

# Constitution of Alpha Omega Alpha

## Ratified 2010

### ARTICLE I. NAME AND MISSION STATEMENT

#### Section 1

This organization shall be called Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society, the three Greek letters ΑΩΑ being the initials of the essential words in the following motto:

Άξιον ωφελειν τους αλγούντας  
"Be worthy to serve the suffering"

#### Section 2

The Mission Statement of Alpha Omega Alpha is constructed and modified when appropriate by the Board of Directors. The mission statement adopted in 2008 is:

Alpha Omega Alpha—dedicated to the belief that in the profession of medicine we will improve care for all patients by:

- Recognizing high educational achievement
- Honoring gifted teaching
- Encouraging the development of leaders in academia and the community
- Supporting the ideals of humanism
- Promoting service to others.

### ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP AND AIMS

#### Section 1

Individuals eligible to be nominated include:

- a. Medical students who have excelled academically, demonstrated professionalism, and have shown promise of becoming leaders in the profession.
- b. Physicians (residents or fellows, faculty, and alumni/alumnae) who later in careers have demonstrated such leadership.
- c. Physicians or scientists who have attained distinction in any line of endeavor related to medicine but are not eligible for election by other means. These individuals are elected by the Board of Directors as honorary members.

#### Section 2

The Society is organized for educational purposes exclusively and not for profit, and its aims shall be the promotion of scholarship and research in medical schools, the encouragement of a high standard of character and professionalism among medical students and graduates, and the recognition of high attainment and service in medical science, patient care, and related fields.

### ARTICLE III. INSIGNIA

#### Section 1. Badge of the Society

The official badge of this Society shall be in the form of a key or key-pin, and shall be designed after the *manubrium sterni*. The face shall have engraved thereon the three Greek letters ΑΩΑ and 1902, the date of organization of the Society.

#### Section 2. Certificate of Membership

The certificate of membership in this Society shall be of such design and wording as the Board of Directors approves. It shall bear the seal of the Society and the signatures of the President and Executive Director.

#### Section 3. Seal of the Society

The seal of the Society shall contain the official badge, the name, and other content deemed appropriate by the Board of Directors.

### ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP AND GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### Section 1. General

The function and influence of the Society depend upon the wisdom with which members are elected. Candidates are selected as nominees for membership of a chapter as medical students, residents or fellows, faculty, and alumni/alumnae not currently members of that faculty of medicine. Individual chapters shall establish procedures to apply

the national criteria for nomination of new members. All members of the chapter are eligible to vote for nominees at a meeting of members convened for that purpose or by mail. Selection as a nominee shall require a majority vote of those in attendance. Once nominated, election to membership in ΑΩΑ will occur when the nominee registers on-line and submits dues payment for the first year. This does not apply to those elected by the Board as honorary members.

No candidate shall be denied election because of race, color, creed, ethnic origin, age, gender, or any other characteristic prohibited by the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action laws of a state, province, territory, or nation.

Self-nomination will not be considered for any category of membership.

