

**Constitution of the Alpha Zeta Mu Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta  
National History Honor Society, Inc.  
Updated April 2014**

**Preamble**

We, the members of the Alpha Zeta Mu chapter Phi Alpha Theta National History Society., in order to encourage the study of history and to recognize excellence in the study of history, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the governance of our chapter. We shall adhere to the University policies and all city, state and federal laws.

**Article I-Name**

This organization shall be known as the Alpha Zeta Mu Chapter of Phi Alpha History Honor Society.

**Article II-Purpose**

Alpha Zeta Mu chapter of Phi Alpha Theta National History Society exists in order to encourage the study of history at Christopher Newport University and to recognize excellence in the study of history of Christopher Newport University students.

**Article III-Hazing**

*Alpha Zeta Mu Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society shall not haze any prospective or current member for the purpose of admission into or affiliation with the organization. Members of Alpha Zeta Mu Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society are free to leave or dissociate without fear of retribution or harassment. Alpha Zeta Mu Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society shall not discriminate based on race, creed, color, sex, age, national origin, disability and sexual orientation.*

**Article IV-Membership**

**Section 1. Categories of Membership**

Alpha Zeta Mu shall have three levels of membership: Active, Alumni, and Honorary.

**Section 2. Qualifications for Membership**

- A. A vital interest in history is a basic requirement for membership; additionally the prospective member must demonstrate high achievement in history courses and in academic work in general. Interest students do not have to be history majors to join Alpha Zeta Mu chapter of Phi Alpha Theta National History Society.
- B. Membership in this organization will be open to any interested student who meets the following academic standards:

### *Undergraduates*

1. Have at least 12 credit hours in history in which six of these credits must be at the 300-400 level,
2. Maintain a 3.1 GPA in history credit hours,
3. Have an overall cumulative GPA of 3.0,
4. Rank in the top 35% of their class

### *Graduate Students*

1. Shall have completed approximately 30% of the residence requirements for the Master's Degree
2. Maintained a GPA in all courses completed for graduate credit of at least 3.5,
3. Received NO grade in graduate courses of "failure" or its equivalent.

## **Section 3. Active Membership**

Active membership of Alpha Zeta Mu shall consist only of matriculated students at Christopher Newport University. Only active members may vote or hold office in Alpha Zeta Mu.

## **Section 4. Alumni and Honorary Membership**

- A. Non-voting members consist of the following:
  1. Alumni of the organization who are no longer enrolled at CNU.
  2. Honorary members shall include all active or retired History faculty above the rank of instructor, active and retired members of other academic departments who have been inducted into a Phi Alpha Theta chapter at their alma mater, and alumni of other chapters who now live in the Hampton Roads area.
- B. Alumni and Honorary members may take part in the annual induction ceremony for new members, and may attend chapter meetings in an *ex officio* role.

## **Section 5. Selection process**

- A. Interested students may obtain a membership application from the History Department Office or from the History Department web page < <http://cnu.edu/history/pat/>>. Students must take the application to the registrar's office for a grade check to see if they meet the society's national qualifications.
- B. Those who qualify will receive an invitation to be inducted and, upon payment of the national and local membership dues, will be formally inducted into the society. Failure to pay the initiation fees and dues will prohibit an invitee from induction. Inability to participate in the induction ceremony, however, does not disqualify an applicant from membership.

## **Section 6. Removal procedures**

By formal request from a chapter under regulations presented in the By-Laws, any member of the Society may be expelled by formal action of the Committee, after opportunity for due process, presented in the By-Laws. Grounds for such expulsion might be plagiarism, malfeasance, etc...

## **Article V – Officers**

### **Section 1. Elective Officers**

The officers of the chapter shall be:

1. President
2. Vice-President
3. Secretary
4. Treasurer
5. Historian

### **Section 2. Election of Officers**

The officers shall be elected after the spring induction ceremony and shall hold office until their successors have been duly installed.

### **Section 3. Nominating Officers**

Nominations for officers shall be made to the Executive Committee prior to the spring semester induction.

