

1 **ARTICLE I — NAME OF THE CHAPTER**

2 **"Chapter" as used herein shall refer to the [chapter Name] [Professional/Campus]**
3 **Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.**

4 **ARTICLE II — QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP**

5 *Professional chapters*

6 **Section 1 — All members of the chapter must be members in good standing of the**
7 **national Society. Professional members will be assigned to the chapter by the national**
8 **headquarters based on geographic boundaries established by the national Society. A**
9 **member of the Society in any membership category, other than a student member, located**
10 **outside a chapter's boundaries may join the chapter by filing a membership form and**
11 **complying with all chapter membership requirements[, such as payment of chapter dues**
12 **and initiation fees].**

13 **Section 2 — Only members in good standing of the chapter shall be eligible to vote**
14 **in chapter elections.**

15 *Some professional chapters have chosen to admit students who are members of the*
16 *national Society. In some instances this choice may be driven by the absence of a student*
17 *chapter at a college or university within the chapter's boundaries. In some instances*
18 *professional chapters hope to provide mentoring and networking opportunities for*
19 *students. A chapter interested in admitting students should add a section so stating.*

20 **Section 3 — Student members of the national Society may join the [name of**
21 **professional chapter] by filing a membership form and complying with all chapter**
22 **membership requirements[, such as payment of chapter dues and initiation fees].**

23 *Student chapters*

24 **Section 1 — All student members in good standing with the national Society who**
25 **are students at [name of institution] may affiliate with the [name of chapter] by filing a**
26 **membership form and complying with all chapter membership requirements[, such as**
27 **payment of chapter dues and initiation fees].**

1 **Section 2 — Student members in good standing automatically become post-graduate**
2 **members of the Society upon graduation and may become professional members upon**
3 **application to the national headquarters. They may remain members of the [name of**
4 **campus chapter] by paying the chapter's annual dues.**

5 *In some areas there are several institutions of higher learning but only one of them has*
6 *an active SPJ chapter. Some student chapters admit students from the other institutions.*
7 *If that is the case, the following would be an appropriate addition to the bylaws. It may*
8 *be appropriate to add provisions stating whether students from other institutions may*
9 *hold office and/or vote in chapter elections.*

10 Section 3 — Student members of the national Society who do not attend [name of
11 institution] but who reside or attend school nearby may associate with the [name of
12 chapter] by complying with all chapter membership requirements[, such as payment of
13 chapter dues and initiation fees].

14 **ARTICLE III — DUES**

15 **Section 1 — The amount of local dues to be paid by each member of the chapter**
16 **shall be fixed by the [officers/Board of Directors] subject to ratification by the professional**
17 **membership when the [officers/Board of Directors] proposes to increase or decrease the**
18 **annual dues.**

19 *Professional chapters that set lower annual dues for retired, post-graduate and student*
20 *members and associates may wish to add the following.*

21 Section 2 — The [name of chapter] extends chapter membership at special rates
22 to retired members and members enrolled as full-time students. In either case, a member
23 must notify the [Secretary-Treasurer/Treasurer] in writing of his or her retirement or
24 enrollment in school to qualify for the special rate, which is [1/2 or some other
25 percentage] of the current regular chapter dues.

26 Dues for recent graduates who become members of the [name of chapter] are [1/2
27 or some other percentage] of the current regular rate for the first year of membership.

1 **ARTICLE IV — MEETINGS & PROGRAMS**

2 **Section 1 — "Meetings" as used herein shall mean regularly scheduled or special**
3 **meetings that are publicized or announced and approved by the [officers/Board of**
4 **Directors/Executive Committee].**

5 *The national Bylaws no longer require chapters to hold a specified number of meetings*
6 *annually, and some chapters hold events, such as professional development programs, as*
7 *their primary general membership gatherings. In such situations the following section*
8 *sets a procedure for occasions when it is necessary to conduct chapter business at such*
9 *events.*

10 **Section 2 — The [officers/Board of Directors] shall give notice when chapter**
11 **business is to be conducted at a regularly scheduled membership meeting or program at**
12 **least seven days in advance by e-mail to members who have provided e-mail addresses and**
13 **by U.S. Mail to all other members.**

14 *Depending on the level of technology available, chapters may select the most efficient*
15 *means of notifying members of events. If the chapter has a website it should post notice*
16 *there, but should not consider that to be adequate to inform chapter members, some of*
17 *whom may visit the website infrequently.*

