

NATIONAL BY-LAWS

SIGMA DELTA PI NATIONAL BY-LAWS (Last amended in 2022.)

Article I. Name

The official name of this society is: Sigma Delta Pi, National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society. In Spanish: *Sigma Delta Pi, La Sociedad Nacional Honoraria Hispánica*.

Article II. Purposes

The Society's purposes are:

1. To honor those who excel in the study of the Spanish language and in the study of the literature and culture of the Spanish-speaking world;
2. To foster an understanding, appreciation and respect for the peoples, cultures and societies of the Spanish-speaking world;
3. To honor those who have promoted and reinforced a better understanding of the contributions of the Spanish-speaking world;
4. To serve its membership in support of the Society's goals and ideals.

Article III. Membership

Section 1.

The Society will receive into its membership, irrespective of association with other organizations, only those who attain its standards of high academic achievement in the study of the Spanish language, the literature and culture of the Spanish-speaking world, and other college-level subjects. Membership may also be granted to those who demonstrate professional merit, proficiency, or special distinction in the fields of Hispanic study and culture or who have made significant contributions to the same. Membership shall be conferred in strict accordance with the standards established by the Association of College Honor Societies. The bases of selection are: (1) the candidate's scholastic or professional record; (2) the candidate's achieved distinction in Hispanic studies; (3) the candidate's demonstrated support of the Society's goals and ideals. Reception into membership is without formal pledge or secret-order training.

Individual chapters may increase, but not decrease, the membership criteria outlined in this article. All chapter requirements for membership must be clearly articulated in the chapter's own published by-laws as approved by the chapter, the respective college or university and Sigma Delta Pi's executive director (see Article XI, Section 2).

Section 2. There are three classes of membership: active, alumnus, and honorary.

Section 3. Active Membership.

Active membership is limited to college students who have demonstrated high scholarship in general and excellence in the academic study of Spanish. Specifically, they must meet the following requirements:

1. Completion of three years of study of college-level Spanish (eighteen semester credit hours) or the equivalent thereof, including at least three semester hours of a course in Hispanic literature or Hispanic culture and civilization (or a course whose content includes at least $\frac{1}{3}$ of these) at the junior (third-year) level at the institution where they are currently enrolled and seeking membership. A student may be admitted to active membership while still enrolled in the second junior-level course if:
 - a) all other requirements have been met;
 - b) the course's instructor certifies that the student's work is of "B" or better;
 - c) the first junior-level course has already been completed with a grade of "B" or better at the current institution.
2. A minimal grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 point scale in all Spanish courses taken.
3. Ranking in the upper 35% of their class—sophomore, junior, or senior—and the completion of at least three semesters or five quarters of college work. *In cases where an institution does not record class rank, the candidate must have a 3.20 cumulative GPA.*
4. Graduate students who have been unconditionally admitted to a degree-granting program may be confirmed for membership upon completion of two graduate courses in Spanish with an average that, if continued, will make them eligible for a graduate degree.
5. Sigma Delta Pi does not discriminate on any basis prohibited by law.

Section 4. Alumnus Membership.

This category only includes active members who have graduated or for other reasons have left college. If alumnus members re-enroll either as undergraduate or as graduate students, they revert to active membership. Alumnus members are welcome at all chapter meetings, but they do not have the right to vote on matters brought before the chapter, nor can they serve as a chapter officer.

Section 5. Honorary Membership.

Persons who are obviously interested in, and supportive of, things Hispanic may be elected to this category. Members of the college Spanish teaching staff and other faculty members or college administrative officials notably devoted to the goals and ideals of Sigma Delta Pi and who have supported the work of the chapter are generally initiated as honorary members. Outstanding high-school or community-college teachers of Spanish may be granted honorary membership. This class is not open to students, graduate or undergraduate. For honorary and all other types of members, the national initiation fee must be paid, and the membership certificate and insignia presented during the initiation ceremony. (For virtual ceremonies, the certificate and insignia must be sent immediately thereafter to the newly inducted).

Section 6. Confirmation of Membership Eligibility.