### **Section 4. Method of Election**

- A. All officers shall be elected in a ranked election using an Australian ballot method.
- B. Voting members receive a ballot in which they shall select officers by level of preference from 1 to 5, with top preference receiving five points; second preference, four points; third preference, three points; fourth preference, two points; and fifth preference, one point.
- C. The candidate receiving the most points shall be elected president; second most, vice-president; third most, secretary; fourth most, treasurer; and fifth most, historian.
- D. In the event of ties, the candidate with the most first place votes shall be elected.

### **Section 5. Eligibility to Serve as Officers**

Any member of the chapter in good standing who is not graduating in the spring semester of their induction year shall be eligible to hold office.

## **Section 6. Terms of Office**

- A. The term for the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Historian shall be one year, and the same shall not be eligible for re-election.
- B. With the exception of circumstances of filling an unexpired term, the terms of office of all officers shall begin at the end of the spring semester.

## **Section 7. Duties of Officers**

- A. The *PRESIDENT* shall have full executive authority to authorize and sign all documents of legal commitment, such as reserving space for the spring induction, for the chapter and shall call and preside at all meetings of the chapter.
- B. The *VICE-PRESIDENT* shall serve as a member of the Executive Committee and shall act for the President when requested by the President. Should a vacancy occur in the office of President, the Vice-President shall also assume the office of President for the remainder of that term.
- C. The *SECRETARY* shall attend to all correspondence, excluding invitations for induction and newsletters, of the chapter, shall keep an accurate record of all formal actions of all chapter meetings and transmit a copy to each active chapter member during the school year. The Secretary shall also fill out the annual activities report to be forwarded to the National Headquarters each spring.
- D. The *TREASURER*, along with the faculty advisor and associate advisor, shall act as custodian of all monies, both from members and from student government disbursements, in the possession of the chapter and shall keep copies of all receipts and expenditures. They shall report the same to each meeting, and shall also report to the Executive Committee as they may require. All expenditures of funds in any off-campus accounts belonging to the chapter must be approved by the Executive Committee and by either the advisor or associate advisor. Only the advisor or associate advisor may sign checks from said accounts.
- E. The *HISTORIAN* shall be editor of any newsletters from the chapter and shall also maintain an archive of documents, pictures, and the like relevant to the chapter's history. They will also serve as student editor for *The Sextant*, the CNU history department on-line historical journal.

## **Section 8. Impeachment, Removal, and Expulsion of Officers**

By formal petition from other members and under regulations present in the by-laws, the chapter as a whole may vote by a two-thirds majority to remove an officer and expel that officer, but only after said officer has opportunity for due process as defined by the by-laws. As for regular members, grounds for removal and/or expulsion include plagiarism, malfeasance, etc. and other improper actions as defined in the by-laws.

### **Section 9. Vacancies**

The Committee shall fill by election all vacancies in its own membership occurring during the school year. Any member so chosen to fill a vacancy shall assume all the duties and privileges of the said office but is ineligible for re-election to the full term.

## **Article VI. Meetings**

### **Section 1. Number of required meetings**

The Committee and full chapter shall meet at least twice per school year; once at the start of the fall semester and again before the induction ceremony in the spring semester. The President may call meetings of the Committee for extraordinary reasons and with at least one week of prior notice. The faculty advisor and associate advisor may also call special meetings to address specific matters. By written petition from a majority of members of the chapter the President is required to call a special meeting of the chapter after providing a one-week notice. Notice of Committee or chapter meetings shall include a proposed agenda of items of consideration, but any appropriate other items may be included at any meeting of the Committee of chapter.

### **Section 2. Parliamentary Procedure**

All meetings shall use Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, as the basis of parliamentary procedure.

### **Section 3. A Quorum Defined**

#### **A. Entire Chapter**

- a. Before a vote can be taken in any chapter meeting, a quorum must be met. A quorum shall consist of 60% of the active membership.

