



BYLAWS OF THE COMICS STUDIES SOCIETY

Revised January 2021

The Comics Studies Society (hereafter the Society) is an interdisciplinary learned society offering scholars and teachers (including academics, non-academic or independent scholars, instructors at all levels, and students) the opportunity to promote the critical study of comics as an art and a communicative form, improve classroom teaching, and engage in open and ongoing conversations about the media, means, and cultures of comics. The Society defines comics broadly to include: comic strips; comic books, papers, and magazines; comics albums, graphic novels, and other graphic books; webcomics and other digital formats; single-panel cartoons, including editorial and gag cartoons; caricature; animation; and other related forms and traditions. All types of sequential art, graphic narrative, and cartooning are relevant to the Society's mission.

The Society is a nonprofit organization founded in Ohio in 2014 and organized and operated only for charitable, education and other purposes as defined in Section 501-(c)-3 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as now or hereafter amended. The Society is governed by Bylaws adopted in 2014 and amended in 2018 and 2021.

SECTION 1—NAME

- 1.1 The name of the organization shall be the Comics Studies Society. The name *Comics Studies Society* shall be considered the property and trademark of the organization. Individual members of the organization may not use the imprimatur of the Comics Studies Society, or CSS, to publicize individual work outside of the business of the organization. Should the organization be dissolved, the name *Comics Studies Society* shall be retired and not used for any subsequent business purpose.

SECTION 2—PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of the Society shall be to foster and to promote study, criticism, and research in Comics Studies in all its varied aspects. The Society is an organization that works best with the support of its members, and we invite students, scholars, librarians, artists, and others interested in comics to join our community as individual or institutional members.

In pursuit of its mission, the Society may enter into partnerships with other organizations that share a commitment to Comics Studies.

SECTION 3—FINANCES

- 3.1 The Society shall be a not-for-profit organization whose revenues shall support the aforementioned purposes within the meaning of Section 501-(c)-(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Such sections of the Internal Revenue Code as bear on 501-(c)-(3) corporations, including 501-(c)-(3) (1954), 501 (h), 509 (a), 4942, 4941 (d), 4943 (c), 4944, 4945 (d), or corresponding provisions of any subsequent Federal tax laws, shall be presumed to define the limits of activities by the Society.
- 3.2 The Society shall be primarily financed by annual membership dues which include a subscription to *Inks: The Journal of the Comics Studies Society*. The amount of the dues is determined by The Ohio State University Press (hereafter the Press). This amount is approved by the Executive Board.
- 3.3 The finances of the organization shall be audited at least every three years, and the result of the audit shall be included in the annual financial report of the Executive Treasurer to the Society. The Executive Treasurer (in consultation with the Executive Officers) will select an auditor who has the expertise and knowledge to perform an independent audit for the Society. The Executive Treasurer will follow Ohio State Law audit requirements for charitable nonprofit, Statute and Description: Ohio Rev. Code § 1716.04*.

SECTION 4—MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 Membership is open to all persons.
- 4.2 Active membership in the Society shall begin when the Executive Treasurer and the Press receive the first payment of annual dues. Any member whose dues are in arrears one month after the mailing of a second notice to the last recorded address shall be dropped from membership rolls. Members who have been thus dropped may be reinstated upon payment of one year's dues in advance. No retroactive dues, payments, or penalties shall be assessed. Only active members may vote or hold a position in the Society.
- 4.3 Scholarly institutions and organizations may have institutional memberships in the Society. Universities and similar organizations interested in promoting the study of Comics Studies may become institutional sponsors.
- 4.4 The Executive Board may designate one person each year as an Honorary Lifetime Member.

