



SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF BLACK RELIGION

BY-LAWS

Amendments Proposed by By-Laws Committee January 5, 2022
Revised as per Review of Executive Committee February 10, 2022
Revised as per Review of Membership at Special Meeting March 4, 2022
Revised by By-Laws Subcommittee September 26, 2022
[Proposed Amendments: Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7](#)

ARTICLE 1 - NAME AND PURPOSE

- Section 1. The name of the organization shall be THE SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF BLACK RELIGION.
- Section 2. The purposes for which the Society has been formed are: (a) to engage in scholarly research and discussion about religious experiences in the African diaspora; (b) to encourage the teaching and discussion of the Black religious experience in the curricula of college or university departments of religion and theological seminaries and divinity schools, (c) and such other activities which will enable the Society to serve as a professional society in the field of Black Religion. The Society may engage in these activities both in the United States and elsewhere, subject to applicable laws.

ARTICLE 2 - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. Executive Committee Members:

The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Past President (as a non-voting member), Executive Director, Executive Director-elect (as a non-voting member), Treasurer, Registrar, Secretary, Nominating Committee Chair, Communications Director, Archivist, and three Members-at-Large.

For continuity, the immediate Past President will serve for one year. All members of the Executive Committee must have dues paid in full. Officers of the Executive Committee shall report yearly at the annual meeting.

Section 2. The succession of Officers:

At the close of the annual business meeting, the President, after having served two years, will serve a third year and last year as President. During this year, the President-Elect and Executive Director-Elect offices are to be presented as a part of the slate of candidates presented by the Nominating Committee Chair becomes Past President. At the close of the annual business meeting, the Executive Director-elect becomes the Executive Director.

Section 3 Terms and Term Limits:

The President serves a term of three (3) years. The Past President shall serve a one (1) year. The Executive Director shall serve a term of three (3) years. All other officers, Treasurer, Registrar, Secretary, Nominating Committee Chair, Communications Director, Archivist and the three Members-at-Large shall serve terms of four (4) years. The President elect, Executive Director-elect and Treasurer-elect shall serve a term of one (1) year. The election of the Executive Director-elect shall occur at the annual business meeting preceding the final year of the Executive Director's term. The election of the Treasurer-elect shall occur at the annual business meeting preceding the Treasurer's final year in office.

Section 4. Selection:

The officers shall be elected by a simple majority vote of the Society's members in good standing by means of secret ballot voting during the annual business meeting of the Society's members.

Section 5. Removal and Vacancies:

Any officer elected by the Society's members may be removed from office, either with or without cause, at any time by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Society's Executive Committee members in good standing actually present or represented by proxy whenever in such members' judgment the best interests of the Society will thereby be served. A vacancy in any office arising from any cause may be filled for the unexpired portion of the term by a member of the Executive Committee.

In case any officer ceases to act as such for any reason before the end of their term, the Executive Committee may choose a successor to serve for the rest of the term. If there is any delay in filling vacancies at the time fixed for the annual meeting, the term of the incumbent officer shall be automatically extended until their successor is elected.

ARTICLE 3 - OFFICERS' DUTIES

Section 1. President:

The President shall have in their charge the general direction and advancement of the Society's affairs with authority to do such acts and to make such contracts as are necessary or proper to carry on the activities of the Society. The President shall preside over all official meetings of the Society, including the annual meeting, the annual business meeting, and the meetings of the Executive Committee, and shall receive, together with the Executive Committee, reports from the officers. The President shall have and exercise such other powers and duties as may be prescribed by the Executive Committee and shall also perform those duties which usually devolve upon a president of an academic society. The President may, during the absence of any officer, delegate said officer's duties to any other officer or director.

It is the President's duty and responsibility to cast the vision for the Society, develop themes, and ensure the program for the annual meeting. The President works in collaboration with the Executive Director to jointly arrange for the annual meeting program and establish a clear delegation of duties well in advance (customarily eight to twelve months prior to the meeting). The President, along with the Executive Director, will present the agenda to the Executive Committee prior to the meeting. The President shall deliver a Presidential Report to the membership at the annual meeting. The President shall formally welcome new members into the Society.

The President represents and speaks for the Society, may sign contracts and other documents on behalf of the Society, except as said duties are assigned to the Executive Director, Treasurer, or other authorized agents of the Society.

After serving the two-year term, the retiring President shall automatically become Past President and serve as a non-voting member of the Executive Committee for a one-year term.

Section 2. Past President:

For the purpose of continuity, the immediate Past President will serve a term of one (1) year. The Past President shall attend the Executive Committee meeting as a non-voting member to support the planning of future programs and the implementation of policies of the Society.

Section 3. Executive Director:

The Executive Director is responsible for coordinating the work of the Society. This requires working closely with the President and the Executive Committee in implementing policy; ensuring that all business arrangements for the Society's annual meetings are handled in an efficient and timely manner (for example, arranging the site of the annual meeting in consultation with a local coordinator when available, securing hotel contracts, and arranging details for a local site visit, customarily eight to twelve months in advance of the annual meeting).

