

SHEAR Bylaws

Revised in summer 2025 and passed by a vote of the SHEAR membership in September 2025

The Society for Historians of the Early American Republic Constitution

[The following constitution was adopted by the Advisory Council on July 23, 1993; approved by a mail ballot of SHEAR members in June 1994 amended at the Annual Meeting on 18 July 1998; by mail ballot in September 2004; at the Annual Meeting in July 2018; and by email ballot in February 2021.]

PREAMBLE: Mission Statement

The Society for Historians of the Early American Republic (SHEAR) is an association dedicated to the mission of fostering the study of the early republican period among professional scholars, students, and the general public. It upholds the highest intellectual standards and encourages the broad diffusion of historical insights through all appropriate channels, including schools, museums, libraries, electronic media, public programming, archives, and publications. SHEAR cherishes a democratic ethos in scholarship and cultivates close, respectful, and productive exchanges between serious scholars at every level of experience and recognition. SHEAR membership is open to all.

ARTICLE I:

Section 1: The name of this organization is The Society for Historians of the Early American Republic.

Section 2: This Society is organized exclusively for educational purposes, including for such purposes the making of distributions to organizations that might qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law). The Society shall act always to remain qualified as a charitable and educational association exempt from federal income tax as specified under the above Section of the Internal Revenue Code.

Section 3: No part of the net income of the Society shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributed to its members, officers, or other private persons, except that the Society shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in this Constitution. No substantial part of the activities of the Society shall be the carrying out of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Society shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the Society shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal

Revenue Law) or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

Section 4: Upon the dissolution of the Society, the Advisory Council shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the Society, dispose of all of the assets of the Society exclusively for the purposes of the Society in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), as the Advisory Council shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the Society is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as, said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

Section 5: The specific objects of the Society are to foster and improve the study and teaching of the history of the United States, from the American Revolution to the outbreak of the Civil War.

ARTICLE II:

Section 1: Membership in the Society shall be open to all persons interested in the history and civilization of the United States. Institutions, including departments, organizations, historical societies, etc., as well as individuals may be members.

Section 2: Active membership shall date from receipt by the Executive Coordinator or their agent of the annual dues fixed by the Advisory Council and specified in the Bylaws, and shall continue so long as the annual dues are paid. Dues are payable at the beginning of each calendar year.

Section 3: Only active members whose dues are paid shall have the right to vote or hold office in the Society.

Section 4: The Executive Coordinator shall prepare annually a list of members, which shall be open to inspection during business meetings of the Society and shall constitute conclusive evidence of membership.

Section 5: Members shall be entitled to receive copies of issues of the Journal of the Early Republic distributed during the calendar year of their dues.

ARTICLE III:

Section 1: The officers and continuing staff of the Society shall be a President, Executive Coordinator, Treasurer, and such other officers as the Society may from time to time establish. The President, Executive Coordinator, Immediate Past President, President-Elect,

Treasurer, Editor of the Journal of the Early Republic (hereafter known as the Journal Editor), Conference Coordinator, Social Media Coordinator, and a representative from the partner institution shall serve as ex officio members of the Advisory Council. The Treasurer, Executive Coordinator, Journal Editor, Conference Coordinator, and Social Media Coordinator shall be appointed according to procedures established by the Advisory Council.

Section 2: The President shall carry out the duties and perform the functions customarily attached to the office and those which the Society may from time to time prescribe. They shall preside at meetings of the Society and the Advisory Council and shall appoint the members of any standing or special committees which may be established. They shall receive no salary or compensation for the discharge of the office but may be reimbursed for expenses of the office. In the year preceding the commencement of their presidential duties, the President-Elect shall serve a one-year term as an ex-officio member of the Advisory Council. After the conclusion of their term, they will, as immediate Past President, serve an additional one-year term as an ex officio member of the Advisory Council. The President shall serve on and chair the Executive Committee. The President may sign contracts with vendors, publishers, and other parties to undertake the business of the Society, as assisted by the Advisory Council and Journal Editor according to the Bylaws.