SECTION 5—EXECUTIVE BOARD

- 5.1 The Executive Board consists of fourteen positions; ten are elected and four are appointed. The ten elected positions are the President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Immediate Past President, Executive Secretary, President of the Graduate Student Caucus, and four Members at Large. The four positions appointed by the Executive Board are the Executive Treasurer, the Journal Editor, the Social Strategist, and the Ombudsperson. Any member in good standing is eligible for a position, provided that they have not held that same position in the previous six years; the exception being the positions of Executive Secretary, Executive Treasurer, and Members at Large, who can serve a total of two consecutive terms should they wish to stay on for a second consecutive term. Executive Board members cannot hold two Board positions (elected or appointed) at once. Executive Board members may be called upon to submit reports on their duties periodically. The voting status of each member of the Executive Board is noted in the position descriptions below.
- 5.2 The President, the First Vice-President, the Second Vice-President, and the Executive Treasurer serve as the Executive Officers who perform the day-to-day administration of the Society. It is the responsibility of the Executive Officers to bring names forward for appointed positions to be approved by the Executive Board. Executive Officers submit annual reports to the Society and for the succession of Officers.
- 5.3 Accession to the presidency occurs via a process of rotation that takes three years, with an optional fourth year: from Second Vice-President, to First Vice-President, to President, followed by the optional final year of service as Immediate Past President. Thus, being elected to serve as Second Vice-President is the path to the presidency and entails a three-year commitment. It is the Second Vice-President who is elected directly by the membership, to serve on the Executive Board for a minimum of three years.
- 5.4 The Second Vice-President, during their first year, serves as parliamentarian at Society meetings and assists the First Vice-President as necessary, with special emphasis on learning how to organize the Society's annual conference. After one year, as described in 5.2 (above), the Second Vice-President succeeds to the first vice-presidency, and then the year thereafter to the presidency. If the Second Vice President vacates the position prior to the expiration of that first year's term, the President shall, in consultation with the Nominating Committee, initiate a call for a special election to elect a replacement to be ratified by a majority vote of the membership. The Second Vice-President is a voting member of the Executive Board.
- 5.5 The First Vice-President, as described above, comes into the position after a year as Second Vice-President and serves a one-year term before succeeding to the presidency. The First Vice-President coordinates the Society's annual conference, assists the President as necessary, and assumes the duties of President in their absence. If the First

Vice-President vacates the position prior to the expiration of the term, the Second Vice-President shall succeed to the position and serve out the unexpired term, followed by a full term as First Vice-President thereafter. However, in the event that there is no sitting Second Vice-President to succeed to the First Vice-President's position, the President shall, in consultation with the Nominating Committee, initiate a call for a special election to elect a replacement to be ratified by a majority vote of the membership. The First Vice-President is a voting member of the Executive Board.

- 5.6 The President, as described above, comes into the position after a year as First Vice-President and serves a one-year term. The President presides at meetings, conducts necessary business throughout the year, convenes a meeting of the Executive Board at the annual meeting of the Society, and oversees the functions of the Society. If the President vacates the position prior to the expiration of term, the First Vice-President shall succeed to the position, serve out the unexpired term and one full year's term as President thereafter. The President is a voting member of the Executive Board.
- 5.7 If the President exercises their option to serve as the Immediate Past President, that person continues to serve as a voting member of the Executive Board for one additional year after the completion of the presidential year.
- 5.8 The Executive Secretary coordinates activities and programs for the Society, appoints program chairs for annual and special meetings, handles general correspondence, runs the elections, and takes minutes of the Executive Board's meetings. The Executive Secretary is responsible for archiving the Executive Board's communications and correspondence on Slack (or future platforms), with such archives being attentive to all due confidentiality. The Executive Secretary serves a three-year term and may serve a total of two consecutive terms. If the Executive Secretary vacates the office prior to the expiration of the term, the President shall, in consultation with the Nominating Committee, initiate a call for a special election to elect a replacement to be ratified by a majority vote of the membership. The Executive Secretary is a voting member of the Executive Board.
- 5.9 The Executive Treasurer advises the Executive Board on all financial matters. The Executive Treasurer maintains the membership list in consultation with the Press, corresponds frequently with the Press about memberships and dues, serves on the Conference Committee, serves on the Outreach Committee, presents regular membership and Treasurer's Reports to the Board, coordinates an audit, and files all necessary financial reports with external agencies. The Executive Treasurer is responsible for managing the Society's bank account, which includes but is not limited to: maintaining a record of bank statements; balancing the accounts; writing checks; ensuring deposits; and paying bills. The Executive Treasurer maintains a record of donations and fundraising campaigns and ensures their deposit into the Society bank account. The Executive Treasurer is the liaison to the Press as it relates to contractual and