#### Section 2. Medical Student Memberships

- a. Those candidates whose scholastic qualifications place them in the upper twenty-five percent of their class shall be considered as eligible for nomination for election. From that number, one-sixth of the total number of the class expected to graduate may be nominated for membership. In those medical schools that have no graded standings for students, the Dean or his/her designee can provide to the chapter Councilor the names of students that approximate in number the upper quartile of the class expected to graduate and who, by consensus, match the high criteria for nomination to membership (see section 2c).
- b. Up to one-half of the quota for any class may be nominated for membership in the spring of their junior year. Each chapter, each year, may determine whether or not to nominate members from the junior class. Chapters may choose to nominate all or a portion of their quota of student members at any time during the senior year prior to graduation. Each chapter is encouraged to save one or two positions in each class of students for seniors to be nominated closer to graduation, in recognition of notable achievements during the final year of undergraduate medical education.
- c. *Criteria for nomination:* Scholastic achievement should be the primary but not sole basis for nomination of a student. Leadership capabilities, ethical standards, fairness in dealing with colleagues, demonstrated professionalism, potential for achievement in medicine, and a record of service to the school and community at large shall be criteria in addition to the academic record.
- d. *Method of nomination:* Members of each chapter, including students, residents, fellows, and faculty, shall establish procedures to apply the national criteria for nomination of new members for election. Each eligible candidate shall be considered separately. If academic records and/or personnel files of eligible candidates are reviewed in connection with the selection process, the chapter must contact the Dean's office to determine if the specific written consent of students is required prior to this review. If so, that must be obtained from eligible students before the election process. Only the chapter Councilor or the Councilor-designated member(s) should have access to grades or class standing of students. Conflicts arising about choices of students for nomination for election must be resolved within the institution by processes set by the chapter Councilor and Dean.
- e. Students who have taken part of their medical school education elsewhere will be eligible for nomination for election to the Society after being in attendance for one academic year in the medical school of the nominating chapter.
- f. Nominated candidates will be declared elected and inducted into the Society only after registration with the national ΑΩΑ office is completed and the first year dues have been paid.

#### Section 3. Resident and Fellow Memberships

Residents and fellows who were elected as medical students to the

Society are automatically members of the chapter of the medical school sponsoring the educational programs in which they are enrolled. In addition, each chapter may nominate for membership in the Society each year up to three residents or fellows who have completed a first year of residency or fellowship. Such election shall be based on continued achievement and promise referred to in Article II and Article IV, with special emphasis on teaching of medical students.

#### **Section 4. Alumni/Alumnae and Faculty Memberships**

The provision for nomination by each chapter of up to two alumni/alumnae members and two faculty members each year provides a means of recognizing and honoring individuals who have distinguished themselves in their professional careers. Inasmuch as the number of individuals eligible for selection in these two categories is limited, chapters should evaluate carefully the professional and personal stature of nominees.

- a. Alumni/Alumnae: Graduates of medical schools in which a chapter exists, who were not elected as students, residents, or fellows, but who, after ten years or more following graduation are judged on the basis of achievement to be qualified, may be nominated for membership in the chapter of the medical school from which they graduated.
- b. Faculty: Members of the sponsoring school's Faculty of Medicine who hold an earned doctoral degree (M.D., Ph.D., or equivalent) and have demonstrated a commitment to scholarly excellence and medical education may be nominated for membership in the chapter of that school.

#### **Section 5. Honorary Membership**

The Board of Directors may elect physicians or others distinguished in careers related to medicine to honorary membership. Eligible are those who have attained national or international recognition in teaching, research, or in leadership roles that are relevant to medicine, and who are not eligible for election through other means. Election shall be by unanimous vote.

#### **Section 6. Membership Transfer and Reciprocity of Membership**

Members of the Society may join the activities of the chapter nearest to the location of their continued professional activity by contacting the Councilor of that chapter.

Members not residing near a chapter may become affiliated with an Association or help in the founding of an Association (Section 7).

#### **Section 7. Associations of Alpha Omega Alpha**

Groups of ten or more society members may, with the approval of the Board of Directors, form an Association of Alpha Omega Alpha in medical schools, cities, or districts where a chartered chapter does not exist. The function of these Associations will be to foster intellectual and social exchange among AΩA members forming the Associations. The Association may not nominate for election student members, but may nominate resident, fellow, faculty, and alumni members in accordance with Article IV, sections 3 and 4. Associations are formed and disbanded at the pleasure of the President of AΩA. Members desiring to form an Association may request a membership listing in a given area. The national office of AΩA should then be petitioned by providing a list of ten or more dues-paying members with e-mail and business addresses, and a brief statement of plans for activities. They should elect officers who will submit a yearly summary of activities and members to the Executive Director of AΩA.