Section 3: The Executive Coordinator, under the direction of the President, shall be responsible for keeping the records of the Society and coordinating the activities of the Society in pursuit of its business as described in the Bylaws.

Section 4: The Executive Coordinator, under the direction of the President, shall be responsible for dues collection and the routine business and fiscal affairs of the Society, as described in the Bylaws. They may be authorized to conduct business in the name of the Society with such vendors, publishers, and other parties as the President directs, and they may, at the direction of the President and Treasurer, name appropriate staff to assist with these routine duties.

Section 5: The Journal Editor, appointed through procedures established by the Advisory Council, shall be responsible for the editorial content of the Society's journal, as described in the Bylaws. Production, promotion, and distribution of the journal may be contracted to such publishers or other parties as the Editor may recommend and the President and Advisory Council approve.

Section 6: The Social Media Coordinator shall be appointed through procedures established by the Advisory Council, and shall be responsible for coordinating social media activities and communications for the Society.

Section 7: The Treasurer, appointed through procedures established by the Advisory Council, shall be responsible for fiscal oversight of the Society, including the investment of surplus assets and the compiling and filing all financial reports required by government agencies, and such other duties described in the Bylaws.

Section 8: The Conference Coordinator, appointed through procedures established by the

Advisory Council, shall be responsible for organizing and implementing the annual conference.

ARTICLE IV:

Section 1: There shall be an Advisory Council to advise the President from time to time at their request. The membership and terms of the Advisory Council shall be as prescribed in the Bylaws.

Section 2: The President, President-Elect, Immediate Past President, Treasurer, Executive Coordinator, Journal Editor, Conference Coordinator, Social Media Coordinator, Finance and Investment Committee Chair, and a representative from the partner institution shall serve as ex-officio members of the Advisory Council.

Section 3: There shall be a Nominating Committee to present to the membership for election candidates for the offices of President and for membership on the Advisory Council and the Nominating Committee. The membership, terms, and selection of the Nominating Committee shall be prescribed in the Bylaws.

Section 4: There shall be an Executive Committee to conduct such business of the Society as cannot conveniently be laid before the Advisory Council at its annual meeting, as described in the Bylaws. The President, President-Elect, Immediate Past President, Treasurer, and Executive Coordinator (ex officio) shall constitute the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE V:

Section 1: There shall be an annual election of officers as prescribed in the Bylaws.

Section 2: The Bylaws shall be considered as supplemental to this Constitution and are adopted upon ratification of the Constitution. Individual Bylaws may be established, amended, or repealed by a majority vote of Society members in ~~a mail~~ an email canvass supervised by the Executive Coordinator or by a majority of those voting at any business meeting.

Section 3: Any member of the Society may suggest in writing to the Executive Coordinator proposed amendments to the Constitution or Bylaws; such proposals shall include reasons and justifications for the amendment. The Executive Coordinator shall present such proposals to the Advisory Council by email or at their next meeting. If approved by the Advisory Council, the Executive Coordinator shall then conduct an email canvass of the members to approve or disapprove of the proposed amendment.

Section 4: To become valid, amendments to the Constitution must be ratified by a majority of those members responding to ~~a mail~~ an email canvass as specified by the Bylaws.

BYLAWS

1. Dues – The annual dues of the Society shall be fixed by the Advisory Council payable to the Executive Coordinator or their agent. Dues are payable January 1 each year.

2. Reimbursement of Expenses – The President, other officers, and staff shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses in carrying out the duties of their offices. If funds are available from outside sources, members who serve on committees or carry out special functions approved by the President may be reimbursed for expenses, but no member shall receive fees for professional services except under specific authorization by the President and Advisory Council.

3. Duties of the President

A. Presiding over the meetings of the Advisory Council and general meetings of the Society, setting the agendas for these meetings, and ensuring the implementation of these bodies' decisions.

B. Delivering a presidential address at the annual meeting that concludes their term.

C. Overseeing the Society's processes for elections and for amending its Constitution and Bylaws.

D. Serving on and chairing the Executive Committee, whose duties are outlined below.

E. Scheduling and chairing regular online meetings of the Advisory Council and Executive Committee throughout the year to update the leadership on Society business.

