

**Constitution and Bylaws
of the Mississippi State University Chapter
of The Honor Society of Agriculture,
Gamma Sigma Delta**

ARTICLE I

Name and Organization

Section 1. The name of the Chapter shall be the Mississippi State University Chapter of The Honor Society of Agriculture, Gamma Sigma Delta.

Section 2. The Chapter is a chartered local chapter of the International Society, The Honor Society of Agriculture, Gamma Sigma Delta.

Section 3. The Chapter accepts in full the Constitution and Bylaws of the International Society.

ARTICLE II

Objectives and Purpose

Section 1. The objectives of this Chapter shall be to encourage high standards of scholarship in all branches of agricultural science and education and a high degree of excellence in the practice of agricultural pursuits.

Section 2. The purpose of this Chapter shall be implemented by conferring membership, as an honor, on graduating seniors and graduate students who have shown exceptional ability during their undergraduate or graduate work in agriculture and its closely related disciplines and those alumni, faculty members, and professional staff who have rendered signal service to the cause of agricultural development. All laws, rules, and regulations of this Chapter shall emphasize and promote the honorary character of the Society.

ARTICLE III

Membership

Section 1. The following are eligible for election to membership in this Chapter.

A. Undergraduate students, the total number initiated in any given year not to exceed 15% of the senior class in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the School of Human Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine, and the College of Forest Resources, elected to membership must have the following qualifications:

1. Are members of the junior or senior class of the college or school in which they are being considered for membership;
2. Are considered to be of high moral character;

3. Have been in residence in their college or school at least one academic year before election;
4. Rank in the upper 5 percent scholastically of the junior class of their college, or rank in the upper 15 percent scholastically of the senior class of their college at Mississippi State University; and
5. Have attained at least a 3.25 GPA for all work at Mississippi State University.

B. Professional students from the College of Veterinary Medicine must have the following qualifications:

1. Are considered to be of high moral character;
2. Have shown promise of making worthwhile contributions to their profession; and
3. Have completed at least 50% of their DVM program (i.e., are classified as 3rd or 4th year DVM students) and have attained at least a 3.5 GPA for work taken towards their DVM at the time of nomination for membership.

C. Graduate students elected to membership must have the following qualifications:

1. Have shown superior ability to carry on research and/or advanced study in agriculture or in other sciences where the individual student's area of study or research is directly related to agriculture;
2. Have shown promise of making worthwhile contributions in these fields; and
3. Have attained at least a 3.5 GPA for work taken for graduate credit toward the advanced degree at Mississippi State University.
4. Graduate students (M.S. and Ph.D.) must have completed 40 percent of the required hours towards their degree (e.g., typically having completed 12 hours for an M.S. candidate, based on a 30 hour M.S. degree program, and typically having completed 24 hours for a Ph.D. candidate, based on a 60 hour Ph.D. degree program) at Mississippi State University.
5. Persons who have been eligible since the immediately preceding nomination period shall be eligible for consideration, even though the degree has been granted in the interim.

D. Faculty members and professional staff in the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine may be elected to membership that have been engaged in work in agriculture, or in science related to agriculture, at Mississippi State University and that have shown exceptional ability in teaching, research, or extension activities.

E. Alumni of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the School of Human Sciences, the College of Forest Resources, and the College of Veterinary Medicine of Mississippi State University or of other institutions with a Gamma Sigma Delta chapter offering comparable degrees, elected to membership must have rendered signal service to the cause of Agricultural development in Mississippi.

F. Honorary membership may be awarded to an individual(s) who has furthered agricultural or related sciences but is not eligible in the above categories. Such membership is a prestigious award and is limited to five per year. Individuals so honored need not have a degree or be directly involved in agriculture, but should be a leader at the university, community, state, regional, or national level.

Honorary membership nominations may be made by any member of the chapter to the Executive Committee. The awarding of honorary membership will then be initiated by a majority vote of the Executive Committee, followed by presentation of the honorary membership nomination(s) to the chapter membership where a majority vote of the voting members will constitute affirmation of election to membership of nominated honorary member(s).

Section 2. Election of members in this Chapter shall be made at the annual business meeting.

A. Prior to this meeting, nomination for membership may be made by any active member, using the official forms and presenting them to the Chapter Secretary.

