



**Bylaws of the Central Ohio Chapter
Of The Society of Professional Journalists**

(Adopted April 1949; amended July 1984, November 2001, April 2016, November 2025.)

ARTICLE I – NAME OF THE CHAPTER

Section 1 – The Central Ohio Chapter, founded April 17, 1949, and based in Columbus, Ohio, is an affiliate of the national Society of Professional Journalists, formerly known as Sigma Delta Chi, and hereafter referred to as the National Society. Formal presentation of the charter to the Central Ohio Chapter, and hereafter referred to as the Chapter, was made April 25, 1950.

Section 2 – The Chapter exists to associate journalists in an organized unit dedicated to the basic elements of journalism: truth, talent and energy; To advance the standards of the news media and enhance the prestige of journalism in this part of Ohio by supporting and maintaining a vigilance in the protection of the First Amendment, free speech and press; To promote the highest standards of ethical behavior in the practice of journalism; To foster excellence among journalists; To encourage diversity in journalism and encourage talented young people at the high school and college levels to pursue journalism as a career, to nurture their interest and help them achieve this goal.

ARTICLE II – QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 – All members of the Chapter must be members in good standing of the National Society. Professional members will be assigned to the Chapter by the national headquarters based on geographic boundaries established by the National Society. A member of the Society in any membership category, other than a student member, located outside a Chapter's boundaries may join the Chapter by filing a membership form and complying with all Chapter membership requirements, such as payment of Chapter dues and initiation fees.

Section 2 – Only members in good standing of the Chapter and the National Society shall be eligible to vote in Chapter elections. Members in good standing must be of the following membership categories: Professional or Retired Professional, including Household; Lifetime; Post-Graduate; or Fellow.

Section 3 – Associate members are nonjournalists who support the missions of the National Society and the Chapter. They are ineligible to vote or hold office in the Chapter by virtue of national bylaw restrictions.

Section 4 – All student members in good standing with the National Society who are

students at an Ohio institution of higher learning may affiliate with the Chapter by filing a membership form and complying with all Chapter membership requirements, such as payment of Chapter dues and initiation fees. These students are ineligible to hold office or vote in this Chapter.

Section 5 – Student members in good standing automatically become post-graduate members of the Society upon graduation and may become professional members upon application to the national headquarters.

ARTICLE III – DUES

Section 1 – The amount of local dues to be paid by each member of the Chapter shall be fixed by the Board of Directors subject to ratification by the eligible professional membership when the Board of Directors proposes to increase or decrease the annual dues.

Section 2 – The Chapter extends Chapter membership at special rates to retired members and members enrolled as full-time students. In either case, a member must notify the Treasurer in writing of their retirement or enrollment in school to qualify for the special rate, which is 25 percent below the current regular Chapter dues. Dues for recent graduates who become members of the Chapter are 25 percent of the current regular rate for the first year of membership.

Section 3 – Billing, collection and distribution of local Chapter dues shall be the responsibility of the National Society office.

ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS & PROGRAMS

Section 1 – “Meetings” as used herein shall mean regular and special meetings of the Board of Directors and Chapter meetings of the membership that are publicized or announced and approved by the Board of Directors.

Section 2 – The Board of Directors shall hold regular and special meetings at such times and places as the Directors decide, but not fewer than eight (8) regular meetings per Chapter year. Special meetings may be called at the request of three Directors, or at the request of the President. Board members and Chapter members must receive notice of all meetings at least 72 hours before such meetings are to be held. All meetings are open to all Chapter members in good standing.

Section 3 – “Programs” as used herein shall mean regularly scheduled or special events sponsored by the Chapter or held in conjunction with another entity that support the Chapter’s missions and/or offer opportunities to network with fellow members and journalists. The Chapter shall host at least six of these per Chapter year and members must receive at least 72 hours’ notice before such programs are to be held. Programs are open to the public.

Section 4 – Notification of meetings and programs shall be the responsibility of the Board. Meetings and programs shall be noticed on the Chapter’s website at least 72 hours in advance. The Board may also use other electronic means to notice meetings and programs, including email to those members who have provided the Chapter with

email addresses.

Section 5 – At a Chapter membership meeting or program, a vote of a majority of the members in good standing who are present and voting shall be sufficient to approve any measure that requires a vote, except amendments to these Bylaws.

Section 6 – There shall be a 12-member Board of Directors in the Chapter. At regular or special meetings of the Board of Directors a quorum (7) of the 12 must be present to conduct business.

Section 7 – Any action of the Board of Directors may be rescinded by a majority vote of the members in good standing present at a Chapter membership meeting. Notice is to be given in accordance with this Article and the action previously taken by the Board of Directors shall be put to a vote of the membership at the meeting.