Duties also include managing and delegating tasks for the proper running of the Society, conferring with the President to plan the upcoming annual meeting program, inviting nominations for new members in accordance with the timeline designated in the by-laws Article 4, §3, and oversight of the Registrar's duties to maintain the active and inactive membership lists.

Section 4. Treasurer:

The Treasurer, in conjunction with the President and Executive Director, is to prepare and recommend to the Executive Committee an annual budget, and is responsible for recommending any major changes in fiscal policy. The Treasurer serves as keeper of Society funds and accounts for all income and expenditures, disburses all outgoing funds, and is responsible for general financial oversight of funding, fundraising, planning, budgeting, and financial reporting. The Treasurer prepares a written and verbal report for presentation at each Executive Committee and Society meeting of the written bank reconciliation, balances monthly bank statements and payment service accounts, and retains copies of all expense receipts. The Executive Committee will periodically assess the need for an independent review of the financial accounts, investments, and records of the Society. The Treasurer shall oversee all filings required by state and federal agencies. The Treasurer ensures that the Society is current with all filings and ensures it has a registered agency within the State of New Jersey. The Treasurer maintains a detailed file of financial records to be passed on to the succeeding Treasurer.

Section 5. Registrar:

The Registrar shall

- a. Manage an up-to-date mailing list.
- b. Maintain an active membership list.
- c. Track annual meeting registration and facilitate on-site registration.
- d. Track pre-meeting registrations relative to hotel and contract deadlines.
- e. Coordinate registration numbers with the Treasurer for the purpose of providing the Registrar's report at the business meeting.
- f. Track regrets for those unable to attend the annual meeting.
- g. Compile materials for distribution at the annual meeting.
- h. Prepare name tags for distribution during conference registration.
- i. Attend Executive Committee meetings and present reports regarding annual meeting registrations and Society membership.
- j. Miscellaneous *per diem*.

Section 6. Secretary:

The role of the Secretary includes the following administrative tasks:

- a. Provide all communications between the Executive Committee and members of the organization via accepted means (email/mail/etc.). Communications include notice of the annual meeting at least six (6) months in advance, timely distribution of minutes and agenda for meetings (customarily ten days in advance), information necessary for governance as sought by the Executive Committee, proposed amendments to the organization's bylaws, and upkeep with the organization's records for archival purposes.
- b. Record accurate minutes at all Society business meetings, including Executive Committee meetings, and special and called meetings. Record all votes and maintain files of administrative material to be passed on to succeeding Secretary and Archivist. The Secretary ensures minutes of previous meetings are presented to the President within ten (10) days following the meeting.
- c. Post all meeting notifications to Society members within two weeks of every meeting.

Section 7. Nominating Committee Chair:

The Chair of the Nominating Committee shall

- a. Oversee the election of officers at the annual meeting of the Society with at least three other members of the Society who are not members of the Executive Committee but are present at the annual meeting at which their appointment to the Nominating Committee is announced.
- b. Present a slate of candidates to the membership at the subsequent annual meeting nominations. Nominations for any office may also be made from the floor, provided those making nominations have secured the person's consent to be nominated.
- c. Oversee the committee's counting of ballots and certify the legitimacy of the election. The Chair and members of the Nominating Committee are ineligible to run for office while serving on the Committee and must resign prior to the call for nominations to be eligible to run for an office.
- d. Maintain a file of administrative material to be passed on to the succeeding Nominating Chair.

Section 8. Communications Director:

The Communications Director, responsible for public-facing communication with the membership, shall:

- a. Establish and manage the website and other forms of social media in coordination with the Archivist.
- b. Supervise the production of the newsletter; edit and publish in coordination with the President the Society's newsletter.
- c. Execute all external communications in line with the by-laws.
- d. Coordinate as appropriate with the Secretary and Registrar to ensure that all communications, email lists, marketing, and information provided to the membership are accurate and timely.
- e. Run Zoom or virtual events when necessary.
- f. Take pictures at events, and manage videotaping when necessary.
- g. Organize a communications committee and make appointments and assignments as necessary.

Section 9. Archivist:

The Archivist shall:

- a. Obtain and secure copies of presentations made during the annual meeting.
- b. Make photographs or videotapes as appropriate of the annual meeting.
- c. Appraise, edit, preserve, and direct safekeeping of permanent records and historically valuable documents.
- d. Organize archival records and develop a classification system to facilitate access to archival materials.
- e. Assist Society members, or nonmember parties approved by the President, in research activities based on archival materials.
- f. Report at each annual meeting any new material that has been added to the archive over the past year, inquiries made about the content of the archives, and how archival material appeared in research and publications, if applicable.
- g. Establish and administer policy guidelines concerning requests for public access and use of materials in consultation with the Executive Committee.
- h. Research and record the origins and historical significance of archival materials.
- i. Partner with and coordinate with the Communications Director in establishing and managing the Society's website.
- j. Organize an archival committee if necessary and make appointments and assignments as needed.

