attained distinction in philosophy or a closely allied field shall be eligible for election to honorary membership in a chapter. Honorary members may be elected only by the Executive Council, upon application and recommendation of the chapter into which they are to be received.

Clause 2— Honorary members shall have all the rights and obligations of active members. Honorary members may also be qualified as alumni members.

### SEC. 6. **Sustaining Membership.**

Clause 1— Any member of the Society may become a sustaining member by agreeing to make any desired voluntary contribution for the support of its programs.

Clause 2— Contributions from sustaining members shall be used as directed by the Executive Council, and shall be solicited and administered by a special board appointed by the Council.

SEC. 7. **Removal of Members from Rolls.** Any member may be dropped from the rolls of the Society by vote of 75% of the active members of his/her chapter. A complete record of the case shall be sent, prior to final action, to the Executive Secretary, who shall submit his/her recommendation to the chapter. The member shall have the right to appeal the chapter determination to the Executive Council, whose decision shall be final.

## ARTICLE XIII — CHAPTER MEETINGS

SEC. 1. **Time and Place.** Regular and special meeting shall be held at such times and places as the chapter may designate in its by-laws.

SEC. 2. **Reports.** The chapter secretary shall keep a report of every chapter meeting on the forms provided for that purpose, and a copy of that report shall be sent immediately following the meeting to the Executive Secretary.

SEC. 3. **Quorum.** The chapter shall define in its by-laws the quorum necessary for transaction of business.

SEC. 4. **Frequency.** At least one meeting of the chapter shall be held during each semester, or two meetings per academic year.

## ARTICLE XIV — CHAPTER OFFICERS

SEC. 1. **Names.** The chapter officers shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chapter Advisor, and such other officers as the chapter may wish to create through by-laws. By-laws may also combine these offices.

### SEC. 2. **Duties.**

Clause 1— It shall be the duty of officers to perform those functions usually assigned to their respective offices.

Clause 2— The Vice-President shall chair the program committee.

Clause 3— The Chapter Secretary shall be responsible for all official chapter communications with the National Office. These communications shall include (a) a preliminary report at the beginning of each academic year, (b) transmission of directory cards and membership fees for new members, (c) regular chapter minutes, and (d) a closing report and list of officers elected at the end of each

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academic year. During the summer holiday, all chapter records shall be left with the Chapter Advisor, or in the departmental office, where they may be accessible.

Clause 4— The Chapter Treasurer shall keep all detailed records of the chapter's financial transactions, and shall prepare an annual report of income and expenses.

Clause 5— The Chapter Advisor shall be elected by the Chapter from among members of the teaching staff, following consultation with the chair of the Philosophy Department (or its functional equivalent). The Chapter Advisor shall act as liaison between the Philosophy Department, the Chapter, and the National Office of Phi Sigma Tau. S/he shall be responsible for distribution of all publications and bulletins from the National Office to members and officers, and shall receive copies of all chapter communications.

## SEC. 3. Terms and Induction.

Clause 1— Chapter officers shall serve for one academic year, unless otherwise determined by chapter by-laws. They shall be elected prior to the beginning of the academic year in which they are to serve, and shall be inducted following procedures established in the chapter by-laws.

Clause 2— In the event of vacancy in any office, it shall be filled by special election at the next chapter meeting following announcement of the vacancy.

## ARTICLE XV — CHAPTER REPORTS TO NATIONAL OFFICE

SEC. 1. **Chapter Information Blanks.** The Chapter Secretary shall furnish to the National Office data concerning chapter personnel and activities, and on forms provided by the Executive Secretary.

SEC. 2. **Failure to Submit Information.** Failure to provide reports required by the Constitution of Phi Sigma Tau, or special reports required by the Executive Council, shall be deemed sufficient to place the Chapter on probation in accordance with the provisions of Article VI above.