B. All nominations shall be in the hands of the Chapter Secretary on or before an announced deadline. The Chapter Secretary shall then transmit the nominations to the Membership Committee.

C. From these nominations the Membership Committee shall prepare a list of persons eligible for membership according to Article III, Section 1, of this Constitution and Bylaws.

D. Election of members shall be by open vote unless a secret ballot is called for by any of the members present. Candidates must receive favorable votes from 3/4 of all active members present at the annual business meeting. Quorum rules shall be in effect. Results of this election shall be tabulated and announced before adjournment of the meeting. Failure to meet quorum rules at the annual business meeting in the election of new members should be followed by electronic (e-mail or similar) voting of the current membership; with 3/4 favorable votes required and quorum rules in effect for the minimum number of votes needed to elect new members.

E. Candidates elected to membership shall be notified of their election in writing by the Chapter Secretary and they shall be instructed to indicate their acceptance of the invitation and to pay the required initiation fee.

F. Candidates accepting election to membership shall be inducted at an initiation meeting to be held shortly after the annual business meeting.

Section 3. Membership in another chartered chapter of the Society may be transferred to the Mississippi State University Chapter upon application to the Secretary. Active status requires payment of dues to the Mississippi State University Chapter.

Section 4. The active members of this Chapter shall consist of those members of Gamma Sigma Delta who have paid annual dues to the Mississippi State University Chapter.

Section 5. This organization does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

ARTICLE IV

Election of Officers

Section 1. The executive officers of this Chapter shall include a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Historian, and Immediate Past President.

Section 2. The officers shall be elected for a one-year term. The President shall not serve consecutive terms, but is eligible for nomination and election to other chapter Executive Committee officer positions.

Section 3. Nominees for the above offices shall be submitted by the Nominating Committee at the annual business meeting. Additional nominations shall be accepted from the floor.

Section 4. Election to the above offices shall be by open vote unless a secret ballot is called for by any of the members present, and candidates must receive favorable votes from a simple majority of all active members present at the annual business meeting. Quorum rules shall be in effect. Results of this election shall be tabulated and announced before adjournment of the meeting. Failure to meet quorum rules at the annual business meeting in the election of new officers should be followed by electronic (e-mail or similar) voting of the current membership; with a majority of favorable votes required and quorum rules in effect for the minimum number of votes needed to elect new members.

Section 5. Terms of office shall begin at the close of the initiation meeting following the annual business meeting at which the election was held.

Section 6. In the event the office of President becomes vacant, the Vice-President shall automatically fill the office of the President and shall serve for the remainder of the term. Other vacancies shall be filled by appointment by the Executive Committee, the appointee to serve the unexpired term.

ARTICLE V

Duties of the Officers

Section 1. The President shall:

A. Preside over all business meetings of both the Chapter and the Executive Committee;

B. Coordinate the work of the Executive Committee;

C. Preside over the ceremonies for the initiation of new members;

D. Appoint committees as provided for by Article VI of this Constitution and Bylaws and to appoint such other committees as deemed necessary to carry out the functions of this Chapter;

E. Submit reports as required to the International Society; and

F. Administer the offices of the local Chapter in a manner which shall be a credit to the aims and objectives of Gamma Sigma Delta.

Section 2. The Vice-President shall:

- A. Assume the duties of the President in the President's absence;
- B. Assist other members of the Executive Committee in coordinating the activities of this Chapter; and

Section 3. The Secretary shall:

- A. Record and read minutes of the Chapter business meetings and of the Executive Committee meetings;
- B. Maintain the membership roll of the Chapter. Transmit to the International Secretary the list of and membership fees for newly initiated members each year;
- C. Transmit required reports and constitution and bylaw revisions to the International Secretary with the assistance of the President;
- D. Maintain records related to Chapter functions including the Constitution and Bylaws;
- E. Carry out the duties required for correspondence connected with the operation of the Chapter;
- F. Mail notices and transmit the agenda for all meetings, as prepared by the Executive Committee, to all active members; and
- G. Have available copies of the International Society Constitution and Bylaws, the Chapter Constitution and Bylaws, and *Robert's Rules of Order* at all meetings.

Section 4. The Treasurer shall:

- A. Collect all dues and assessments from the members and initiates;
- B. Be custodian of all Chapter funds and disperse them as approved by the Chapter Executive Committee;
- C. Keep a record of all funds collected and disbursed by the Chapter;
- D. Provide the membership with an annual report of all financial transactions;
- E. Submit financial records to the Executive Committee for audit at the end of the Chapter's fiscal year.

