

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

NAME

This Society is a constituent member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society and shall be known as Alpha of Tennessee or as the Vanderbilt Chapter.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

The purpose of Phi Beta Kappa is to recognize and encourage scholarship.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

The membership of Alpha of Tennessee shall consist of members in course, alumni members, honorary members, and associate members.

Section 1. Only those persons shall be elected to membership whose qualifications have been carefully investigated. With a view to maintaining the historic character of Phi Beta Kappa, members of the Faculty on the Membership Committee shall be chosen predominantly from teachers of liberal subjects. Here as elsewhere in this Constitution, liberal arts subjects and studies shall be considered to be those designed principally for a knowledge or understanding or appreciation of the natural and social world in which we live, as contrasted with training intended to develop skill or vocational techniques. The Chapter shall be responsible for determining the courses or work which are to be considered liberal in character.

Section 2. Members in Course. The members in course shall be elected from each graduating class of the College of Arts and Science, Vanderbilt University, primarily on the basis of broad cultural interests and of scholarly achievements. The number of undergraduates elected from any class, including any who may be elected in their junior year, shall ordinarily not exceed 10 per cent and never exceed 12 1/2 per cent of those expected to receive liberal bachelor degrees in that class.

Section 3. Alumni Members. Graduates of the College of Arts and Science, Vanderbilt University, of not less than fifteen years' standing who, by contributions in the fields of humane sciences and letters or by works of pure literature, have since graduation given clear evidence of the possession of distinguished scholarly capacities, may be elected to alumni membership.

Section 4. Honorary Members. Men and women, not graduates of the College of Arts and Science, Vanderbilt University, who, by contribution in the fields of the humane sciences and letters or by works of pure literature, have given clear evidence of the possession of distinguished scholarly capacities, may be elected to honorary membership. No graduate of another institution having a chapter of

Phi Beta Kappa shall be elected unless the consent of that chapter has been obtained.

Section 5. Associate Members. Members of other chapters of Phi Beta Kappa who become officers or members of the teaching staff of Vanderbilt University shall be invited to become associate members of the Alpha of Tennessee with full privileges in the conduct of its affairs. Other members of Phi Beta Kappa in the vicinity may be invited to any meeting of the Chapter.

Section 6. Since good moral character is a qualification for membership, any member found to have lost this qualification, after being given due notice and an opportunity to be heard, may be expelled from Phi Beta Kappa by a four-fifths vote of the members present at a regular annual meeting of the Chapter.

Section 7. A citation of the qualifications of each person elected to alumni or honorary membership shall be entered upon the minutes and submitted for record to the Secretary of the Phi Beta Kappa Society. A full report of all members elected, expelled, or recorded as having resigned or died shall be sent annually to the Secretary of the Phi Beta Kappa Society.

ARTICLE IV

AFFILIATION WITH THE PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY

This Chapter shall send a delegation to represent it at each meeting of the Council of Phi Beta Kappa and shall contribute its share to the financial support of the Phi Beta Kappa Society.

ARTICLE V

PROCEDURES

This Chapter shall, by suitable by-laws, provided for the election of officers, the selection of members, the conduct of its meetings, and such other matters as may be deemed proper; provided that said by-laws shall contain nothing inconsistent with this Constitution or with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Phi Beta Kappa Society.

ARTICLE VI

AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by three-fourths majority vote of the members present at a regular annual meeting, provided the proposed amendment has been presented in writing to the membership by the Executive Council at least two weeks prior to said meeting.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I

VOTING MEMBERS

Section 1. Ordinarily, and for the conduct of the regular business of the Chapter, the voting members of Alpha of Tennessee shall consist of those persons of each class of membership defined in Article III of the Constitution who are present at any regularly scheduled or called meeting of the Chapter. Unless otherwise specified in the Constitution or By-Laws, a simple majority shall determine action.

Section 2. For a proposed action declared extraordinary by the Executive Council, the Executive Council may require a polling of the entire membership by mail, in which case action will be determined by a simple majority of votes returned.

ARTICLE II

CHAPTER OFFICERS, EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Section 1. The officers of the Alpha Chapter of Tennessee shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. They shall hold office for two years or until their successors have been elected and qualified. Officers may be elected to succeed themselves.

Section 2. Their duties are such as usually devolve upon such officers.

Section 3. These officers together with three members and one undergraduate student member to be elected at the Spring meeting shall constitute the Executive Council. A nominating committee shall be appointed by the President to present a slate for this election. Nominations may also be made from the floor.