F. Approving and/or authorizing financial decisions.

G. Appointing the Treasurer and Conference Coordinator to six-year terms; and Social Media Coordinator, members of the Best Book and Bradford Best Biography Prize committee, members of the Dissertation Prize committee, members of the Broussard Best First Book committee, and members of the Mary Kelley Prize committee to three-year terms. The President shall make every effort to appoint to these committees members who have volunteered to serve the Society but who were not selected for a position.

H. Overseeing any special committees that they and the Advisory Council might appoint for specific purposes.

4. Duties of the Executive Coordinator

A. Maintaining membership records including records of payment of dues.

B. Receiving, acknowledging, and depositing in some convenient account all gifts to the Society and other revenues from the publisher, subscription agency, or other sources.

C. Coordinating ongoing relations and fiscal transactions between the Society, its members, the Journal Editor, or any publishers, vendors, or other parties contracted to conduct the business of the Society.

D. Mailing and receiving of all communications between the Society and its members, such as reports, ballots, billings, announcements, and other assigned duties.

E. Preparing budgets (in cooperation with the Journal Editor) and providing appropriate financial data for the use of the President, Treasurer, Journal Editor, Advisory Council, and any other officers or agents of the Society

F. Authorizing and tracking routine disbursements for budgeted expenditures

G. Supervising any Administrative Assistant or Business Manager appointed to assist them in the performance of these duties.

H. Maintaining the Society's insurance policies, including but not limited to liability insurance for directors and officers.

I. Ensuring that the Society's annual tax returns are prepared by a certified public account and properly filed with state and federal tax authorities.

J. Attending the Advisory Council meeting at the annual meeting as well as any online meetings throughout the year; taking notes at these meetings; and reporting annually to the Advisory Council such summary of activities as the Council shall require.

K. Maintaining the Society's archival records.

L. Paying the fee each year to maintain the Society's 501(c)(3) status as an incorporated non-profit organization in the State of Indiana.

5. Duties of the Editor, *Journal of the Early Republic*

A. Performing all responsibilities associated with the management of the *Journal of the Early Republic*, including relations with the Journal's host institutions, authors, the Editorial Board, direct supervision of any editorial staff, and coordination with any publishers, vendors, or other parties contracted to produce and distribute the Journal.

B. Recruiting and appointing, with the advice of the President and Advisory Council, members of the Editorial Board to assist with the development of content for the Journal

C. Recruiting and appointing, with the advice of the President and Advisory Council, a Book Review Editor or Co-Editors for the Journal.

D. Appointing an annual prize committee for Best Article Prize.

E. Representing the Journal in all deliberations of the Society as an ex-officio member of

the Advisory Council and Executive Committee.

F. Reporting to the President and the Advisory Council, and submitting an annual report to the Council.

6. Duties of the Treasurer

A. Holding, managing, and investing Society assets other than those operating funds assigned to the Journal or Executive Coordinator.

B. Preparing, in cooperation with the Executive Coordinator and Journal Editor, financial reports for the Society, including an annual report that provides annual tax returns, an overview of the Society's financial status, and any other related documentation that the Advisory Council requests. Such report shall be delivered to the Advisory Council at the Society's annual meeting and be made available to all members.

C. Arranging for audits of the Society's financial records.

7. Advisory Council

A. The Advisory Council shall consist of fifteen members, elected by e-mail ballot of the membership for three-year terms, one-third (five members) of the Council being elected each year.

B. Nominations for the Advisory Council shall be determined by the Nominating Committee, which shall submit its nominations to the President.

C. The candidate from each pairing who receives the most votes from the membership is elected to the Advisory Council. The nominee with the highest number of votes among those not elected shall become an at-large member of the Advisory Council, for a total of five new members each year.

