

## **Working-Class Studies Association Constitution**

*I. Name.* The name of this association shall be the Working-Class Studies Association.

*II. Purpose.* The object of the association shall be to promote and develop multiple forms of scholarship, teaching, and activism related to working-class life and cultures.

*III. Membership.* There shall be three categories of individual membership: people who are employed full time; students or part-time employed, unemployed, and retired persons; and honorary and lifetime members. Organizations, such as schools, departments, or unions, may also join as institutional members, though they are ineligible to vote in Association elections. The dues structure within each category shall be determined by the Steering Committee.

A. Life members: Persons eligible for regular membership may become life members by making a single payment, thereafter becoming exempt from the annual payment of dues.

B. Honorary members: Distinguished men and women may be elected honorary members. Honorary members shall be nominated by the Steering Committee and elected by a mail ballot of the membership of the association.

### *IV. Administration:*

A. The administration of the Association shall be in the hands of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee shall consist of the president, the president-elect, the immediate past-president, the secretary and the treasurer; and four at-large members. At least one member of the Steering Committee shall at all times come from the following constituencies: college or university faculty and staff, graduate students, non-university affiliated, and members from outside the United States. To the extent practicable, members shall represent the diverse fields, activities, and constituencies that constitute working-class studies.

The Steering Committee shall act either on its own initiative or on the recommendations of a properly-convened meeting of the membership as a whole.

B. The Steering Committee shall meet as often as needed to transact the business of the Association, but no less than twice during any given year. Five members of the Steering Committee shall constitute a quorum at meetings, and a majority vote of the members present and voting shall control its decisions. Special meetings of the Steering Committee may be called by the President or by a majority of the members of the Steering Committee.

C. The Steering Committee may establish other offices, boards and committees, as the business of the association may require, define their tasks and powers, and fix their terms and methods of appointment.

### *V. Officers--Responsibilities*

A. President: The president shall preside at all meetings of the Steering Committee and of the

membership of the organization. The president is also empowered to represent the organization in appropriate public fora, or to delegate responsibility for such representation to other of the officers or members of the Steering Committee. The President shall also chair the Outreach Committee.

B. The President-elect shall execute the functions of the president in case of his or her absence or incapacity. He or she shall chair the Conference Committee and therefore take primary responsibility for organizing conferences.

C. The Immediate Past-President shall be a member of the Steering Committee and shall participate in the work of the Conference Committee. He or she shall chair the Awards Committee.

D. Secretary: The secretary shall act as secretary of the Steering Committee, as clerk of general meetings of the membership of the association, and as chair of the Communications Committee.

E. Treasurer: The treasurer shall have charge of all financial operations of the association, including managing its funds; the collection of sums due the association and the payment of its bills; presentation to the Steering Committee each year of a budget for the ensuing fiscal year; maintaining the membership mailing and e-mail lists; and, with other officers, preparation of grant proposals and other fund-raising initiatives. After action by the Steering Committee, the treasurer shall insure that the budget be distributed to the members of the association for their information. The treasurer shall chair the Finance Committee.

F. Steering Committee members: At-large members of the Steering Committee shall participate in the activities of the Steering Committee. In addition, each member shall participate in the activities of at least one of the standing committees.

G. Bonding: The officers and the staff shall be bonded in a sum of not less than \$10,000, the exact amount to be set by the Steering Committee.

H. Emergency replacement: the Steering Committee shall be empowered to designate one of its members, or another member of the association, to serve in lieu of any one of the officers should that officer resign, die, or become otherwise unavailable, such service to continue until an election can be held.

I. Terms of office: The president-elect, president, and immediate past-president shall fill each of those offices in sequence for a period of one year from election—a three-year term in all (the first president will only serve a two-year term), unless recalled. The secretary and treasurer shall be elected in alternate years to serve terms of two years. Two at-large members of the Steering Committee shall be elected every year to serve terms of two years. In the first election, two at-large members will be elected for a one-year term and two for a two-year term, the secretary for a two-year term, the treasurer for a three-year term, along with President and President-elect. There will be no immediate past-president in the first year of the Association.

#### *VI. Officers–Election:*

A. The President-Elect, Treasurer, Secretary, members of the Steering Committee, and any committee members who are elected by the membership-at-large shall be elected by a plurality of the votes of the members of the Association qualified to vote. The term of office shall begin on the date announced for the close of the Annual Meeting of the Association in the year during which they are elected, except that the term of office for members of the Elections Committee shall begin on the date announced for the beginning of the Annual Meeting of the Association in the year during which they are elected. Elections shall be conducted by mail ballots; mail ballots are defined to include email or internet-based ballots.