Once a chapter is installed and has held its first initiation ceremony, the responsibility of confirming the candidates' eligibility to all membership categories is assumed by the local chapter. Advisers and chapter officers must ensure that all candidates fully meet the requirements, and with absolutely no exceptions. Doubtful cases must be referred to a regional or national officer.

Section 7. Initiation Ceremony.

A candidate for membership must be initiated personally, not by proxy, and will be admitted only if they arrive in time for the start of the ceremony, either virtual or face-to-face. The initiation ceremony is private but not secret. Other than members and initiates, special guests such as spouses and parents of candidates as well as administrative officers of the college or university may be invited to witness the ceremony with the approval of the chapter's adviser and officers.

Section 8. Insignia and Membership Certificates.

The insignia is the same for active, honorary and the Order of José Martí membership (see Article XIV), but the certificates indicate the type of membership.

Section 9. Privileges.

Only active members may vote or hold office in a chapter.

Section 10. Terminology.

The members of the society will exercise care in the use of terminology to distinguish between Sigma Delta Pi as an honor society and such organizations as language clubs, social fraternities, professional fraternities, and recognition societies.

Section 11. Revocation of Membership.

Membership may be revoked for stated and just cause following a formal investigation conducted by the institution and the Society, a formal vote of the faculty/administration of the institution in question, and subsequent approval (majority vote) by the National Executive Council. Said member will be required to return their membership pin and certificate to the National Executive Director. Sufficient cause for revocation of membership may result from violation of these by-laws, violation of the honor code of the institution in question, violation of any Society rule or practice, or other conduct that the Executive Committee deems detrimental to the mission and interests of the Society. A member suspended or terminated for just cause would not be entitled to return of dues.

Article IV. Officers

Only students may serve as chapter officers. Only faculty members actively teaching in some area of Hispanic studies may hold national or regional office. Such officers may be reelected to office after retirement from teaching. National and regional officers must hold an earned doctorate in their teaching field.

Section 1. National Officers.

The national officers include the president, the executive director, the presidents emeriti, and the immediate past president (The immediate past president is one who has served to the end of their elected term.).

Section 2. Regional Officers.

The regional officers include a vice president for the northeast, a vice president for the southeast, a vice president for the midwest, a vice president for the southwest, and a vice president for the west.

Section 3. Editor.

There is a national editor, unless this function is assumed by the executive director or another officer.

Article V. Executive Council and Executive Committee

Section 1. Executive Council.

The Executive Council includes the Executive Committee (see Article V, Section 2) and the five vice presidents. The president chairs the Executive Council. Meetings of the Executive Council will be scheduled as deemed necessary and appropriate. Those present, with a minimum of three attending, constitute a quorum.

Section 2. Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee includes the president, the executive director, the presidents emeriti, the immediate past president and one member-at-large (see Article VI, Section 5: Additional Executive Committee Member). The Executive Committee authorizes the executive director to disburse funds for the most efficient operation of the Society. The Executive Committee, without the vote of the executive director, determines any compensation for the executive director and their assistant(s). The executive director and their assistant(s), are the only compensated officials of the Society. The Executive Committee may meet on call of the president whenever such a meeting is needed to serve the best interests of the Society. The president or executive director reports to the Executive Council all actions taken.

Article VI. Election or Appointment of National and Regional Officers

Section 1. Term of Office.

All national and regional officers except the presidents emeriti and the honorary presidents hold office for three years or until the end of the triennium during which they were elected or appointed. They may be re-elected or re-appointed for additional terms. The presidents emeriti and the honorary pPresidents hold office for life.

Section 2. Election of National and Regional Officers, except the Executive Director, Presidents Emeriti and Honorary Presidents.

Each chapter may offer nominations for the national president and for a vice president for its own geographical region, and may vote for the candidates for these offices only. One year prior to the triennial convention, the executive director, with Executive Committee approval, appoints an election committee of three members, none of whom

may be the incumbent of any elective position to be filled. The executive director also appoints the chair of the committee. The committee's responsibilities are: (1) to receive nominations from the chapters for the offices of the president and the five vice presidents, and to send out requests to all active chapters for this purpose no later than January 15 of the third year of the triennium; (2) to select from the nominations made by the chapters two candidates for each office solely on the basis of their qualifications; (3) to prepare for each candidate a brief curriculum vitae that emphasizes the candidate's contributions to Sigma Delta Pi; (4) to prepare ballots and send them together with the candidates' curricula vitae to each active chapter no later than April 1 of the last year of the triennium; (5) to receive and count the ballots no later than May 1 of the last year of the triennium; and (6) to notify the executive director of the voting results. The executive director notifies the candidates immediately and announces the results at the national triennial convention. Newly elected officers take office at the conclusion of the national triennial convention.