18 **Section 3 — At a chapter membership meeting or program a vote of a majority of**
19 **the members in good standing who are present and voting shall be sufficient to approve**
20 **any measure that requires a vote, except amendments to these Bylaws.**

21 **Section 4 — At a meeting of the [officers/Board of Directors/Executive Committee] a**
22 **quorum consisting of a majority of the members of that body must be present to conduct**
23 **any business.**

24 **Section 5 — Any action of the [officers/Board of Directors/Executive Committee]**
25 **may be rescinded by a majority vote of the members in good standing present at a meeting**
26 **of the chapter membership if notice has been given in accordance with Section 2 above that**
27 **the action previously taken by the [officers/Board of Directors/Executive Committee] shall**
28 **be put to a vote of the membership at the meeting.**

29 **Section 6 — ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER shall be the parliamentary authority for all**
30 **matters of procedure not specifically covered by these Bylaws.**

1 **Section 7 — All membership meetings and programs of the [name of chapter] shall**
2 **be on the record and open to coverage by any or all communications media on an equal**
3 **basis. Coverage of programs of the [name of chapter] shall be encouraged in order to**
4 **acquaint the profession and public at large with the issues discussed by and before the**
5 **chapter membership. Individual guest speakers shall be apprised in advance that this is a**
6 **chapter policy.**

7 **Section 8 — All meetings of the [officers/Board of Directors/Executive Committee]**
8 **shall be open to all members of the national Society, except that when action is required**
9 **between regular meetings the [officers/Board of Directors/Executive Committee] may vote**
10 **by electronic or other means. When the [officers/Board of Directors/Executive Committee]**
11 **[have/has] taken action outside a regular meeting that body must ratify the action by a vote**
12 **at the next regular meeting.**

13 **Section 9 — The financial records of the chapter and minutes of all meetings shall**
14 **be open for inspection to members in good standing. Requests for inspection shall be made**
15 **to the custodian(s) of such records and shall be made available, if practical, at the next**
16 **meeting of the membership or the [officers/Board of Directors/Executive Committee].**

17 **ARTICLE V — OFFICERS**

18 *Professional and student chapters*

19 **Section 1 — The officers of the chapter shall be: (list them here).**

20 **PRESIDENT — The President shall be the chief executive officer and shall supervise**
21 **and direct the business and affairs of the chapter. The President shall see to it that the**
22 **chapter conforms to the requirements of the national Society. The President shall have the**
23 **power to delegate such functions to other officers as necessary. The President shall have the**
24 **power to create committees of officers, directors, members, or any combination thereof, to**
25 **further the business and affairs of the chapter. The President shall perform other functions**
26 **customarily associated with such a title.**

1 **VICE PRESIDENT — The Vice President shall exercise the functions of the President**
2 **in the absence or inability of the President, either temporarily or for the duration of the**
3 **President's term.**

4 *Some chapters assign specific duties to this position. Consider adding the following.*

5 The Vice President shall [serve as chair of the (Membership, Programming)
6 Committee][supervise chapter (fundraising, communications)].

7 **SECRETARY-TREASURER — The Secretary-Treasurer shall maintain the chapter's**
8 **records and its finances, file an annual report to the national Society, and otherwise**
9 **maintain contact with the national Society. The Secretary-Treasurer shall take minutes of**
10 **all meetings of the [officers/Board of Directors/Executive Committee] and the membership.**
11 **The Secretary-Treasurer shall also maintain regular contact with the chapter membership.**
12 **The Secretary-Treasurer will perform other functions customarily associated with such a**
13 **title.**

14 *This is the minimum size for a chapter governing body. Larger chapters may wish to*
15 *separate the Secretary and Treasurer functions into separate officer positions. Some*
16 *chapters include the following.*

17 SECRETARY — The Secretary shall record the minutes of meetings of the chapter
18 membership and the [officers/Board of Directors/Executive Committee], be custodian of
19 chapter records, maintain chapter membership rolls, and maintain contact with the
20 national Society. The Secretary shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the
21 President or Board, and provide all notices required by these Bylaws.

22 TREASURER — The Treasurer shall be the principal accounting and financial
23 officer of the chapter. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the financial books of
24 account for the chapter, will have custody of all chapter funds and securities, and will
25 make disbursements of funds in accordance with chapter policies and at the direction of
26 the [officers/Board of Directors/Executive Committee]. The Treasurer will perform all
27 the duties incidental to the office

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If the chapter has a Secretary-Treasurer, the Immediate Past President should be ex officio, without a vote.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT — The Immediate Past President shall serve as an ex officio officer of the chapter.