D. The Advisory Council is responsible for working with the President to develop and implement all phases of the Society's efforts to fulfill its mission as a learned society. For this reason, all members of the Advisory Council will be expected to attend all annual Council meetings and online meetings held throughout the year. All councilors are expected to be current members of the Society and should be familiar with the provisions in the Constitution and Bylaws. The Advisory Council shall meet at the annual meeting and at least two more times each year.

E. The President shall select three members of the Advisory Council to serve as a liaison to the Nominating Committee for the purpose of consultation throughout the election process. No member of the Nominating Committee may serve concurrently on the Advisory Council.

8. Executive Committee

A. The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, President-Elect, Immediate Past President, Treasurer. The Executive Coordinator shall serve as an ex officio member of the committee.

B. The Executive Committee may take action for the Society, provided that no action of the Executive Committee shall commit resources in excess of assets in hand nor bind the Society past the time of the next annual meeting without consent of the Advisory Council by means of mail, phone, or email. The Executive Committee shall report any such activity by mail or email to the Advisory Council as soon as practicable.

C. All actions related to advocacy on behalf of the Society shall be conducted as described in these bylaws.

D. The charge of this committee may be altered or expanded by majority vote of the Advisory Council at any annual meeting.

9. Finance and Investment Committee

A. A Finance and Investment Committee shall consist of a chair appointed by the President for a three-year term, two members of the Advisory Council appointed by the President with staggered three-year terms, and an additional member of the Society not necessarily drawn from the Advisory Council appointed by the President for a three-year term renewable in the year that neither Advisory Council member is appointed. The Treasurer shall serve as a non-voting ex officio member of the Committee.

B. The Finance and Investment Committee shall review and amend as appropriate the Society's investment policy, oversee Society investments by communicating on a semi-annual basis after receipt of the report from the investment adviser, and review the checking account balance at least once per year, arranging transfers as appropriate. The Committee shall also oversee annual internal audits of the Society's financial records.

10. Election of Officers–Nominating Committee

A. Elections for President-Elect and for vacancies on the Advisory Council and Nominating Committee shall be held annually by email ballot of the membership.

B. The six members of the Nominating Committee will be elected in pairs of two to serve overlapping three-year terms.

C. Nominees for election to the Nominating Committee will be put forward by that Committee after soliciting suggestions from the membership as a whole. The Nominating Committee shall also consult with the Advisory Council's liaison subcommittee throughout its process of consideration. Members of the Advisory Council may not serve concurrently on the Nominating Committee.

D. Each vacancy on the Nominating Committee will be filled through an election by the voting membership of the Society. There will be two candidates nominated for each

vacancy.

E. The duties of the Nominating Committee shall be:

- 1) To nominate annually for the approval of the membership a candidate for the position of President Elect.
- 2) To nominate annually pairs of candidates for election by the membership to the Advisory Council.
- 3) To nominate annually pairs of candidates for election by the membership to the DEI Committee and Nominating Committee itself.
- 4) To make nominations consistent with the Society's membership diversity in gender, race, geographical area, type of organization or institution represented, historical field, and time period.
- 5) To submit a report to the Executive Committee at the conclusion of each annual voting process that shall include the names of all members considered for nomination. The President shall make every effort to appoint to these committees members who have volunteered to serve the Society by standing for election but who were not selected for a position.

11. Vacancy in or Removal from Office

A. A vacancy in the office of the Executive Coordinator, Treasurer, Conference Coordinator, or Journal Editor shall be filled by appointment by the President with the consent of the Advisory Council. A vacancy on the Advisory Council shall be filled by the remaining members of the Council until the next regular annual election for Council members. A vacancy in the office of President shall be filled by the President-Elect, who shall immediately contact the Advisory Council and inform them of the vacancy.

B. An officer may be removed from office at any time by a three-quarters vote of all Advisory Council members.

C. Any appointed member of a committee may be removed at any time by a two-thirds vote of the Advisory Council.

12. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

A. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee shall consist of six voting members and two ex officio members. The six voting members shall be elected by email ballot in pairs of two to serve overlapping three-year terms. During their final year, members will act as co-chairs. Nominations for the DEI committee will be determined by the Nominating Committee.