Section 3. Executive Director.

Prior to the national triennial convention, the executive director will be appointed/re-appointed by the president, the president-elect, the presidents emeriti, and the immediate past president. The newly named executive director will take office at the conclusion of the national triennial convention.

Section 4. Presidents Emeriti.

The presidents emeriti, who are elected for life, are voting members of the Executive Council and the Executive Committee. Presidents emeriti must have served as national president of Sigma Delta Pi. The national president and the executive director may in concert nominate candidates for this office and submit the nominations to a vote of the Executive Council. A two-thirds majority vote is required for election. It is not a requirement of these bylaws that any presidents emeriti be elected.

Section 5. Executive Committee Member-at-Large.

At its discretion and/or if the Executive Committee comprises only two members, the Executive Committee may appoint no more than one Executive Committee member-at-large from either the existing Executive Council, past presidents, honorary presidents, outstanding chapter advisers or prominent alumni or honorary Sigma Delta Pi members whose experience would serve the Executive Committee well. The member-at-large votes on and participates in all activities of the Executive Committee, and serves to the end of the triennium in which they have been appointed. At the end of a triennium, the Executive Committee may choose 1) to re-appoint the incumbent member-at-large for another term; 2) to appoint a different member-at-large, or 3) to refrain from appointing a member-at-large. It is not a requirement of these by-laws that a member-at-large be appointed.

Section 6. Honorary Presidents.

Honorary presidents are elected for life by a two-thirds majority vote of the Executive Council. Candidates may be nominated by any chapter or by any member of the Executive Council. Considered for this honor may be eminent Hispanists, persons with

distinguished records in Sigma Delta Pi, and those whose appointments might significantly and positively impact the Society. Current members of the Executive Council may not be considered for this honor, and appointed honorary presidents are not members of the Executive Council but may be called on for advice. It is not a requirement of these by-laws that any honorary presidents be elected.

Section 7. National Editor.

The national editor, whose chief function is the editing of official publications, is appointed/re-appointed by the president during the first month of the triennium in which they take office. The editor's term is for three years, and they may be reappointed for succeeding terms. However, the Executive Committee may also determine that the appointment of the national editor is unnecessary for the Society's official publications.

Section 8. Webmaster.

The webmaster is appointed by the president during the first month of the triennium in which they take office. The webmaster's term is for three years, and they may be reappointed for succeeding terms.

Article VII. Duties of Officers

Section 1. President.

The president has the following responsibilities: (1) to recruit and facilitate the installation of new chapters; (2) to help manage scholarship programs; (3) to appoint the national editor and to supervise official publications; (4) to appoint the webmaster of the Society's national website; (5) to design and issue all certificates in cooperation with the executive director; (6) to serve as chair of the Executive Council and the Executive Committee; (7) to encourage chapter advisers and other officers to work for the benefit of the Society; (8) to seek support for the Society from outside sources; (9) to identify and to implement ways to improve the Society's operation; (10) to consult regularly with the Executive Council on matters of policy, approval of new chapters, and other matters requiring Council approval; (11) to represent the society as its chief executive officer at important meetings or ceremonies or to designate others to do so; (12) to maintain contact with chapters through *Entre Nosotros* and other means to keep them informed of opportunities available to the membership and of changes in policy; (13) to help reactivate inactive chapters; (14) to work diligently to serve the best interests of the Society and its membership.

Section 2. Executive Director.