For student chapters:

CHAPTER ADVISER — The chapter Adviser must be a professional member in good standing of the national Society. S/he shall be recognized as the representative of the national Society and shall oversee all activities of the chapter membership and make recommendations as s/he believes necessary, but will have no vote. The adviser shall be charged with the duties of attending meetings regularly and of providing, whenever possible, a permanent place of safekeeping for the books, documents and records of the chapter and its officers.

The chapter Adviser shall be chosen annually by [members of the chapter in good standing /the Board of Directors] and may serve an unlimited number of terms.

For professional and student chapters

Section 2 — If the President and Vice President are both unable to carry out their duties, executive power shall flow to the following officers, in order: the Secretary (or Secretary-Treasurer), the Treasurer, the Immediate Past President.

Section 3 — Officers’ terms shall begin on [date], and each shall serve for one year or until their successors have been selected and qualified.

Some professional chapters that admit students as members limit eligibility for the position of President to professional members. Some limit eligibility for all officer positions to professional members. The national Bylaws state that associates are not eligible to vote or hold national offices.

Some chapters impose term limits on some or all officers.

1 ARTICLE [NO.] — BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OPTIONAL ARTICLE)

2 *New and small chapters may not need boards of directors. Having three or four officers*
3 *(see above) may be sufficient. But, as chapters grow and/or find that they have active*
4 *members willing to volunteer their time, including them in the decision-making process*
5 *may be beneficial. In many chapters board members serve as committee chairs and help*
6 *to spread the everyday workload of running the chapter. The number of director positions*
7 *will depend on the size of the chapter and the complexity of its operations and*
8 *programming.*

9 *The issues that should be considered include: ensuring that the total number of officers*
10 *and directors is an odd number; and staggering directors' terms so the entire board*
11 *cannot turn over in one election.*

12 Section 1 — The Board of Directors is the decision-making body of the chapter. It
13 shall meet at least [monthly between September and June/quarterly in (Months)] to
14 conduct the chapter's business. The Board shall be made up of the President, Vice
15 President, [Secretary-Treasurer/Secretary, Treasurer], Immediate Past President [and no.
16 of directors]. Directors shall serve [two/three]-year terms, which shall be staggered.

17 Section 2 — Upon adoption of these Bylaws, the Board of Directors shall agree
18 on a method for apportioning the lengths of terms of directors on the Board at the time so
19 that [1/2 or 1/3 No.] of the directors' terms expire each year.

20 ARTICLE [NO.] — EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (OPTIONAL ARTICLE)

21 *chapters with officers and boards of directors may find it more efficient to establish an*
22 *Executive Committee to deal with issues that require prompt decisions when it is not*
23 *possible to take a vote of the chapter's entire governing body. Here, too, it would be*
24 *beneficial if an odd number of individuals makes up the Executive Committee, giving the*
25 *President the tie-breaking vote.*

26 Section 1 — The Executive Committee shall be made up of the President, the
27 Vice President, the [Secretary-Treasurer/Secretary, the Treasurer], the Immediate Past
28 President and [No. of directors].

29 Section 2 — The Executive Committee shall possess and may exercise all of the
30 power of the Board of Directors while the Board is not in session, except to the extent, if
31 any, that such authority shall be limited by action of the Board.

1 *If one or more directors serve on the executive committee they might be designated by a*
2 *vote taken at the board meeting after each annual election, or they might be designated*
3 *by a vote at a general membership meeting.*

4 Section 3 — Newly elected officers and directors of the chapter shall select
5 directors who will serve on the Executive Committee at the first Board of Directors
6 meeting after they take office.

7 **ARTICLE [NO.] — ELECTIONS**

8 *Because new chapters and small chapters may have limited resources in terms of active*
9 *membership, and some chapters have members spread over large geographic areas,*
10 *these model bylaws will lay out a basic process for conducting elections.*

11 **Section 1 — There shall be an election annually in [month] to elect the [identify**
12 **officers by title] [and (number of) directors (if relevant)] of the [name of chapter].**

13 **Section 2 — In preparation for the annual election, in [month (2 months before the**
14 **election)] the President shall appoint a Nominating Committee to prepare a slate of**
15 **candidates for each officer [and director] position to be filled.**