B. The two ex officio members will include one graduate student representative appointed by the President and serve a term of one year.

C. The Advisory Council, Nominating Committee, and Program Committee will each include one of the six members of the DEI committee, who will serve in an ex officio capacity. Members of the DEI committee may not serve concurrently on these other committees.

D. The duties of the DEI committee shall be:

- 1) To administer and maintain organizational self-studies and report findings to Advisory Council.
- 2) To assist the Advisory Council, Nominating Committee, Program Committee, and the Journal Editors with their efforts toward diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- 3) To advise the Executive Committee, the Advisory Council, and the Journal Editors on policies to ensure DEI representation and inclusion across the organization.

13. Annual Meeting

A. The Executive Committee shall call an annual meeting of the Society at a time and place it deems appropriate. To plan and organize an annual meeting, the President-Elect shall appoint one or more members to chair a Program Committee and a Local Arrangements Committee.

B. The National Conference Coordinator shall consult with the Advisory Council and Executive Committee to propose a site and dates for each annual meeting to the Executive Committee at least two (2) years in advance of the convention date. The Coordinator and Executive Committee shall consider a variety of factors in selecting a conference site: the financial condition of the Society; the ability to meet safely and freely conduct business at the convention site; the proximity of the site to modes of public transportation; the adequacy of the conference facilities, and geographical rotation.

C. The chair(s) of the Program Committee shall be named by the president-elect in consultation with the members of the Executive Committee. The chair(s) shall name additional members consistent with reasonable representation of the major fields of historical scholarship and the diversity of the Society's membership with attention to age, racial, ethnic, regional, and gender participation in the pursuit of scholarly excellence. They may consult with the President-Elect during the process of naming additional members.

D. The chair(s) of the Local Arrangements Committee shall be named by the president-elect in consultation with the members of the Executive Committee. The chair(s) shall name additional members of the Local Arrangements Committee.

E. At the Annual Meeting, sessions may include presentations on scholarship, teaching, and professional issues; a business meeting of the full membership; a plenary session organized by the President; an address by the President; and such other matters as the Program Committee deems appropriate. The Program Committee shall determine the procedures for evaluating proposals and the general content of the meeting. One slot shall be reserved by the Council for a business meeting session.

14. Advocacy

A. The Society may consider advocacy related to its mission to study the history of the early American republic and to support the community of scholars that sustains that history. This includes issues of historic preservation, including monuments, sites, and archives; issues of academic freedom and the integrity of teaching and scholarship; and issues related to the working conditions of our membership. Such advocacy shall be consistent with applicable federal and state laws, as well as the provisions of the Society's constitution.

B. Endorsements of position statements from other organizations—including umbrella organizations like the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, and the American Association of University Professors—must be approved by a supermajority (2/3) vote of the Advisory Council.

C. Society members may present proposals for advocacy, including endorsements and position statements, signed by at least ten members, to the Advisory Council or to the President. Alternatively, any individual member of the Advisory Council may present a proposal for advocacy to the Advisory Council as a whole. Proposals for advocacy submitted by either of these means must be approved by a supermajority (2/3) vote of the Advisory Council.

D. The Advisory Council may conduct debate and voting on advocacy statements by virtual and/or asynchronous means, including email, in order to facilitate rapid discussion and determination.

E. All Society advocacy will be publicized via social media, announcement on the Society's website, and email to the membership.

15. Partner Institution

A. The Society may choose to partner with an academic institution in order to better carry out its administrative and other functions. Selection of a partner organization to aid in the administration of the Society should be conducted in an open and transparent manner. When the Society is considering taking on or changing a partner, it should follow procedures outlined in the constitution and bylaws.

B. Every five years beginning in 2028, the Advisory Council shall invite written comments

from the membership on the existing partnership during a reasonable time interval. The Advisory Council shall then vote on whether to solicit bids for a new partner agreement.

C. The Advisory Council shall vote on any agreement with a partner institution. Approval requires two-thirds of all members of the Council. Prior to such vote, the Advisory Council shall engage in open consultation with the full membership either in person or via videoconference.