Section 8 – Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by these Bylaws.

Section 9 – All Chapter membership meetings and programs shall be on the record and open to coverage by any or all communications media on an equal basis. Coverage of programs of the Chapter shall be encouraged in order to acquaint the profession and public with the issues discussed by and before the Chapter membership. Individual guest speakers shall be apprised in advance that this is a Chapter policy.

Section 10 – All regular, special or Chapter meetings of the Board of Directors shall be open to all members of the National Society, except that when action is required between regular meetings, the Board of Directors may vote by electronic or other means. When the Board of Directors has taken action outside a regular or special meeting, that body must ratify the action by a vote at the next regular or a special meeting.

Section 11 – Technology can be implemented to achieve a meeting quorum for the Board of Directors. Officers and Directors may use voice or video conference calling when necessary to attend regular or special meetings.

Section 12 – The financial records of the Chapter and minutes of all meetings shall be open for inspection to members in good standing. Requests for inspection shall be made to the custodians of such records and shall be made available, if practical, at the next meeting of the membership or the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE V – OFFICERS

Section 1 – The Officers of the Chapter shall be: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Section 2 – Officers shall be elected by the Board of Directors and serve one year. Regular terms of office begin with the formal installation of Officers at the annual Founders' Day meeting.

PRESIDENT – The President shall be the chief executive officer and shall supervise and direct the business and affairs of the Chapter. The President shall see to it that the Chapter conforms to the requirements of the National Society. The President shall have the power to delegate such functions to other Officers as necessary. The President shall have the power to create committees of Officers, Directors, members, or any combination thereof, to further the business and affairs of the Chapter. The President shall preside at the meetings of the Chapter and the Board of Directors and be the Chapter spokesperson.

VICE PRESIDENT – The Vice President shall exercise the functions of the President in the absence or inability of the President. The Vice President serves as the membership chair and has the primary duties of assisting with membership recruitment and retention. The Vice President shall perform other duties as may be assigned by the President or the Board.

SECRETARY – The Secretary shall write the minutes of the Board meetings and maintain the Chapter's written and historic records. The Secretary shall maintain Chapter membership rolls and contact with the National Society. The Secretary shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the President or the Board.

TREASURER – The Treasurer shall maintain the accounts of all Chapter funds, provide the Board with a report at each meeting, make collections as necessary and pay all authorized Chapter debts. The Treasurer shall perform other duties as assigned by the President or the Board.

ARTICLE VI – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1 – The Board of Directors is the administration body of the Chapter. It shall meet at least eight (8) times per year to conduct the Chapter's business. The Board shall be made up of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and eight (8) Directors for a total of 12 Board Members.

Section 2 – The Board of Directors and Officers shall be responsible for: (1) Promoting membership; (2) Arranging meetings and professional programs for the Chapter membership; (3) Conducting regular and special Board meetings; (4) Maintaining Chapter finances and (5) Representing the Chapter at regional and national conventions.

Section 3 – Directors shall serve three-year terms, which shall be staggered.

Section 4 – Directors shall serve no more than three (3) full terms (9 years). After three consecutive terms, a Director may appeal to the Board for a continuation of service, which may be approved by a majority vote of the Board.

Section 5 – Upon adoption of these Bylaws, the Board of Directors shall agree on a method for apportioning the lengths of terms of Directors on the Board at the time so that one-third of the Directors' terms expire each year.

Section 6 – In the event of a tie vote, the presiding officer may cast the deciding vote.

Section 7 – Directors are required to attend a minimum of five (5) Board meetings per Chapter year. Upon recommendation of an Officer or Director, and after giving at least 18 days' notice to the absent Officer/Director, upon a majority vote of the remaining Officers and Directors at the next regular meeting of the Board of Directors, the Officer or Director shall be removed from office.

Section 8 – Any Director who becomes ineligible for continuing membership in the National Society or the Chapter automatically vacates a seat on the Board. The vacancy is immediate.

Section 9 – Vacancies among Officers and other Directors due to death, resignation or other cause shall be filled by a majority vote of the Chapter Directors present at any meeting at which a quorum of the Directors is present. Officers appointed under this section shall serve until the next Chapter election. Directors appointed under this section shall serve the unexpired term of the person replaced.

ARTICLE VII – ELECTIONS

Section 1 – The Chapter's membership, administrative, and financial year shall begin with the installation of Officers at the annual Founders' Day banquet meeting and end at the next installation.

Section 2 – Each year, the President shall ask the Board to nominate Chapter members to fill impending Board vacancies. Chapter members in good standing also will be invited to nominate members. The Board will prepare and distribute a ballot to every Chapter member with instructions to respond prior to a date set by the Board. The Board will tally the ballots and announce the results at Founders' Day.