Section 5. The Historian shall:

- A. Maintain a record of the development of this Chapter;
- B. Summarize, record, and report from time to time the important historical facts relating to the Chapter, and
- C. Submit a copy of the Chapter History to the International Historian when authored or revised.

ARTICLE VI

Committees

Section 1. Committees and committee members shall be appointed by the President or the President's representative, except where limited by the articles of this Constitution and Bylaws. Current chapter members can call for establishment of a committee by a vote or petition to the Executive Committee of twenty-five percent of the members in good standing. Ad hoc Committee structure and organization should be as outlined below in Section 3 (and modified when necessary), and may include, but not be limited to, committees such as an Awards Committee, Membership Committee, Scholarship Committee, Nominating Committee, Audit Committee, Publicity Committee, etc.

Section 2. Executive Committee:

- A. Shall be composed of the Executive Officers.
- B. Shall call meetings to plan or act on the business of the Chapter;
- C. Shall have the power to act upon all matters pertaining to the welfare and promotion of the interests of this Chapter, except where limited by this Constitution and Bylaws and the International Society Constitution and Bylaws;
- D. Shall appoint a replacement Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, or Historian to fill any unexpired term of these offices.

Section 3. Ad hoc Committee Structure and Organization:

- A. Shall be composed of at least five members appointed by the President or the President's representative;
- B. Shall elect a Chair from among the members of the Committee;
- C. Shall serve no more than one year terms at which time new appointments should be made, or reappointments made by the new President, or the President's representative, if committees operate beyond a single year term; i.e., depending on the committee's business and charge.

D. Efforts should be made to balance representation on committees from the following units: College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the School of Human Sciences, the College of Forest Resources, and the College of Veterinary Medicine; however if no members from a particular unit are available to serve, or unwilling to serve, the balance of appointments should come from the other units.

ARTICLE VII

Awards

Section 1. The International Gamma Sigma Delta Award for Distinguished Achievement in Agriculture.

A. A nominee (individual or team) for this award shall be selected by this Chapter and submitted to the International Society.

B. The nominee for this award must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Must have made major contributions to agricultural and related sciences during the previous five years. These distinguished contributions may be in teaching, research, extension and/or other service.

2. The nominee (or one member of the team) must be a member of Gamma Sigma Delta.

C. The Chapter Secretary shall transmit the name of the nominee and a packet of material in support of the nomination to the International Secretary no later than April 30.

Section 2. Junior, Senior, Professional and Graduate Scholarship Recognition Awards.

A. The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, College of Forest Resources, School of Human Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine, and/or departments therein are responsible for nominating their top student(s) for the Junior, Senior, Professional and Graduate Scholarship Recognition Awards. Each college/school/department is responsible for developing their own process for nominating their respective candidates. In the absence of a college/school/department process, any member may nominate candidates for awards to the chapter for consideration. Students must meet the following criteria:

1. The Junior awardee must have completed or be currently enrolled in courses equivalent to at least 74 percent and not more than 84 percent of the total hours required for graduation and at least 30 percent of these hours must have been earned at Mississippi State University; must have attained high scholastic standing at the end of their junior year which shall include the accumulated work and shall be determined by the usual methods prevailing at Mississippi State University; and must demonstrate scholarly and leadership activities.

2. The Senior awardee must have completed requirements for graduation during the academic year in which she/he is being honored, and at least 25 percent of the hours required for graduation must have been earned at Mississippi State University; must have attained high scholastic standing and shall be determined by the usual methods prevailing at Mississippi State University; and must demonstrate scholarly and leadership activities.

3. The Professional and Graduate awardee must have attained high scholastic standing as determined by the usual methods prevailing at Mississippi State University; and should demonstrate scholarly and leadership activities as part of their professional or graduate program; and/or should demonstrate excellence in research, teaching, extension, service, or clinical activities.

B. The Gamma Sigma Delta Awards Committee will evaluate the nominations and select Junior, Senior, Professional, and/or Graduate Award recipients based on a standard set of evaluation criteria developed and approved by the committee.

C. The Chapter Secretary shall transmit the names of the recipients of these awards to the International Secretary.

Section 3. Faculty and Professional Staff Awards:

A. These awards shall be presented to individuals who have made distinct contributions to agriculture in the classroom, or through research, administration or other service.