#### **Section 8. Membership Revocation**

The Board of Directors may, at its discretion and by unanimous vote, revoke the membership of any member for proven behavior that is in conflict with the national criteria for election, or that is inconsistent with the mission, goals, and purposes of AΩA as outlined in Articles I and II, Section 2.

### **ARTICLE V. ORGANIZATION AND CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION**

#### **Section 1. General**

The general management of the Society shall be vested in the Board of Directors and the officers elected by it. The Board of Directors shall conduct the business of the national organization of Alpha Omega Alpha. Nominations for vacancies on the board shall be made by a Nominating Committee chaired by the Vice-President and comprised of the three Councilor Directors and up to three additional members of the Board, chosen by the President.

#### **Section 2. Officers**

The officers shall be the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, each elected by majority vote of the Board. The latter two offices may be combined, if approved by the Board.

#### **Section 3. Executive Director and National Office**

The national office shall be directed by an Executive Director, chosen by the Board, who will be responsible for implementation of all activities of the society, for maintenance of all society records, and for reports to the Board each year on the state of the society.

#### **Section 4. President**

The President shall be elected by the Board to serve for one to three terms of three years or until a successor is duly elected and installed. He or she shall be the executive head of the Society and shall, with the approval of the Board of Directors, administer the business of the Society not otherwise provided for by the Constitution.

#### **Section 5. Vice-President**

The Vice-President shall be elected by the Board to serve one to three terms of three years or until a successor is duly elected and installed. The Vice-President shall serve as the presiding officer in the absence of the President. In the event of death or resignation of the President, the Vice-President shall assume the office of President until a new President is elected.

#### **Section 6. Secretary**

The Secretary shall be elected by the Board to serve for one to three terms of three years. The Secretary shall perform the usual duties devolving upon such office, including but not limited to ensuring a complete record of all members and their addresses is maintained, and such other data as the Board of Directors may require.

#### **Section 7. Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall be elected by the Board for one to three terms of three years, and shall perform the usual duties of such officer in concert with the Assistant Treasurer on the staff at the national office. At the annual meeting of the Board of Directors, the Treasurer shall present a written report of the financial standing of the Society that includes a detailed statement of all monies received and expended during the preceding year and a full report of the annual external audit and of the Audit committee of the Society. The Treasurer shall be bonded to such sum as the Board of Directors may require.

#### **Section 8. Installation of Officers**

The officers will be installed at the time of their election.

#### **Section 9. Composition of the Board of Directors**

The Board shall consist of members of the Society elected by the Board of Directors based on recommendations by the nominating committee and installed after election by the Board. At least nine shall be Members-at-Large, each elected for a three-year term. Members-at-large are limited to three consecutive terms. At least three shall be Councilor Directors who are Councilors of chapters at the time of their election to the Board of Directors. Each shall be elected for one three-year term. At least three shall be student members of the Board, one elected each year to serve a three-year term. The student shall be elected

so that he or she will serve in his or her senior year of medical school and first two years of residency. Nominations for student membership to the Board shall be submitted by chapter Councilors to the nominating committee, which will recommend candidates for consideration by the Board. Additional members of the Board may be elected by the Board of Directors for three-year terms to fill specific functions or representing constituencies not covered by existing board members.

#### **Section 10. Meetings of the Board**

The Board of Directors shall meet at the call of the President or any six members of the Board at such place as may be decided. An annual meeting must be held each year following financial report completion for the previous year. The Board may also conduct business by correspondence, including facsimile transmission and electronic mail, and votes so taken shall be binding. A record shall be kept of its action by the Secretary, and a report thereof shall be made to the next annual meeting of the Board. The Executive Committee of AΩA shall be the officers, the Assistant Treasurer, and Executive Director at the national office.

#### **Section 11. Removal of Officers**

The Board of Directors shall be empowered to remove officers for cause and to fill vacancies by majority vote.