Section 10. Members-at-Large:

Three Members-at-Large shall

- a. Serve as liaisons between the membership of the Society and the Executive Committee by being available at the annual meeting for discussion of any concerns members might have and reporting these concerns to the Executive Committee.
- b. Attend the annual Executive Committee meeting.
- c. Carry out additional duties as needed.

ARTICLE 4 - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The Society shall be composed of persons who have engaged in active teaching and/or research about the religious experiences of Black people.

Section 2. Membership in the Society shall be by invitation only and upon the vote of the Society at the annual meeting.

Section 3. New members shall be nominated by any member of the Society in good standing, provided that the nomination is presented to the President between October 1st and January 5th before the next annual meeting. The application must include the nomination form, letter from the nominator, CV, and a paragraph from the nominee stating how they plan to demonstrate commitment to the SSBR. Normally nominees must have a PhD or equivalent terminal degree in hand at time of nomination and shall show evidence of present or demonstrated contribution to scholarly study of Black religious experiences.

The Executive Committee shall act upon the application no later than February 1st before the next annual meeting. If the nomination is approved by the Executive Committee, the proposed nomination(s) will be submitted to the membership for approval between February 5-15 before the next annual meeting. Nominees and their nominators will be informed of the vote of the membership no later than February 20 and will be invited to attend the next annual meeting to be inducted into membership formally.

Section 4. Members of the Society may also nominate Associate Members—PhD (ABD) students—who have completed all requirements for the degree, except the dissertation. New associate members shall be nominated by any member of the Society in good standing, provided that the nomination is presented to the President between October 1st and January 5th before the next annual meeting. The application must include the nomination form, letter from the nominator, CV, and a paragraph from the nominee stating how they plan to demonstrate commitment to the SSBR. The Executive Committee shall act upon the application no later than February 1st before the next annual meeting. If the nomination is approved by the Executive Committee, the proposed nomination(s) will be submitted to the membership for approval between February 5-15 before the next annual meeting. Nominees and their nominators will be informed of the vote of the membership no later than February 20 and will be invited to attend the next annual meeting to be inducted into membership formally.

Section 5. A member of the Society may bring a maximum of two (2) guests to the annual meeting provided a written request has been submitted to the President at least thirty (30) days prior to the annual meeting. Guests of a member may attend public sessions only and guests shall pay the established on-site registration fee.

Section 6. Each member of the Society shall pay an annual membership fee, the amount of which shall be determined by the Society itself at the annual meeting. Failure to pay the annual membership fee shall result in the loss of voting privileges at the annual meeting.

Section 7. Members who have not paid annual dues for five consecutive years will be removed from membership. If circumstances change, and the former member wishes to become an active member, they may seek re-nomination. The Executive Director in consultation with the President may make exceptions to this rule if circumstances warrant such.

Section 8. Members who have retired from active service are eligible for emeriti/ae status. These members are not required to pay membership dues. Active members who wish to be granted this status must submit a letter to the Executive Committee.

Section 9. Life Membership is currently available at the fee of \$1000, payable over three consecutive years.

ARTICLE 5 – MEETINGS

Section 1. The Society shall meet at least once every year, the weekend before Palm Sunday weekend, normally Thursday through Saturday, in the city decided upon by the members at the annual meeting or, if the members prefer, such place and time determined by the Executive Committee.

Section 2. Special meetings may be held on the call of the President.

Section 3. Notice of all meetings shall be emailed to the address of each member as appearing on the mailing list of the Society at least two (2) months before the date of the meeting.

Section 4. A simple majority of the members in good standing in attendance of the meeting shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of any business at the meetings of the Society, except as may be otherwise required by these by-laws.

ARTICLE 6 - AMENDMENTS

Section 1. These by-laws may be amended at any meeting of the Society, provided (1) the proposed amendment is indicated in the notice of the meeting, and (2) a simple majority of the members in attendance vote for the amendment or approve it in writing.

ARTICLE 7 - DISSOLUTION

Upon the decision to dissolve this organization, the elected Executive Committee of officers shall notify all dues-paying members, those who have paid dues within the last three (3) years or less, of the decision within six (6) months of dissolution.

Within ninety (90) days of dissolution, dues-paying members shall vote to dissolve by means provided by the Executive Committee (electronically or in person). Once at least fifty-one percent (51%) of the members have agreed, the elected Executive Committee shall dispose of all assets of the organization in such a manner to such organization(s) organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization(s) under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law as the official governing board or staff shall determine. Such disposal of assets will occur after the organization has paid or made provision for payment of all of the liabilities of the organization. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the court of the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, exclusively for such purposes as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such not for profit purposes.