The executive director has the following responsibilities: (1) to receive all monies collected by the Society; (2) to receive initiation fees for new members and to forward membership certificates, insignia, and other materials to chapters; (3) to receive all charter and re-activation petitions and charter fees; (4) to disburse all monies expended by the Society; (5) to assist the president with the management and administration of scholarship programs; (6) to have the society's accounts reviewed annually by a certified public accountant and to report the results to the Society; (7) to prepare interim financial statements upon request of the president or the Executive Committee; (8) to invest, with the advice and consent of the Executive Committee, any surplus funds in

the most advantageous and secure manner possible; (9) to make arrangements for the national triennial convention; (10) to preside at the convention; (11) to keep a national register of all persons initiated; (12) to maintain a record of all initiated into the the Orders, and of those recognized with other national awards/recognitions.; (13) to maintain a record of chapter initiations and to report inactive chapters to the president; (14) to order insignia and membership certificates when needed; (15) to receive the results of national and regional elections, inform the candidates of the results, and report the results at the triennial convention; (16) to assist the president and the Executive Council with the performance of their duties by providing advice, information, and statistics as appropriate; (17) to assist chapters in their activities; (18) to represent Sigma Delta Pi before federal, state, and local agencies and to handle all matters pertaining to taxes and the Internal Revenue Service.

Section 3. Regional Vice Presidents.

The regional vice president has the following responsibilities: (1) to contact personally each chapter in their region to offer encouragement, advice, and help; (2) to contact each four-year college or university in their region which does not have a chapter of Sigma Delta Pi in an effort to found new chapters; (3) to contact all inactive chapters in their region to encourage their reactivation; (4) to vote on petitions for new chapters and other matters of importance referred by the president; (5) to seek ways to improve service to the Society's membership.

Section 4. National Editor.

The primary responsibility of the national editor is to edit and publish the society's publications, particularly *Entre Nosotros*, in accordance with policies established by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee and/or the President may refer additional editorial responsibility to the editor if the need should arise.

Section 5. Webmaster.

The webmaster will manage, edit and update the national website in accordance with policies established by the Executive Committee.

Article VIII. Replacement and Removal of Officers

Section 1. Replacement of Elected Officers.

In the event of the death, resignation, or incapacitation of the president, the executive director assumes the president's duties until a new president is elected following procedures outlined in Article VI, Section 2, with the exception that the election process will take place immediately. The executive director, while performing the duties of president, will at the same time continue to carry out their own duties and responsibilities. In the event of the death, resignation, or incapacitation of the executive director, the Executive Committee will elect a successor to serve until the end of the triennium in progress at the time of appointment. In the event of the death, resignation, or incapacitation of a regional vice president, the president will appoint, with the approval of the Executive Council, a successor who will serve until the end of the triennium in progress at the time of appointment.

Section 2. Removal of Officers.

For causes of incompetence, lack of cooperation, or lack of time to perform the duties incumbent upon any officer, except the executive director and the Executive Committee member-at-large, the president may suggest that they resign their position. If the individual refuses to resign, the president may, with the approval of the Executive Council, declare the position vacant and appoint, with the approval of the Executive Council, a successor who will serve until the end of the triennium in progress at the time of appointment. The Executive Committee may remove and replace an incompetent executive director and an incompetent Executive Committee member-at-large by majority decision. The executive director may initiate action to remove from office an incompetent president by a two-thirds majority vote of the Executive Council. The Executive Director will assume the president's duties until a new president is elected following procedures outlined in Article VI, Section 2, with the exception that the election process will take place immediately. The executive director, while performing the duties of president, will at the same time continue to carry out their own duties and responsibilities.

Article IX. Dues and Fees

Section 1. Charter Fee.

For each new chapter approved, the chapter must pay a charter fee in an amount determined by the Executive Council. This fee must be paid before the petition for a charter in Sigma Delta Pi is approved. The president or executive director will notify the petitioner of the amount of the fee.

Section 2. Membership Dues.

For each member initiated into Sigma Delta Pi, except for the Order of Don Quijote, the respective chapter will pay a specified membership fee to the Society. This fee provides for lifetime membership, a membership certificate, and the Society insignia in the form of a pin. Alumnus members have already paid the fee and are not required to pay again when they affiliate with a local chapter. The membership fee is normally paid by the new initiates themselves--although the chapter or institution may cover these fee(s)--and all fees must be sent to the executive director before the candidates are initiated. The fee may be changed upon recommendation of the Executive Council, subject to approval at the next triennial convention or by means of a convention by mail. Chapters will be notified well in advance of the effective date of any change.