### **ARTICLE VI. CHAPTER OFFICERS**

#### **Section 1. Composition**

The officers of each chapter shall be: President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Councilor. The President and Vice-President shall be student members. The offices of Secretary-Treasurer and Councilor may be held by the same person. When chapter officers are chosen, the Councilor shall ensure that their names, school addresses, and other pertinent information are sent promptly to the national office of Alpha Omega Alpha.

#### **Section 2. Chapter Councilor**

The Councilor, who must be a member of the Faculty and of the Society, shall be appointed by the Dean of Medicine on the recommendation by the chapter to serve for three years. He or she may be reappointed to successive three-year terms, and shall be responsible to the Faculty and to the officers of the Society for the operation and well-being of the chapter. With the student officers, the Councilor should help organize social, educational, and service projects of the chapter, as well as arranging for full membership meeting(s) to select nominees for membership. The Councilor should be prepared each year to submit to the Executive Director a summary of the chapter activities, including the use of funds provided for specific projects by the national office.

#### **Section 3. Election of Chapter Officers**

The President and Vice-President will be elected by fellow student members for one year. The officers shall arrange in concert with the Councilor periodic meetings of the chapter and be responsible for generating social, educational, and service projects.

#### **Section 4. Chapter Secretary-Treasurer**

The Secretary-Treasurer shall be a member of the Faculty and of the Society, shall serve for three years, and may be re-elected to successive three-year terms at the discretion of the chapter. He or she shall maintain accurate records of newly nominated members and submit them to the national office. These records will furnish the full name, date of nomination and induction, and e-mail and home addresses for each member. After graduation of new members, the Councilor shall make a strong effort to gather their new e-mail and home/office addresses to help ensure that the national office has contact information for them.

### **ARTICLE VII. CHAPTER MEETINGS**

#### **Section 1**

At least two meetings shall be held each academic year at times and places decided upon by the chapter officers in consultation with the Councilor. This Society since its inception has been an organization of medical students. Every effort should be made to stimulate and maintain student interest in the Society and its mission. Chapters are urged to generate activities in which medical student members as well as non-members may take part.

#### **Section 2**

A meeting to discuss the nomination of student members shall be held at least once each year. Other meetings for any purposes may be called at the discretion of the chapter President in consultation with the Councilor. An annual Alpha Omega Alpha address by a distinguished member of the medical profession or other appropriate speaker should be sponsored by each chapter. The address may be given on the same day as the annual dinner for the recognition of new members and may be combined with the Visiting Professorship sponsored by the national office of AΩA..

#### **Section 3. Voting**

All members of the chapter are entitled to vote at a chapter meeting or in response to receipt of a ballot by mail. Each chapter shall establish the number of members constituting a quorum for the transaction of chapter business and nomination of members.

#### **Section 4. Fiscal Matters**

Chapters may institute local membership dues each year at a level agreed upon by a majority of members constituting a quorum at the annual chapter meeting. Other methods of fundraising for the chapter must have the approval of the Executive Director acting on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Society.

### **ARTICLE VIII. CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

#### **Section 1**

The executive committee of a chapter shall consist of the chapter officers and the Councilor.

#### **Section 2**

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for arranging the meeting programs, for providing a suitable speaker to deliver the annual Alpha Omega Alpha address, for the nomination of candidates for election, and for the transaction of necessary business in the intervals between chapter meetings.

### **ARTICLE IX. NEW CHAPTERS**

#### **Section 1**

A chapter may be chartered at a College or School of Medicine that meets the Society's requirements and has received LCME accreditation. An application signed by the Dean and by at least six members of the Faculty of Medicine who are members of Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society shall be sent to the President along with full information about the school's financial status, admission criteria, curriculum, faculty, and scholarship aid. The President will refer the application to the Committee on New Chapters for evaluation of the application and to make a site visit to the school. Upon receipt of a favorable report from the Committee on New Chapters, the President shall submit the application and recommendation to the full Board of Directors. If the application is approved by the Board of Directors, the proposed charter shall be granted, and the school may appoint a councilor and nominate junior and senior members after the date of the granting of the charter. Nominations for student membership will be made by the Councilor and the six members signing the application in collaboration with the office of the Dean.