#### **B. Executive Committee**

- a. A simple majority of the active members plus the faculty advisor or associate advisor of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting. If a quorum is not present, the Committee may only transact business of an emergency nature but must offer all absent members, immediately following the meeting, the opportunity to vote on any issues decided by the group present. The absent members shall also receive a written summary of deliberations held at the meeting.

#### **Section 4. Majority Defined**

Once a quorum is met, all actions must be approved by a simple majority (50% plus one) vote of all members present to declare a decision valid.

### **Article VII. Faculty Advisor**

#### **Section 1. Qualifications**

The faculty sponsor must be a member of the CNU History Faculty and a member of Phi Alpha Theta.

#### **Section 2. Duties**

- A. The advisor shall oversee the operation of the organization, and co-ordinate activities involved in the application for membership (including collecting initiation fees and dues and forwarding them to the National Headquarters, the induction ceremony, and the selection of student papers for competition in the annual Virginia Regional Conference of Phi alpha Theta, as well as arranging transportation and accommodations for said conference.
- B. The advisor shall work closely with the organization in coordinating activities to insure that they are conducted in compliance with Christopher Newport University policies and the laws of the United States of America, and the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the City of Newport News.
- C. The advisor also maintains all official records of the financial transactions and the minutes of meetings in the Department of History and all such files shall be open to all members of the Executive Committee at any time.

#### **Section 3. Method of Election**

The advisor shall be elected by the History faculty and shall serve until he or she resigns, retires, or is removed from office by the department at the request of the active members of the chapter.

#### **Section 4. Removal**

An advisor may be removed at the written request of a majority of the active membership for financial malfeasance, academic misconduct, or other activities as defined by the by-laws. That removal request must be approved by a simple majority of the History faculty.

### **Article VIII. Committees**

## **Section 1. Executive Committee**

### **A. Composition**

- a. The elected officers and the faculty advisor and associate advisor shall constitute the Executive Committee. Both faculty members are *ex officio*, non-voting members.

### **B. Duties**

- a. Shall have general supervision and direction over the chapter in matters of obtaining facilities and refreshments for the annual induction ceremony at all times between meetings of the entire chapter.
- b. Shall insure that all persons brought into new membership in the Society shall be initiated in accordance with the initiatory services prescribed by the National Committee.
- c. Under the signatures of the President and the faculty advisor, send out the invitations to prospective new members and authorizes the faculty advisor to collect all relevant fees and dues.
- d. May also consider special assessments upon the members of the chapter with the approval of a majority of the active members as a means to maintain the chapter in good order.
- e. Shall consider whether to send delegates to any national biennial convention and help cover the delegates' expenses, but only after official receipt of the formal call of the Convention. The Secretary shall notify the National Executive Director of the results of a delegate election at least thirty days prior to the opening of the Convention.
- f. May also appoint additional committees as need and appoint members to the Constitutional and Scholarship Committees.
- g. Additional powers and duties of the Executive Committee may be set forth in the by-laws of the chapter.

## **Section 2. Constitutional Committee**

- A. The Constitutional Committee shall be a formal committee appointed by the Executive Committee either at the request of either the Executive Committee itself or a majority of active members to rewrite or provide amendments to the Constitution or by-laws. Composition of the said committee may be determined by the Executive Committee initially, but its future composition must be written into the by-laws.
- B. Shall write or revise the chapter's by-laws or Constitution, so long as it shall conform to the provisions of the National Phi Alpha Theta Constitution and its by-laws.
- C. Once the chapter as a whole approves the changes, the chapter Secretary shall submit a copy, with those changes, of the same to National Headquarters.

## **Section 3. Scholarship Committee**

- A. This committee, at its discretion and with approval of the faculty advisor and the History faculty, may approve the awarding a gold scholarship key to worthy members, with the design of said key to meet the form required in the National Constitution. This committee's composition shall be written into the by-laws but should include the faculty advisor and associate advisor, at least one elected officer and one active member who is not an officer.
- B. Additional powers and duties of said committee may be set forth in the by-laws of the chapter.

#### **Article VIII. Amendments**

- A. Changes to the Constitution shall be made only by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the active members of the chapter.