B. Recall: Officers, including at-large members of the Steering Committee, may be recalled for cause, such cause to include failure to perform duties, malfeasance, or the like. The officer or at-large Steering Committee recalled will be entitled to procedural due process. The officer or at-large Steering Committee member must be notified by written letter of cause and intent to recall at least thirty days before recall petition is initiated. A petition to recall must be signed within sixty days of its initiation by at least the number of members who voted for the officer or at-large Steering Committee member. An officer or at-large Steering Committee member who is thus recalled by petition may, with any other candidates nominated by the methods herein stated, run in an election called to fill the office.

#### *VII. Steering Committee--Responsibilities*

A. The Steering Committee shall meet as often as needed to transact the association's business.

B. The responsibilities of the Steering Committee shall be as follows:

1. To provide for its own organization and operations and to manage the business and affairs of the association as provided by the laws of the state in which the organization is incorporated for directors of a corporation.

2. To conduct a review of the constitutional, legal, and fiduciary issues posed by the language of each resolution or motion approved by duly-constituted meetings of the membership. The Steering Committee will then, in a timely manner, either forward to the membership the resolution as approved, or with nonsubstantive modifications, or determine that it is unable to implement the resolution of the membership for one or more of the following reasons:

a) The resolution or motion impedes the council's ability to carry out its fiduciary responsibilities.

b) The resolution or motion contains erroneous, tortious, or possibly libelous statements.

c) The resolution, by itself or taken with other resolutions, poses a threat to the association's continuing operation as a tax-exempt organization.

If the Steering Committee is unable to approve and implement a resolution of the membership, it will, at the earliest possible opportunity, present to the membership the reasons for its action. The membership may then consider reformulating the resolution or motion, or other appropriate action.

3. To act on the recommendations of meetings of the membership, and to inform it of actions taken. Such actions may include implementation, modification, referral to an appropriate committee of the association, or return to the agenda of a legally-constituted membership meeting. The Steering Committee shall not reverse decisions of the membership on purely political bases.

4. To inform the membership of actions taken to implement resolutions or motions passed and ratified.

5. To initiate and supervise the services of the association.

6. To appoint an executive director and/ or other staff members, and to supervise the administrative structure of the association's office.

7. To approve the budget of the association and to supervise its expenditure.

8. To establish and (except for Standing Committees) discharge committees and commissions of the association, either on the recommendation of the membership or on its own initiative, and to designate their chairs. In making appointments to committees, the Steering Committee shall ensure fair representation of all relevant constituencies within the domain of the association. The Steering Committee shall provide for the appointment of at least one member of the association to each committee of the association whose charge emerges from actions taken at a duly-constituted membership meeting.

9. To act on proposals affecting the dues structure approved by the membership.

10. To supervise publications and other media of the association.

11. To authorize applications for and administration of grants and contracts.

12. To plan, with the Conference Committee and the membership, the time, place, character, and scope of general conventions and meetings of the association.

13. To nominate honorary members, if any.

#### *VIII. Standing Committees:*

A. The following Standing Committees will, under the supervision of the Steering Committee, carry forward the work of the Association: Outreach, Conferences, Communications, Finance, Awards, Elections. Membership of these committees, except for the Elections Committee, and except as specified within this constitution, shall be determined by the Steering Committee.

B. Elections Committee:

1. Responsibilities: The Elections Committee, consisting of three members, is responsible for selecting two nominees for president-elect, secretary, treasurer, at-large members of the Steering Committee, and any other elected committee members; for devising appropriate methods for submitting a ballot containing the names of nominees to the membership for their vote; for arranging for the counting and certification of such votes.

2. Nominations Procedures:

a. Prior to the time of the meeting of the Elections Committee, all members of the Association shall be invited to suggest names for nominations for all elective offices; the Committee shall be guided but not bound by the suggestions received.

b. Prior to the submission of the official ballot for the election, the Elections Committee shall make its nominations for all offices known to the membership of the Association. Within thirty days of that notice, any member of the Association may propose additions to the ballot. A member who is supported by 5% of members of the Association for nomination to the Steering Committee or by at least 10% of members for nomination as President-Elect, Treasurer, or Secretary will be placed on the official ballot along with the nominees of the Elections Committee.

3. Election of the Elections Committee:

Nominations for vacancies on the Elections Committee shall be made by the Steering Committee. The members of Steering Committee shall select twice as many names as there are vacancies to be filled. Additional nominees may be proposed by members of the Association as provided in 2b, above. The Elections Committee shall be elected by a plurality of members voting on the annual ballot of the Association.

4. Terms of Office:

Each member of the Elections Committee is eligible to serve for a term of three years; initially, one member shall be elected for a term of one year, one for a term of two years, and one for a term of three years.