16 *Some chapters specify the size of the Nominating Committee and/or designate who may*
17 *be appointed to it. Some say a specific chapter officer will be its chair. To avoid even the*
18 *appearance of a conflict of interest, it is recommended that the members of the*
19 *nominating committee should not be chapter members who will be candidates in the*
20 *election.*

21 **Section 3 — No later than 45 days before the [election/start of balloting] the**
22 **Nominating Committee shall forward to the President a slate of qualified candidates for**
23 **[identify officers by title (and directors positions)] for consideration by [chapter officers/the**
24 **Board of Directors].**

25 **Section 4 — Upon determination that each candidate is a member of the chapter in**
26 **good standing and qualified to serve in the position for which s/he has been nominated, the**
27 **[chapter officers/Board of Directors] shall, at least 30 days before the [election/start of**
28 **balloting], publish the candidates' names and qualifications for office to the chapter**
29 **membership.**

1 *Some chapters say publication is to be accomplished by including the information in the*
2 *chapter newsletter. Chapters may use e-mail or other electronic means. The goal is to*
3 *ensure that each member receives timely, adequate notice of when and how the election*
4 *will be conducted, and the process for nominating candidates to run against the official*
5 *slate.*

6 **Section 5 — Any chapter member in good standing may nominate a candidate or**
7 **candidates to run against the proposed slate. Nominations must be received by the chapter**
8 **President no later than 14 days before [the date of the election/balloting is to begin], and**
9 **must include a statement of the candidate’s qualifications to hold the office for which s/he**
10 **has been nominated. Upon verification that a candidate nominated in this way is a member**
11 **of the chapter in good standing and qualified to hold the office sought, the [chapter officers,**
12 **Board of Directors] shall, no later than 10 days before the [date of the election/balloting is**
13 **to begin] publish the names of candidates and their qualifications by the same method used**
14 **to publish the official slate.**

15 *Most chapters conduct balloting at a regular membership meeting. However, chapters*
16 *should consider conducting balloting by mail or electronically — by e-mail or some other*
17 *means that ensures ballot secrecy.*

18 **Section 6 — The election shall be conducted by secret ballot of all chapter members**
19 **in good standing at a regular chapter meeting in [month].**

20 **Section 6 (alternative) — Voting by electronic means using [ballots returned by e-**
21 **mail, Survey Monkey, other electronic means] and/or U.S. Mail shall commence on [date]**
22 **and continue until 11:59 p.m. on [date], and shall included ballots sent by U.S. Mail**
23 **postmarked no later than [date].**

24 **Section 7 — All chapter members in good standing are eligible to vote.**

25 **Section 8 — No later than [date], a committee appointed by the President shall**
26 **count the ballots and report the results of the election to the [officers/Board of Directors],**
27 **which shall publish the outcome of the election to the members.**

28 *In chapters with boards of directors it often is the case that a contested election occurs*
29 *when there is at least one more candidate than the number of director seats to be filled.*
30 *In such situations it would be appropriate to include the following in Section 5 or to*
31 *create a new section stating:*

1 Section 9 — If there are more candidates for Director positions than the number
2 of seats to be filled, the first seat will be filled by the candidate who received the largest
3 number of votes, the second seat will be filled by the candidate who received the second
4 largest number of votes, and so on until all seats have been filled.

5 **ARTICLE [NO.] — FILLING UNEXPIRED TERMS**

6 **Vacancies among Officers, other than the President, [and board members] due to**
7 **death, resignation or other cause shall be filled by a majority vote of the chapter officers**
8 **[and directors] present at any meeting at which a quorum of the officers [and directors] is**
9 **present. Officers appointed under this section shall serve until the next chapter election.**
10 **[Directors appointed under this section shall serve the unexpired term of the person s/he**
11 **replaced.]**

12 **ARTICLE [NO.] — REMOVAL FROM OFFICE**

13 **Section 1 — It shall be grounds for removal from office if any officer [or board**
14 **member] has failed to attend three regularly scheduled, consecutive meetings, or any five**
15 **meetings between [date] and [date (1 year later)], without an excuse approved by the**
16 **[officers/Board of Directors].**

17 **Section 2 — Upon recommendation of the President, and after giving at least seven**
18 **days' notice to the officer [or board member], upon a vote of two-thirds of the remaining**
19 **officers [and directors] at the next regular meeting of the [officers/Board of Directors], the**
20 **officer [or board member] shall be removed from office.**

21 *For Campus chapters*

22 The Chapter Adviser may be removed by a vote of 75 percent of the voting
23 members of the [name of chapter] present and voting.