Section 3. Local Dues.

Each chapter determines the amount of local dues, if any. As specified in the national policy manual, the Society recommends modest fees of this sort and urges chapters to engage in other types of fund-raising activities to build a local treasury.

Article X. National Conventions and Meetings

The Society is governed by its conventions and meetings held by its Executive

Committee. Between conventions and meetings, the Society is governed by the president and the Executive Council. National conventions and meetings will include:

Section 1. National Triennial Conventions and Meetings.

Each active chapter has the right to send one voting delegate to the national triennial convention. If this delegate is unable to attend, the chapter may give its proxy to the delegate from another chapter. National and regional officers will attend, but may only vote if they are official delegates of a chapter. The society's business is conducted in formal sessions. The Executive Council may also call special national meetings during or outside the year in which the national triennial convention is held. Each chapter is encouraged to send at least one representative to these meetings.

Section 2. Remote Conventions.

Between conventions and meetings described in Section 1 above, conventions by mail, or remote meetings, are held to decide important issues. In conventions by mail, each active chapter will receive full information on the business at hand and a ballot to register its vote. If a chapter fails to submit its ballot by the announced deadline, its vote is surrendered to the Executive Council, which will cast the vote in the best interest of the society.

Article XI. New Chapters

Section 1. Petition for a Charter.

Any four-year college or university which enjoys full unconditional accreditation by its recognized regional accrediting association and which offers at least a baccalaureate degree may petition the Executive Council for the establishment of a chapter of Sigma Delta Pi. The executive director reviews the petition carefully to determine whether all requirements have been met. They will then make their recommendation to the national president who, in turn, will review the petition and make their recommendation on the petition to the members of the Executive Council, who by majority vote will approve or disapprove the petition. The petitioning institution submits: (1) an official petition form properly completed; (2) a copy of the latest issue of the catalog, which must show a regular curricular offering of at least twenty-four semester hours of Spanish; (3) a list of three or more students who qualify as charter members, accompanied by official current transcripts for each student recommended for membership; (4) a letter from the chair/program director of the appropriate department/program and one from the appropriate Dean or other upper administrator, each expressing approval and support of the petition; (5) the name of the faculty member or members who will serve as adviser(s) of the chapter; (6) payment in the amount specified in the petition form to pay for the charter fee.

Section 2. Governance of Chapters.

The individual chapters, once authorized (or while petitioning for authorization), prepare chapter by-laws that must be consistent with the by-laws of the national society. A copy of the chapter's by-laws must be sent to the executive director, who will verify conformity with the national by-laws.

Article XII. Status of Chapters

Section 1. Active Chapters.

An active chapter holds elections to active membership at least once annually, except in national emergencies.

Section 2. Inactive Chapters.

An inactive chapter is one that does not initiate active members for a three-year period.

Section 3. Deactivated Chapters.

A deactivated chapter is one where the respective college or university has officially decided to close its chapter and has notified the executive director with separate, official letters/e-mails from 1) the academic dean; 2) the department chair; 3) the current chapter adviser.

Section 4. Suspended Chapters.

A chapter may be suspended by a majority vote of the Executive Council for any of the following reasons: (1) the chapter has held no election to membership during a five-year period; (2) the chapter does not conduct its affairs in accordance with these national by-laws; (3) a college or university makes demands upon the local chapter which are at variance with these national by-laws; (4) the chapter refuses to pay legitimate debts owed to the national treasury.

Section 5. Reactivation of Inactive Chapters.

An inactive chapter may petition the president or executive director to return to active status.

Section 6. Reactivation of Deactivated Chapters.

A deactivated chapter may petition the president or executive director to return to active status using the official reactivation petition.

Section 7. Reinstatement of Suspended Chapters.

A chapter whose charter has been suspended may be reinstated by a majority vote of the Executive Council after submitting a reinstatement fee and a petition that provides evidence of the restoration of normal conditions, the assurance of their continuance, and the agreement to comply with all provisions of these national by-laws. The reinstatement fee is equal to the new charter fee.