C. Outreach Committee:

Chaired by the President, the Outreach Committee shall be responsible for making contacts with other organizations, recruitment of members, and for developing projects designed to promote activity in the field of working-class studies.

D. Conference Committee:

Chaired by the president-elect, the Conference Committee shall be responsible for planning of the annual meeting and such other meetings as the Association decides to undertake. The Conference Committee shall also be responsible for overseeing local arrangements connected to mounting the annual meeting.

E. Finance Committee:

Chaired by the treasurer, the Finance Committee shall be responsible for preparing an annual budget for presentation to the Steering Committee, for preparing an annual report of the Association's financial state, for developing fund-raising proposals and other

appeals.

F. Communications Committee:

Chaired by the Secretary, the Communications Committee shall oversee communications with the members and others interested in the work of the Association; publication of a newsletter; development and publication of a journal; creation and maintenance of a web site.

In addition to the secretary, its members may include the listserv moderator, the newsletter editor, any journal editor, the web master, and others selected by the Steering Committee.

G. Awards Committee:

Chaired by the Immediate Past-President, the Committee on Awards shall have oversight of all WCSA awards. The Committee on Awards shall have the responsibility to propose to the Association policies and procedures for establishing and promoting all awards; shall consider proposals to establish new awards and recommend actions to the Steering Committee; and shall nominate to the Steering Committee members to participate in sub-committees whose responsibility it shall be to choose among nominees for Association awards.

*IX. Annual Business Meeting:*

A. The Association shall meet annually at a time and place designated by the Steering Committee, generally in connection with the annual conference. The Steering Committee and the officers shall make every effort to acquaint the members with the business of the Association and with the issues involved in the agenda of the Annual Business Meeting or in a ballot by mail, and to provide sufficient time at business meetings for deliberations and votes. Constitutional amendments and items to be included in the agenda of the annual business meeting must be submitted to the President no less than 45 days in advance of the annual business meeting. Emergency resolutions may be submitted and must be circulated by the President no less than 30 days in advance of the annual business meeting.

B. The membership of the Association duly assembled in the Annual Business Meeting or in a special meeting called by the Steering Committee to conduct Association business shall consider policy questions brought to it, and may vote to confirm, revise, or suspend the actions of the Steering committee, or any officer. Whenever a majority of those present and voting at the Annual Business Meeting or special business meeting vote to suspend, revise, or substitute the judgment of the Meeting for an act or recommendation of the Steering Committee or of any officer, the question shall be submitted to the entire membership in a mailed, secret ballot under conditions prescribed by the Steering Committee and shall be determined by a majority of those voting by mail on the question.

C. Resolutions may be proposed by any member of the Association under conditions prescribed by the Steering Committee. All resolutions shall be referred to the Steering Committee for its recommendations before submission to the vote of the Association at its Annual Business Meeting. Notice of this provision shall be given to the members of the Association in advance of the Annual Meeting. A proposed resolution shall be ratified whenever

a majority or more of dues-paying members in good standing present and voting at the Annual Business Meeting vote in support.

D A quorum for the Annual Business Meeting shall be established in the Association's By-Laws.

*X. Amendments:*

A. Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by the Steering Committee or by twenty-five (25) members of the Association. The Steering Committee shall transmit all proposed amendments to the next Annual Business Meeting and may make recommendations on those amendments originating outside the Steering Committee.

B. Amendments to this constitution shall be considered at the annual business meeting, or at a special meeting called for the specific purpose of considering a constitutional amendment, and must be presented for inclusion on the agenda of any such meeting no less than 45 days in advance. To be adopted, any amendment must be approved by two-thirds of the members present and voting at the annual business meeting, or at a special meeting called for the specific purpose of considering a constitutional amendment, AND then approved by mail ballot by a majority of members voting upon the question.

C. The Constitution may also be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote of those voting in a referendum submitted to the voting members of the Association. All proposed amendments to the Constitution shall be communicated to the voting membership at least 45 days prior to the vote on the amendment.

D. An amendment shall take effect immediately upon ratification unless the amendment itself provides otherwise.

*XI. Dissolution:* Dissolution. In accordance with the laws of the [State of Maryland], the association may be dissolved only by a vote of three-fourths of the members present at a special meeting called for the purpose. On the dissolution of the association, subject to compliance with the applicable provisions of such laws, all the property remaining after satisfaction of the association's obligations shall be distributed as the Steering Committee directs, choosing the recipients from corporations, funds, foundations, or learned societies that are organized and operated exclusively for charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes, that allow no part of their net earnings to inure to the benefit of any private shareholder, member, or individual, and that do not carry on propaganda or participate or intervene in any political campaign.