## ARTICLE XVI — AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

SEC. 1. **Ballots.** The by-laws and Constitution may be at any time amended by a mail ballot upon recommendation of the Executive Council and a majority vote of chapters, or at a National Convention by favorable vote of a majority of chapter delegates.

SEC. 2. **Votes.** Votes by mail upon proposed changes shall be considered as favorable unless a ballot is received within thirty days following the mailing date of the bulletin announcing the proposed changes.

SEC. 3. **Petitions.** Upon request of five chapters, the Executive Secretary shall submit any proposed amendments to the Executive Council. The proposed amendments will then be submitted to all active chapters and adopted upon a majority vote.

## ARTICLE XVII (Amendment D) — FINANCES

SEC. 1. Phi Sigma Tau is organized exclusively for educational and scientific purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

SEC. 2. No part of the net earnings of Phi Sigma Tau shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the organization shall be

authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the purpose clause hereof. No substantial part of the activities of Phi Sigma Tau shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of this document, Phi Sigma Tau shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Sec. 3. Upon the dissolution of Phi Sigma Tau, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

[The preceding amendment to the PST Constitution was approved by the National Executive Council on 14 February 2002, and distributed to the Society's active chapters on 26 February.]

## PHI SIGMA TAU By-Laws

(As amended through April, 2000)

(This printing, August, 2008)

## ARTICLE I — ENTRANCE FEES

### SEC. 1. Chapter and Dues.

Clause 1 — The application for granting a charter to a petition group must be accompanied by a charter fee, and this fee is determined by the Executive Council at the beginning of each fiscal year. Under circumstances where state or local laws prohibit payment by a college or university for charters, the Executive Secretary is authorized to accept an institutional subscription fee in the same amount for DIALOGUE and in lieu of the charter fee. If the application for a charter is not endorsed by the Executive Council, the charter fee will be returned. There shall be no return of the charter fee in the event that the charter is not ratified by chapter votes.

Clause 2 — No annual fees payable to the National Office will be assessed. Each active member received into the Society shall pay an initiation fee, the total amount of which is determined by the local chapter. \$25.00 of such amount shall be paid to the National Office. The fee shall not include the cost of a key.

### SEC. 2. Fees for Charter Members.

Clause 1 — Following granting of a charter, but before installation of a new chapter, each charter member shall pay to the National

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Office an entrance fee of \$25.00. This fee shall not include the cost of a key.

Clause 2 — The travel expenses of the installing party shall be paid by the new chapter or the institution at which it is resident.

Clause 3 — The entrance fees for alumni members shall be identical with fees of other members.

## SEC. 3. Fees for New Members.

Clause 1 — Each active member received into the Society shall pay to the National Office, prior to his/her reception into membership, an entrance fee of \$25, which will not include the cost of the key.

Clause 2 — Members wishing PST Keys may order them using forms supplied by the Executive Secretary, and at a price scale determined by the Executive Council.

Clause 3 — For each honorary member, the chapter shall pay to the National Office a fee of \$25.00.

Clause 4 — The National Office will bear all expenses incidental to providing membership certificates and other materials, including the PST Key, to members of the Laureate Chapter.

Clause 5 — All issues of the PST Newsletter and DIALOGUE will be issued to chapters in numbers representing the total active membership at time of issue. Alumni members may receive these publications via membership in the National Alumni Chapter, or by personal subscriptions (without membership in the National Alumni Chapter) at the current rates.

## ARTICLE II — Amendments to By-Laws

SEC. 1. **Amendments.** These By-Laws may be amended by mail ballot upon recommendation of the Executive Council, and a majority vote of active chapters, or by a favorable majority vote of delegates at a National Convention.

SEC. 2. **Votes.** Votes by mail upon proposed changes in these By-Laws shall be considered as favorable if not received within a period of thirty days after mailing of the notice for proposed changes.

SEC. 3. **Petitions.** Upon the request of five active chapters, the Executive Secretary shall submit any proposed amendments to these By-Laws, as provided in Section 1 above.

**End**