**Section 2. Form of Charter**

The form of the granting of charters shall be as follows:  
“Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society, by virtue of the authority granted to it by the State of Illinois, herewith grants to . . . . . the power to establish a chapter of this Society at . . . . . subject to the Constitution governing said Society. In token of these presents are herewith affixed the signatures of the President and the Secretary, with the corporate seal of the Society.”

**ARTICLE X. PROBATION, SUSPENSION AND WITHDRAWAL OF CHARTER FROM CHAPTERS**

**Section 1**

A chapter may be placed on probation of one or two years for failure to fulfill expectations of the national office. After evaluation by the national office at the end of one or two years, the chapter may be reinstated with full privileges or a decision to suspend the charter may ensue.

During suspension the chapter shall not nominate or induct new members. Suspension can be lifted and the chapter permitted to nominate new members at any time during the ensuing two years by the Board. If the chapter has not fulfilled expectations after a two year suspension, the procedure for withdrawal shall be initiated (section 2).

**Section 2**

- The procedure for the withdrawal of a charter shall include:
  - a. An investigation convincing to the Board of Directors that such action is desirable and a unanimous affirmative vote of the Board to that effect.
  - b. Formal declaration by the President of Alpha Omega Alpha to withdraw the charter.
  - c. Written notification of the withdrawal of a charter shall be forwarded to the chapter Councilor and the Dean of the Medical School.

In addition, the charter of a chapter in a school that loses its LCME accreditation will be suspended and the chapter cannot elect new members until accreditation has been reinstated.

**ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION**

**Section 1**

Proposals for amendment of the Constitution shall be submitted through the President to the Board at least sixty days before the next annual meeting of the Board. A two-thirds majority vote by the Board in favor shall be necessary to adopt any amendment or revision to the Constitution.

**ARTICLE XII. OTHER PROVISIONS**

- 1. Committees
  - a. A standing Committee on New Chapters shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Board of Directors. This committee shall, upon direction by the President, investigate applicant institutions and make recommendations thereon to the Board of Directors.
  - b. An Executive Committee shall be appointed, consisting of the officers and the Executive Director. The duties of the Executive Committee shall be to transact routine business of the Society in the interim between meetings of the Board of Directors.
  - c. The President shall appoint other committees, temporary or standing, as may from time to time be required.
- 2. Fees and Dues
  - a. The initiation fee to the Society will be established by the Board of Directors upon recommendation by the Assistant Treasurer and may change from time to time as deemed necessary.
  - b. Annual sustaining dues shall be set by the Board of Directors

upon recommendation by the Assistant Treasurer and shall be payable on-line or by mail upon receipt of notice. The fee for lifetime dues will be set by the Board of Directors upon recommendation by the Assistant Treasurer.

3. Fiscal Policy

- a. The Board of Directors must approve an annual budget. There shall be an annual audit by an independent accounting firm.
- b. The fiscal year shall extend from September 1 to August 31.

4. Publication Policy

- a. *The Pharos* shall be the official publication of Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society. The Board is the publisher of *The Pharos* and responsible for editorial policy and management.
- b. The Editor of *The Pharos* shall be appointed by the Board of Directors and provide an annual report to the Board.
- c. Advertisements will not be included in *The Pharos* without the consent of the Board of Directors.
- d. The editor of *The Pharos* shall be an *ex officio* member of the Board of Directors of the Society and may also serve as Executive Director of the Society at the discretion and direction of the Board of Directors.

5. Dissolution of Alpha Omega Alpha

In the event of dissolution of Alpha Omega Alpha at some future date, the net assets of the society will be distributed to another non-profit organization qualified for tax exempt status under I.R.S. section 501(c)(3).

**ARTICLE XIII**

For all purposes this Constitution shall constitute the corporate Bylaws of the Society.