- financial matters. The Executive Treasurer serves a three-year term and may serve a total of two consecutive terms. If the Executive Treasurer vacates the position prior to the expiration of the term, the remaining Executive Officers, in consultation with the Executive Board, will appoint a replacement. In cooperation with the Executive Officers, the outgoing Executive Treasurer must determine a method for secure transfer of information and access to accounts for the incoming Executive Treasurer. The Executive Treasurer is a voting member of the Executive Board.
- 5.10 Four Members at Large participate in an ongoing basis in carrying out the business of the Society, which include but is not limited to attending Executive Board meetings and serving on committees. Members at Large may also serve on the Editorial Board of the Society's journal. Members at Large serve two-year terms, with two members elected each year. Each may serve a total of two consecutive terms and may also run for another position at the expiration of their tenure as Member at Large. In the event of a special election for Second Vice President or Executive Secretary, a Member at Large's name may appear on the ballot. If a Member at Large vacates the position prior to the expiration of their term, the President shall nominate a successor to serve out the unexpired term, with the approval of the Executive Board. Members at Large are voting members of the Executive Board.
- 5.11 The Journal Editor coordinates, organizes, edits, and oversees the Society's peer-reviewed journal of scholarly work. The editor of the journal will be responsible for conducting those matters of the Society's journal with the approval of the Executive Board; however, appointments of members to the editorial board are at the discretion of the editor. The Editor also oversees the process by which papers are selected for the journal. The Journal Editor is appointed by the Executive Board, serves a three-year term and may serve multiple and consecutive terms. The Journal Editor is a voting member of the Executive Board.
- 5.12 The Social Strategist role is largely a digital one, responding to incoming inquiries to the Society and maintaining the Society's presence in the most salient social media spaces. In conjunction with the Executive Treasurer and relevant committees, the Social Strategist runs the online elections mechanism. The Social Strategist will usually serve on the Conference Organizing Committee to promote the annual conference in social media spaces and develop a public communications strategy. The Social Strategist will also liaise with the Outreach Committee. The Social Strategist is appointed by the Executive Board, serves a three-year term and may serve multiple consecutive terms. The Social Strategist is a voting member of the Executive Board.
- 5.13 The CSS Ombudsperson is a member who acts in an impartial capacity and is appointed to help resolve complaints from other Society members. The Ombudsperson is appointed by the Executive Board and their appointment is ratified by the general membership. The Ombudsperson is contactable throughout the year by email and will be onsite for the

annual, in-person conference. The Ombudsperson will process all complaints according to the Society's Code of Conduct. The nominee should be a secure, senior member of the Society, ideally familiar with the work of ombudspersons in academic settings. The Ombudsperson serves a three-year term and may serve multiple and consecutive terms. The Ombudsperson is a non-voting member of the Executive Board.

SECTION 6—STANDING COMMITTEES

- 6.1.1 Nominating Committee: A three-person Nominating Committee, chosen from among the Executive Board and appointed by the President, will be responsible for recruiting and confirming the eligibility of candidates for open posts to be filled on the Executive Board. In the event of a special election for First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, or Executive Secretary, the Nominating Committee may also recruit candidates from Members-at-Large or the Society's general membership. Members of the Nominating Committee will serve two-year terms and may serve a total of two consecutive terms.
- 6.1.2 The Society recognizes that both it and Comics Studies in general benefit from a diverse makeup, including diversity in scholarly discipline, professional field, career position, job niche, cultural background, and identity. The Nominating Committee is enjoined to consider diversity in its nominations, and to welcome diverse nominees from among the Society's general membership. While representation on the Executive Board shall not be determined by a quota system, nor shall nominating and governing procedures be constrained by quota, the Society shall be guided by the principle that a diverse Executive Board and diverse Society are vitally important to the further development of Comics Studies.
- 6.2 Conference Organizing Committee: A six-person Conference Organizing Committee, chosen from among the Executive Board and appointed by the President, will be responsible for organizing the annual conference. The committee membership is as follows: First Vice President (Chair), Second Vice President, Executive Treasurer, Social Strategist, one member recommended by the Graduate Student Caucus, and one additional member of the Executive Board. The Conference Organizing Committee tasks include, but are not limited to: proposing a host institution and conference dates at least twelve months prior to the conference; selecting a conference theme; circulating the conference call for papers; inviting keynote speakers who reflect the diverse interests and membership of the Society; working with the local organizing committee to secure meeting rooms and accommodation that meet the recommendations of the Society's Accessibility Policy; establishing a process for peer-reviewed vetting of submissions; drafting the program; inviting sponsors; establishing a registration system; communicating with participants directly and over social media; hosting the annual awards ceremony and business meeting, and running the conference in accordance with the Society's Code of Conduct. The Conference Organizing Committee proposes

conference registration fees for approval by the Executive Board. In the event that a Conference cannot be held in person, the Conference Organizing Committee will coordinate with the Executive Board to establish an appropriate course of action.

