

Constitution

Articles I – III: Name, Purpose, Membership

Article I. Name

The name of the organization shall be the American Forensics Association. Official use of the Association's name shall occur only through the authority of the National Council.

Article II. Purpose

The purpose of this Association shall be to promote argument and advocacy and to support the professionals whose activities adhere to the following credo:

- Our principle is the power of individuals to participate with others in shaping their world through the human capacity of language;
- Our commitment to argument expresses our faith in reason-giving as a key to that power;
- Our commitment to advocacy expresses our faith in oral expression as a means to empower people in situations of their lives;
- Our research studies the place of argument in advocacy in these situations of empowerment;
- Our teaching seeks to expand students' appreciation for the place of argument and advocacy in shaping their worlds, and to prepare students through classrooms, forums, and competition for participation in their world through the power of expression; and
- Our public involvement seeks to empower through argument and advocacy.

Article III. Membership

Membership shall be available to any person supporting the purposes of this Association, and to any institution, department, library, or organization upon payment of appropriate dues. Categories of membership shall be specified in the Association by-laws.

Article IV: Officers

Section 1: National Officers

National officers shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Vice-President for High School Affairs, Recording Secretary, Executive Secretary, and Treasurer. The Vice-President, Vice-President for High School Affairs, and Recording Secretary shall be elected by mail ballot for a term of two years. Upon completion of a two-year term as Vice-President, the person serving in that office shall succeed to the office of President, and serve for two years, except as provided in Article IV, Section 2. The Executive Secretary shall be appointed by and serve at the will of the National Council for a term not to exceed five years. The Executive Secretary may be reappointed. The Treasurer shall be appointed by and serve at the will of the National Council for a term not to exceed five years. The Treasurer may be reappointed.

Section 2: Succession to Presidency

For the first election following adoption of this Constitution, the officers of President, Vice-President, Vice-President for High School Affairs, and Recording Secretary shall be elected by a

mail ballot for a term of two years. The Vice-President shall, upon completion of her or his term, succeed to President.

Article V: National Council

Section 1: Membership

The National Council shall be composed of the national officers, a representative selected by each recognized regional association, the immediate past national president, one two-year college representative, and a representative selected by each caucus qualifying under the by-laws. The two-year college representative shall be elected for a two-year term at the same time elections for national officers are held. All members of the National Council shall be voting members with the exception of the Executive Secretary, the Treasurer, and representatives of affiliate organizations.

Section 2: Powers

The National Council shall act on behalf of the Association between General Business Meetings. All actions taken under this provision shall be reported in the next issue of the appropriate Association publication. Such actions shall be suspended if a petition is received by the Executive Secretary signed by 25 members, and if the action remains reversible. All suspended actions shall be placed on the agenda of the next General Business Meeting. Actions shall be sustained unless rescinded at the General Business Meeting by a majority of those in attendance if the petition is received in time to be placed on the preliminary agenda for the meeting, or by a two-thirds vote of those in attendance if the petition is received after the preliminary agenda for the General Business Meeting is published.

Section 3: Alternates

In the event that a member representing a regional association or caucus is unable to attend a meeting of the National Council, an alternate may represent that member provided that the substitution be certified to the Executive Secretary by the appropriate officer of the regional association or caucus.

Article VI: Caucuses

Members of the Association with similar interests may form Caucuses to promote specific aspects of the forensics or specific educational practices. Procedures for establishing caucuses and qualifying caucuses for representation on the National Council shall be specified by the By-laws. Each caucus shall be responsible for establishing its own officers their responsibilities.

Article VII: Meetings

Section 1: General Business Meeting

The authority of this Association shall be vested in a General Business Meeting, which shall be held not less than once each calendar year.

Section 2: Sessions

The General Business Meeting may consist of several sessions if justified by sufficient business. The session at which the nomination of officers is to be held, and any session at which a Constitutional amendment is to be discussed must be designated clearly for those purposes in all announcements.

Section 3: Call of National Council Meetings

Meetings of the National Council Shall be held at the call of the President. The Executive Secretary may also call a meeting upon receiving a written request from any five members of the National Council.

Article VIII: Regional Associations

Each geographic region as constituted by the Central States, Eastern, Southern States, and Western Communication Associations shall be permitted one representative to the National Council. The National Council shall approve application by a regional association for seating on the National Council.

Article IX: Committees

Section 1: Appointment of Committees

Standing Committees, as specified in the By-laws, shall be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the National Council. Each standing Committee shall present a report of its activities at the General Business Meeting.

Section 2: Chartered Committees

Chartered Committees, as specified in the By-laws, shall be created for special, on-going activities by approval of a specific Charter by the Association's voting members by mail or electronic ballot. Size of these Committees, selection of members, and duties and responsibilities shall be delineated within the approval Charter. Each Chartered Committee shall present a report of its activities at the General Business Meeting.

Section 3: Nominating Committee

A Nominating Committee shall be elected by voting members by mail or electronic ballot, and shall submit a list of nominees for all elected offices not later than thirty days prior to the General Business Meeting preceding an election.

Section 4: Special Committees

Special Committees may be established as needed, and shall be appointed by the President.

Article X: Affiliates

- An organization with objectives consistent with those of the AFA may petition the National Council to become an Affiliate.
- Procedures for establishing relationships with such organizations shall be specified in the bylaws.
- Affiliate organizations reserve the right to establish their own objectives, constitutions, and officers.
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- Affiliate organizations reserve the right to establish their own objectives, constitutions, and officers.

Article XI: Organization and Dissolution

Section 1: Educational purposes

This Association is organized exclusively for educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501©(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Section 2: Restriction on Activities

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these articles, the Association 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©(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), or (b) an organization contributions to which are deductible under section 170©(2) of the internal 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

Section 3: Dissolution

Upon the winding up and dissolution of this corporation, after paying or adequately providing for debts and obligations of the corporation, the remaining assets shall be distributed to a nonprofit fund, foundation, or corporation which is organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, and/or scientific purposes and which has established its tax exempt status under section 501©(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Article XII: Amendment

Section 1: Initiation of Amendments

Amendments to this constitution may be initiated by the National Council or by petition of fifty voting members of the Association.

Section 2: Action on Amendments

Amendments which have been passed by a majority vote of the National Council or submitted by petition shall be printed on ballots and distributed by mail or electronically to voting members after discussion at the General Business Meeting. A summary of the pro and con arguments from the discussion at the General Business Meeting shall accompany the proposed amendments. The ballot shall include the instruction that ballots must be returned by a deadline to be established not earlier than thirty days, or later than sixty days, from the date of mailing. Amendments shall be made if ratified by two-thirds of those members eligible and voting.

Approved December, 2018