24 **ARTICLE [NO.] — AUDITS**

25 **The chapter shall conduct a review of its finances at least once a year. The**
26 **[Secretary-Treasurer/Treasurer] shall present all relevant financial records to a committee**

1 **of three chapter members who are [not/neither] officers [nor board members] for this**
2 **review.**

3 *Each chapter needs to have a provision that insures its financial integrity. How this is*
4 *done depends on the size and sophistication of the chapter. Larger chapters may wish to*
5 *require, in their bylaws, that an outside firm be hired to conduct a formal audit annually*
6 *or at some other regular interval, i.e. biennially.*

7 **ARTICLE [NO.] — COMMITTEES**

8 **The President is authorized to appoint such committees as s/he deems necessary.**

9 **Chairmen of the committees may be officers[, directors] or regular chapter members.**

10 *If the chapter has sufficient active members it should consider appointing committees to*
11 *address professional development and membership, as well as the Society’s core*
12 *missions: Freedom of Information, Ethics, Diversity. Other articles of the bylaws suggest*
13 *ad hoc committees, including nominating and audit committees.*

14 **ARTICLE [NO.] — STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH CAMPUS**
15 **REGULATIONS (OPTIONAL ARTICLE)**

16 *Campus chapters — Colleges and universities may require specific statements regarding*
17 *adherence to institutional rules, regulations and policies. The examples that follow are*
18 *not intended to be exhaustive. Chapter leaders need to find out what their institutions*
19 *require.*

20 The [name of chapter]

21 — is a not-for-profit organization.

22 — shall adhere to all guidelines set forth by the [name of institution and published
23 policy statements].

24 — shall not discriminate on the basis of age, color, ethnicity, gender, national
25 origin, disability or handicap, race, religion, sexual orientation. This policy will include,
26 but is not limited to recruitment, membership, organization activities, or opportunities to
27 hold office.

28 — shall comply with all University and campus policies and local, state, and
29 federal laws.

1 — shall not conspire to engage in hazing, or commit any act that causes or is
2 likely to cause bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation or disgrace
3 resulting in physical or mental harm to any fellow student or person attending the
4 institution.

5 **ARTICLE [NO.] — CONVENTION ATTENDANCE (OPTIONAL ARTICLE)**

6 *The national Bylaws require chapters to send delegates to the national convention and*
7 *regional conferences. Some chapters may find it desirable to reiterate that in their*
8 *bylaws.*

9 Section 1 — The chapter shall be represented at each National Convention and
10 Regional Conference by at least one delegate and alternate elected by the [officers/Board
11 of Directors] from among the chapter’s members in good standing.

12 Section 2 — The chapter will strive to defray travel costs and registration fees for
13 delegates who attend the Convention.

14 **ARTICLE [NO.] — DISBANDING THE CHAPTER**

15 **Upon the decision to terminate the chapter, whether by dissolution, disbandment,**
16 **revocation pursuant to the national Bylaws, or otherwise, any remaining chapter funds**
17 **shall be distributed to an adjoining active Society chapter then in good standing, to the**
18 **Society or to the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation, as directed by the chapter’s governing body,**
19 **or, in the absence of action within 60 days of termination by the local governing body, by**
20 **the Board of Directors of the national Society.**

21 *The language above is taken from Art. V, Sec. 14 of the national Bylaws.*

22 **ARTICLE [NO.] — AMENDMENTS**

23 Section 1 — Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed by the [officers/Board
24 of Directors] at a regular meeting of the [officers/Board of Directors], or by no fewer than
25 [No of members] chapter members in good standing. Regardless of whether the
26 [officers/Board of Directors] agree[s] with the proposal, [they/it] must present the proposal
27 to the [name of chapter] membership for a vote no later than the next annual election of

1 **officers. The [officers/Board of Directors] must provide members the text of the proposed**
2 **amendment(s) at least 60 days before [the next annual election/balloting is to begin]. If the**
3 **[officers/Board of Directors] oppose[s] the proposed amendment(s) [they/it] may issue a**
4 **statement explaining [their/its] reasons for opposition and/or alternative amendments, and**
5 **circulate [their/its] report at least 30 days before [the next annual election/balloting is to**
6 **begin].**

7 **Section 2 — To become effective, proposed amendments must receive a 2/3 vote of**
8 **the chapter members in good standing voting in accordance with procedures set out in**
9 **Article [No.] (Elections) above.**

10 **Section 3 — Amendments become effect immediately, unless otherwise specified.**