Section 4. The Executive Council is authorized to act for the Chapter in the transaction of business coming up between meetings whenever called by the President to meet for that purpose.

Section 5. The Membership Committee shall consist of the Executive Council and at least eight Phi Beta Kappa members of the Faculty, the latter to be nominated by the retiring Executive Council. The Membership Committee shall meet early in each spring semester to elect members in course.

ARTICLE III

ELECTION OF MEMBERS

Section 1. Members in Course. Members in course may be elected in the Spring semester of each year.

A. Any member of the graduating class of the College of Arts and Science, including graduates of the previous summer and fall, shall be eligible for election under the following conditions:

1. If all the student's work has been done at Vanderbilt, the student must ordinarily have completed 105 semester hours of the work required for the degree. All candidates for the degree at the Spring Commencement immediately following the election shall be considered for that election.
2. A student must have obtained a number of quality points at least 3.6 times the number of semester hours taken. The reckoning shall be made on all grades recorded in the Registrar's Office, and no course taken and so recorded may be disregarded.
3. A transfer student who is a candidate for graduation and who will have been in residence by the time of graduation at least four semesters may be elected provided:
 - a. that a minimum of 60 semester hours in the College of Arts and Science will have been completed at graduation;
 - b. that if the work transferred was done at an institution having a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the over-all grade point ratio at the time of election be at least 3.6, re-evaluating the transfer work at its face value which may in no case exceed the Vanderbilt ratio;
 - c. that if the work transferred was done at an institution not having a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the over-all grade point ratio at the time of election be at least 3.7, re-evaluating the transfer work at its face value which may in no case exceed the Vanderbilt ratio;
 - d. that the course of study and record of college work prior to admission to Vanderbilt University is, in the judgment of the Membership Committee, at least the equivalent of that of non-transfer students eligible for membership.

B. Any other student in the College of Arts and Science shall be eligible for election under the following conditions:

1. The student must be in at least the sixth semester of residence at Vanderbilt and must have completed there a minimum of 70 semester hours of the work required for a degree, regardless of any transfer credit presented
2. The student must have obtained a number of quality points at least 3.85 times the semester hours taken. The reckoning shall be made on all grades recorded in the Registrar's Office, and no course taken and so recorded may be disregarded.
3. The total number of such members elected shall never in any year exceed six.

C. Only courses which are counted by the College of Arts and Science toward graduation shall count for Phi Beta Kappa computation.

D. From those meeting the above conditions the Membership Committee shall elect members within the allowed number on the basis of broad cultural interests and scholarly achievements. Prior to the time of election the Secretary shall furnish the Membership Committee a confidential copy of the complete record of every junior or senior who has attained the required ratio.

E. A total of *not more than 10 per cent of the senior class* including those elected as juniors from that class shall be elected to membership in any given year. Fractions of one-half or more are counted as units.

F. Members in course are chosen by the Membership Committee, a three-fourths majority of that Committee present and voting being necessary to election.

Section 2. Alumni Members. Alumni Members shall be nominated by the Executive Council and elected by a three-fourths majority of the members of that Committee. Only graduates of not less than fifteen years' standing shall be considered.

Section 3. Honorary Members. Honorary Members may be chosen from the Vanderbilt Faculty, but such members must have attained the rank of associate professor and have been on the Faculty for five years. Exceptions may be made in the case of executive officials of the University. Honorary members may not otherwise be elected except in rare instances of achievement in literature or research. Honorary members shall be nominated by the Executive Council and elected by a four-fifths majority of the Membership Committee.

ARTICLE IV

MEETINGS

Section 1. The annual meeting of the Chapter shall be held in the Spring of each year for the initiation of new members, for the election of officers and four other members of the Executive Council and for the transaction of any other business.

Section 2. An anniversary meeting of the Chapter shall be held on or about December 5 to which the public may be invited. The eight members of the Membership Committee who are not members of the Executive Council shall be elected at this meeting.

Section 3. Special meetings may be called by the President. In the President's absence, the Secretary shall call a special meeting at the written request of five members.

Section 4. At any meeting ten members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

ARTICLE V

INITIATION FEES AND DUES

Section 1. The initiation fee for Members in Course, Alumni Members, and for Honorary Members shall be determined by the National Phi Beta Kappa Society. After election new members must be initiated before enjoying the privileges of the Society.

Section 2. The annual dues shall be determined by the Executive Council.

ARTICLE VI

AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be amended at the meeting of the Chapter by a three-fourth majority vote of the members present, provided the amendment is proposed by the Executive Council.

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

1977

(revised 1995)

(revised 2005)