Section 3 – The President shall assemble a slate of Officers for the following year and present it to the Board. Directors shall be given an opportunity to make further nominations from the Board personnel. A vote shall be taken in any case where more than one candidate is nominated for an office. A majority vote of the Directors present shall determine the new Officers.

Section 4 – Results of the voting shall be announced and the new Officers sworn in at the Founders' Day meeting.

ARTICLE VIII – AUDITS

Section 1 – The Chapter shall conduct a review of its finances at least once a year in conjunction with submission of the Chapter's annual report to the National Society. The Treasurer shall present all relevant financial records to a committee of three nonofficers for this review. The President shall appoint the committee.

ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES

Section 1 – The President is authorized to appoint such committees as they deem necessary for a purpose and duration as they deem necessary.

Section 2 – Chairs of committees may be Officers, Directors or other Chapter members.

ARTICLE X – CONVENTION ATTENDANCE

Section 1 – The Chapter shall be represented at the Society’s national convention by delegates as determined by the national organization based upon the Chapter’s membership. One will be the Chapter’s President and subsequent delegates will be alternates chosen by the Board.

Section 2 – In the event that no alternate is able to attend, the President will be responsible for casting all votes in any elections at the national convention.

Section 3 – Registration fees and reasonable travel expenses for the President will be paid by the Chapter. If the Chapter’s number of delegates drops to one, the President shall represent the Chapter at the national convention.

Section 4 – The Chapter also shall strive to participate in each regional conference. The President or Chapter representative shall attend and the Chapter will pay for registration and reasonable travel expenses.

ARTICLE XI – SCHOLARSHIPS

Section 1 – The Board shall make an annual financial commitment from Chapter funds to honor and encourage outstanding college journalism students with scholarships in amounts determined by the Board.

Section 2 – The President shall appoint a Scholarship Chair to identify candidates for scholarships and make related recommendations to the Board of Directors. Recipients shall be determined by a Board vote.

Section 3 – Representatives from relevant Ohio colleges and universities shall be consulted for recommendations.

Section 4 – To be considered for Chapter scholarships, college journalism students shall meet the following criteria: (1) Be enrolled at an accredited college or university’s school or departments of journalism/communications/media in the Chapter’s membership area; (2) Fulfill the criteria for the Chapter’s scholarship for which they are applying or recommended; and (3) Intend to pursue a career in journalism.

Section 5 – In addition to other scholarships overseen by the Chapter, the Board shall oversee the James W. Faulkner scholarship. This scholarship shall recognize deserving Ohio journalism students who meet criteria established by these Bylaws, the Board and The Columbus Foundation, which will maintain the scholarship fund on the Board’s behalf.

ARTICLE XII – AWARDS PROGRAM

Section 1 – The Chapter shall have an awards program to recognize individuals and organizations for journalistic accomplishments.

Section 2 – The awards shall recognize: journalism that has advanced the principles of freedom of expression (First Amendment Award); members who have demonstrated distinguished service to the Chapter (Distinguished Service Award); individuals or organizations that have made a notable contribution to journalism in Central Ohio (Appreciation Award); individuals who have demonstrated a lifetime contribution to the journalism profession (Lifetime Achievement Award); and individuals or groups that have obstructed dissemination of information (Brick Wall Award).

Section 3 – The First Amendment, Distinguished Service, Appreciation, Lifetime Achievement and Brick Wall awards shall be awarded by and at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

Section 4 – Chapter members will be asked to submit each year their nominations for these awards, which will be presented at Founders' Day.

ARTICLE XIII – DISBANDING THE CHAPTER

Section 1 – Upon the decision to terminate the Chapter, whether by dissolution, disbandment, revocation pursuant to the national Bylaws, or otherwise, any remaining Chapter funds shall be distributed to an adjoining active Society chapter then in good standing, to the Society or to the SPJ Foundation, as directed by the Chapter's governing body, or, in the absence of action within 60 days of termination by the local governing body, by the Board of Directors of the National Society pursuant to the National Bylaws.

ARTICLE XIV – AMENDMENTS

Section 1 – The Board of Directors may have the Chapter Bylaws amended by proposing an amendment at a regular Board meeting and, with a majority of the Directors voting favorably, distributing the proposed amendment(s) to the Chapter membership for review.

Section 2 – Upon Board approval, the proposals shall be distributed promptly to Chapter members in good standing for approval. Votes must be received by return mail or email within two weeks to be counted.

Section 3 – A two-thirds affirmative vote by those responding shall be required for approval of the amendment(s).

Section 4 – Amendments shall take effect immediately, unless otherwise specified.