1. Teaching Award - shall be awarded to an outstanding teacher in the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine. To be eligible, faculty and professional staff must have been employed at Mississippi State University for a minimum of three years at the time of nomination, and must be current members of Gamma Sigma Delta in good standing.

2. Research Award - shall be awarded to a member of the faculty or professional staff of the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine, who has made an outstanding contribution in research either directly or indirectly related to agriculture. To be eligible, faculty and professional staff must have been employed at Mississippi State University for a minimum of three years at the time of nomination, and must be current members of Gamma Sigma Delta in good standing.

3. Extension Award - shall be awarded to an Extension faculty or professional staff member (including county agents, associate county agents, assistant county agents, 4-H - youth agents and home economists) who has made an outstanding contribution either directly or indirectly to agriculture. To be eligible, faculty and professional staff must have been employed at Mississippi State University for a minimum of three years at the time of nomination, and must be current members of Gamma Sigma Delta in good standing.

4. Alumni and Professional Award - shall be awarded to an alumnus/a or any resident of Mississippi who has made an outstanding contribution either directly or indirectly to agriculture. Recipients do not have to be current or former members of Gamma Sigma Delta, and may also be considered for honorary membership (See Article III, Section 1-F).

B. The Chapter Secretary shall transmit the names of the recipients of these awards to the International Secretary.

C. The Chapter Executive Committee shall have the names of the recipients of these awards inscribed on the appropriate plaques to be displayed in an appropriate location within the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine.

Section 4. No individual shall be honored with more than one award in any one year.

Section 5. No recipient shall be honored with the same award within any single five-year period.

Section 6. Nothing in Article VII, Sections 1, 2 and 3 shall be construed as making it mandatory to grant any or all of these awards or scholarships every year if the membership does not desire to do so, and may also be dependent on the availability of funding and financial resources of the chapter.

ARTICLE VIII

Finances

Section 1. An initiation fee of \$35.00 (updated in Spring 2016) shall be paid by each individual accepting an invitation to join Gamma Sigma Delta. Of this fee, a portion shall be forwarded to the International Society (for honor cord, certificate, pin, postage, etc.) and the remaining funds shall be used to defray operating expenses of the local MSU Chapter.

Section 2. The annual Chapter membership dues (\$25.00; updated in Spring 2016) shall be determined by the Executive Committee and shall become due and payable October 1 of each year and delinquent after December 1 of that year. When a member becomes two years in arrears in the payment of dues, the member shall be notified to this effect and shall be dropped from the roll of active members unless dues for the current year and at least one year's back dues are paid. To remain active, new members shall be required to pay annual membership dues starting October 1 following their initiation.

Section 3. Special assessments may be levied by a 3/4 vote of those present at any business meeting. Quorum rules shall be in effect.

ARTICLE IX

Operations

Section 1. The annual business meeting shall be held in the Spring semester of the school year to elect officers and new members, and to transact such business as may be required according to the Chapter Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 2. A business meeting of the Chapter may be called at any time by the Executive Committee or upon petition of twenty-five percent of the members in good standing of the Chapter. A written notice of each business meeting shall be mailed to all active members at least one week before the meeting.

Section 3. An annual initiation meeting shall be held in the Spring semester at which time new members shall be initiated, Junior, Senior, Professional and Graduate Awards presented, Faculty and Staff Awards presented, the nominee for the international Distinguished Achievement in Agriculture Award announced, and new officers installed.

Section 4. The Chapter should elect a legislative delegate to the International Legislative Council. If none are elected, the President, or their appointed representative from the Executive Committee or chapter membership at large, will serve in this role

ARTICLE X

Amendments

Section 1. The Chapter Constitution and Bylaws may be amended at any time by a 3/4 vote of the active members present at the meeting at which the amendment is proposed. Written notice of proposed amendments shall be circulated to the members not less than fifteen days before the balloting. Quorum rules shall be in effect.

Section 2. The revised and approved Constitution and Bylaws shall be submitted to the International Secretary for review and approval by the International Executive Committee.

ARTICLE XI

Rules of Operation

Section 1. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (or latest edition) shall govern this organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Chapter Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 2. Fifteen active members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Revised and Accepted April 2016.

Prior Revision: March 2000