- 6.3.1 Awards Committees: The Awards Coordinator acts on behalf of the Executive Board to recognize outstanding contributions to the field with annual prizes. Awards are presented by the Society at its annual conference. The Awards Committee will maintain a document that outlines its guidelines and practices; this document, and its revisions, will be publicly available and approved by the Executive Board. Peer nominations and self-nominations are welcome.
- 6.3.2 The Awards Coordinator is a member of the Executive Board, appointed by the President, who solicits nominations and manages the judging process, including the recruitment and supervision of subcommittees. Nominees for each prize will be reviewed by a committee of not less than three members of the Society, as nominated by the Awards Coordinator for approval by the Executive Board. All nominees will be notified of the results by the Awards Coordinator, and the announcement of winners will be published on the Society's website, in *Inks: The Journal of the Comics Studies Society*, and announced at the annual awards ceremony. The Awards Coordinator will exercise all due diligence to avoid conflicts of interest. The Awards Coordinator serves a term of one year and may serve multiple and consecutive terms with the approval of the Executive Board.
- 6.3.3 The Outreach Committee is comprised of the Executive Treasurer, at least one Member-at-Large, one member recommended by the Graduate Student Caucus, and two Society members. The Social Strategist will also liaise with the Outreach Committee. The Outreach Committee develops events and programming related to expanding and supporting initiatives for the purpose of diversifying the membership of the Society. Members on this committee serve one-year terms and may serve consecutive terms with the approval of the Executive Board.

SECTION 7—THE GRADUATE STUDENT CAUCUS

- 7.1 The Society recognizes the Graduate Student Caucus as an affiliated organization of members comprised of and providing support to graduate students, post-doctoral students, and adjuncts in the field. Given the precarious nature of those positions, the Graduate Student Caucus works to grow the field by supporting these colleagues and providing guidance to undergraduates who hope to enter the field.
- 7.2 The sitting President of the Graduate Student Caucus, elected in accordance with the Caucus's own bylaws, shall serve as both liaison between the Executive Board and the Caucus and as a voting member of the Executive Board.

SECTION 8—COHORTS

- 8.1 The Executive Board may establish Cohorts as interest groups that have their own structure and leadership, whose interests align with that of the Society.
- 8.2 An assemblage of no fewer than five Society members may propose a Cohort to the Executive Board. Cohorts may be organized around research and/or professional interests. Cohorts provide opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing, and liaising with the Executive Board. Upon the recommendation of the Executive Officers, Cohort proposals are approved by the Executive Board. Once Cohorts are approved by the Executive Board, their formation is announced to the general membership and membership of the Cohort is open to any Society member.
- 8.3 Cohorts will be consulted by Standing Committees for input into Society events, programming, and nominations.
- 8.4 The Second Vice-President will serve as the official liaison between Cohorts and the Executive Board.

SECTION 9—MEETINGS

- 9.1 An annual business meeting of the Society and its Executive Board will be held in conjunction with the annual conference.
- 9.2 The place and time of the annual business meeting shall be announced to the membership no later than three months prior to the meeting.
- 9.3 Robert's Rules of Order, current edition, governs the conduct of meetings.

SECTION 10—PUBLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Society shall sponsor the publication of a scholarly journal and maintain an official website. Both shall be considered publications of the Society, for the benefit of the general membership. A portion of each member's dues shall be assigned to those publications to pay their costs. Each member shall receive access to such publications as are issued during the period of the membership.
- 10.2 The Editors shall make annual reports to the Society. Their files and records shall be open to the Executive Board.

SECTION 11—ELECTIONS

- 11.1 The Nominating Committee shall put forth the names of candidates for positions in the Society to the Executive Board. In addition, any member of the Society may be nominated or self-nominated for the positions of Second Vice-President, Executive Secretary, or Member at Large via an electronic call for nominations. In the event of a special election, the Nominating Committee shall put forth the names of candidates via an electronic correspondence.
- 11.2 The Executive Secretary administers the election electronically. The majority vote winner in any contest wins the election.
- 11.3 Election results and the names of position-holders shall be announced on the Society's website and by electronic mail.

SECTION 12—AMENDMENTS

- 12.1 Amendments to the bylaws may be proposed to the membership by a majority vote of the Executive Board or by petition with signatures of at least twenty members. Such proposed amendments shall be submitted electronically to the general membership for a vote. A majority of persons returning ballots shall determine approval or denial of the proposed amendment.

SECTION 13—DISSOLUTION

- 13.1 The Society may be dissolved upon recommendation of the Executive Board and a two-thirds majority vote of the members.
- 13.2 In the event of dissolution of the Society, all assets left after the liabilities have been met shall be disposed of in a way amenable to Section 501-(c)-(3) and other pertinent sections of the Internal Revenue Code.