

SEMIOTIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA:

CONSTITUTION

Adopted at the SSA First Annual Meeting,

ARTICLE I. NAME

This Society shall be known as the Semiotic Society of America.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The object of the Society shall be the advancement of the study of signs.

ARTICLE III. AFFILIATIONS

The Semiotic Society of America takes a positive view to affiliating with appropriate international and other national organizations.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. MEMBERSHIP CLASSES

There shall be four classes of membership in the Society:

(a) Individual: Any person may become a member of the Society by paying the designated annual dues. Any member who has paid dues for twenty years and who has retired from the regular exercise of his/her profession may, by vote of the Executive Board, be relieved from the further payment of dues, without losing any of the rights of membership.

(b) Student: Any student enrolled in the regular academic year as a candidate for a degree in a recognized college or university may become a Student member by paying the designated annual dues. This status may be held for no longer than seven continuous years, and may be applied for only once.

(c) Institutional: An institution (e.g., a library) may become an institutional member by paying the designated annual dues.

(d) Honorary: Foreign scholars who have made significant contributions to the advancement of the Society's aims, and who are not residents of North America, may be elected to Honorary membership by vote of the Society on recommendations of the Executive Board. Honorary members shall have no financial obligations to the Society. The total number of honorary members shall not exceed fifteen, and not more than four may be elected in any one year.

Section 2. MEMBERSHIP DUES

The dues for the classes of membership shall be fixed by vote of the Society on recommendation of the Executive Board. The payment of dues on or before October 1st of each year shall constitute membership in good standing in the Society.

Section 3. SPECIAL FUND

The Executive Board is empowered to establish a fund, to be administered by the Executive Board, from which dues may be paid for worthy foreign scholars who are not in the position to pay their own dues.

Section 4. MEMBERSHIP PRIVILEGES

Only Individual and Student members in good standing shall be eligible to vote and hold office in the Society.

Only Individual, Student, and Honorary members in good standing may offer papers to the Program Committee for oral presentation at meetings of the Society. Anybody may submit manuscripts to be considered as possible contributions to the publications of the Society.

All members shall receive the regular periodical publications of the Society.

ARTICLE V. OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

Section 1. INDIVIDUAL OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

The individual officers shall consist of:

(a) a President, who shall serve for one term only and who shall take office at the conclusion of the annual meeting. The President shall preside at all business meetings of the Society and all meetings of the Executive Board and shall present an annual address to the Society.

(b) a Vice-President, who shall have the additional title of President-Elect. The Vice-President shall serve for one term only, succeeding to the presidency in the following term.

(c) an Executive Director appointed by the Executive Board for one term and eligible for immediate re-appointment. The Executive Director is directly responsible to the Executive Board. The Executive Director shall administer the affairs of the Society, with the following specific responsibilities:

- to be in charge of all publications issued by the Society, delegating any editing deemed advisable;
- to keep records of the transactions of the Society;
- to oversee the elections and referenda conducted by mail ballot;
- to conduct financial operations of the Society.

The Executive Director may be provided with administrative, editorial, and clerical assistance, as approved by the Executive Board.

Section 2. THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND ITS DUTIES

(a) There shall be an Executive Board, composed of the above individual officers, together with the immediate past president and six other members of the Society. Two of the six shall be elected each year to serve for a period of three years, and are to be ineligible for immediate re-election. [In contrast the President, who assumes office at the *end* of the Annual Meeting, the two newly elected members of the Executive Board take office with the *beginning* of the Annual Meeting.] At the meeting of the Board, no proxies are to be allowed.

(b) The Executive Board is charged with setting the policies of the Society, overseeing the office of the Executive Director, and carrying out such other functions as may seem advisable.

(c) The Executive Board shall meet at the time of the annual meeting of the society, and all actions must be reported to the Society at the next annual meeting. The meetings of the Executive Board shall be open for observation to any member of the Society.

(d) The Executive Director may, and shall at the request of any other member of the Board, ask the Executive Board to vote upon specific questions by mail, and if a majority of the Board shall vote by mail for or against any measure thus submitted, that vote shall be decisive.

ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEES AND THEIR DUTIES

Section 1. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

There shall be a Nominating Committee, consisting of three members appointed by the Executive Board, for a three-year term, one to be replaced each year. The member whose term is about to expire shall chair the Committee.

The Nominating Committee shall nominate one person for the position of Vice-President and one person for each vacant position on the Executive Board. The names of the nominees will be circulated by mail to all voting members in good standing not less than four months in advance of the annual meeting.

Any member of the Society may initiate a petition proposing an additional candidate for any vacancy. The petitions, including the consent of the candidate and supported by letters from at least ten members in good standing of the Society, must be received by the Executive Director within one month of the mailing of the initial Nominating Committee report.

A mail ballot shall be submitted to the members not less than two months before the annual meeting. It shall contain the names of the candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee together with names proposed by members of the Society. Election shall be a plurality of votes cast for each office and received by the Executive Director at least one week prior to the annual meeting.

Section 2. PROGRAM COMMITTEE

There shall be a Program Committee, consisting of the Vice-President as chairman, together with six members appointed by the Executive Board. Two persons shall be appointed each year to serve for a period of three years. The Program Committee shall have complete responsibility for the scholarly aspects of the Society's meetings.

Section 3. SEBEOK FELLOW COMMITTEE

There shall be a Thomas A. Sebeok Fellow Committee, consisting of three members. Two of these shall themselves be Sebeok Fellows, while the third shall be a senior SSA member-in-good-standing of scholarly repute (including ex-Presidents). The full term of Sebeok Fellow Committee members shall be nine years, one to be replaced every three years.

The senior Sebeok Fellow on the committee shall serve as committee chair. Upon a vacancy on the committee, the newest Sebeok Fellow shall replace any Sebeok Fellow rotating off the committee; the senior SSA scholar shall be replaced by nomination of the Executive Director confirmed by the Executive Board. (In case of death or the occurrence of any other abnormal vacancy in the Committee membership, appointment shall revert to the Executive Director in consultation with the Executive Board, which shall have also the confirming power.)

A new Sebeok Fellow shall be appointed at intervals of no less than two and no more than four years, with three years being the recommended interval. (This formula was arrived at by taking the already established pattern of previous Sebeok Fellow awards as a *signum ex consuetudine* or 'sign established by custom' as the basis for the convention of a *signum ad placitum* or 'sign formally established'.) Announcement of the committee's decision as to the person and year of the next award shall be made by the chair (in person or in writing) at the Business Meeting session of an Annual Meeting

Besides the scholarly honor of the award publically recognizing outstanding contribution to the development of the doctrine of signs, the title of Sebeok Fellow shall also carry a life membership in the Semiotic Society of America in accordance with the SSA Constitution, as follows. Scholars who are not residents of North America automatically receive as Sebeok Fellows honorary membership in the Society under Article 1, Section 1.d. of the constitution. Sebeok Fellows resident in North America who have been dues-paying members of the Society for at least twenty years are relieved of further dues, in accord with Article 1, Section 1.a. of the constitution.

Section 4. OTHER COMMITTEES

The Executive Board may create ad hoc committees to deal with particular problems.

ARTICLE VII. MEETINGS

Section 1. ANNUAL MEETINGS

There shall be an Annual Meeting of the Society at each time and place as shall be determined by the Executive Director. This meeting shall have the dual function of:

a scholarly forum devoted to the presentation of papers and to other scholarly discussion as arranged by the Program Committee;

a general business meeting, at which any member in good standing shall have the right to raise and discuss any issue pertaining to the conduct of the Society, and at which a quorum shall consist of the members actually present.

Section 2. SPECIAL MEETINGS AND POWERS

The Executive Board may call special meetings of the Society and shall have the power, in an emergency, to cancel any meeting.

ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS

Any member of the Society may initiate a petition proposing an amendment to this Constitution. The petition, submitted to the Executive Director, must be supported by letters from at least ten voting members in good standing. Within one year of the receipt of a valid petition, and after open discussion at the next business meeting, the Executive Director shall submit the proposed amendment to the Society in a special mail ballot. An amendment must have the approval of two thirds of the members voting.