Article XIII. Faculty Adviser

The faculty chapter adviser must be a member of Sigma Delta Pi and should be appointed by an administrative official of their college or university. The adviser may be initiated as an honorary member at the time of their appointment as adviser. The faculty adviser's term may be of indefinite duration. The duties of the adviser are: (1) to represent the chapter before the national organization and the university or college

where the chapter exists; (2) to advise the officers and members and supervise all activities of the chapter; (3) to attend all meetings personally or by delegation of another faculty member who is also a member of Sigma Delta Pi; (4) to supervise the admission of new members and to assure that all membership requirements are fully met; (5) to respond to requests from national and regional officers for information on the chapter's activities; (6) to maintain the active status of the chapter and to coordinate a reasonable program of activities; (7) to see that the chapter maintains permanent records of members and activities and that it meets its financial commitments to the national organization; (8) to assist chapter officers in making arrangements for initiation ceremonies; (9) to promote activities in cooperation with nearby chapters.

Article XIV. The Orders

Section 1. The Order of Don Quijote and the Order of José Martí are elite categories of membership that recognize exceptional and meritorious service in the fields of Hispanic scholarship, the teaching of Spanish, and the promotion of good relations between English-speaking countries and those of Spanish speech.

Section 2. The Order of José Martí.

Election to the Order of José Martí may be recommended by a majority vote of the active members of a chapter with the endorsement of the chapter adviser, or by members of the Executive Council. Membership in this Order is restricted to: (1) outstanding teachers of Spanish or Hispanic studies at the college or university level; (2) outstanding community-college or high-school teachers of Spanish, with a proven record of excellence in teaching; (3) Chapter advisers and regional vice presidents who have given distinguished service to Sigma Delta Pi; (4) others—such as government officials, professional people, and university personnel—who have served the cause of Sigma Delta Pi in an exceptional way. Nominations for this recognition must be sent with ample supporting documentation to the executive director, who will determine the eligibility of the nominee. If the recognition is approved by the national office, the nominating party must purchase the Order to be conferred at an appropriate event as also approved by the national office.

Section 3. The Order of Don Quijote.

So that membership in the Order of Don Quijote, one of Sigma Delta Pi's highest honors, may continue to have full meaning, it is controlled by the national office, requiring the approval by a majority vote of a committee chaired by the executive director and comprised of at least three past inductees of this Order. The executive director will issue the corresponding plaque and pin to be presented at an appropriate ceremony to the honoree. Membership in this order is restricted to: (1) nationally or internationally distinguished scholars in the field of Hispanic studies; (2) distinguished teachers of Spanish who are employed in an accredited four-year college or university, or retired from such service, and have published extensively in the field of Hispanic studies; and (3) college officials, members of the clergy, officers of service clubs or fraternal organizations, members of the judicial, legislative, or executive branches of our federal or state governments, and other such professional people who have served our cause in a very distinguished manner and who would honor us by accepting this award.

Nomination to this order may be made by a local chapter (by unanimous vote of all active members and approval of the chapter adviser), or by a national or regional officer, and must be sent together with a detailed supporting letter and résumé of the nominee, to the Executive Director. The executive director will distribute the nomination to the committee members and relay the final decision to the nominating chapter or officer within three weeks, unless additional information is needed.

Article XV. Amendments

These by-laws may be amended by a simple majority vote of all active chapters by the announced deadline. Written notice of any proposed amendment must be endorsed by members representing not less than five active chapters of Sigma Delta Pi and received by the executive director. Following this confirmed endorsement, the executive director will conduct a vote of all active chapters. An active chapter's official delegate will cast its official vote. If a chapter fails to vote by the announced deadline, its vote is surrendered to the Executive Council, which will cast the vote in the best interest of the Society.

Article XVI. Disposition of Assets

If Sigma Delta Pi should ever be dissolved, all assets will be transferred to another similar nonprofit organization that is tax exempt under Article 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code or a similar provision in effect.

These by-laws accompany and are supplemented by the Sigma Delta Pi Policy Manual (adopted August 2, 2008; last amended March 27, 2022). For related details contact [Dr. Mark P. Del Mastro](#).