

# HIGHER EDUCATION LITERACY COUNCIL BY-LAWS

## ARTICLE I. NAME OF ORGANIZATION

The name of the organization shall be The Higher Education Literacy Council (HELC).

## ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

### Section 1. Organization Purpose

This volunteer membership organization serves as a collegial body for teacher preparation professionals concerned with evidence-based practices in literacy instruction in the State of Mississippi. HELC defines literacy to include the development of oral language, reading, and writing skill acquisition.

### Section 2. Specific Purpose

The specific objectives and purpose of this organization shall be to:

- a. Provide mutual support among literacy professionals across the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), and related literacy organizations.
- b. Build capacity among and impact of all teacher preparation programs in Mississippi by examining and disseminating relevant educational research specific to literacy instruction.
- c. Provide opportunities for members to engage in discussions related to their work as literacy professionals and to advise decision makers (including national and state accrediting bodies and legislators) on policies to strengthen literacy in Mississippi.
- d. Offer and/or participate in professional development that promotes evidence-based practices as the members deem appropriate and necessary.
- e. Host and/or participate in events and activities that promote evidence-based practices in literacy instruction.

## ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

### Section 1. Eligibility for Membership

HELC membership is voluntary and open to the following:

- Deans of Education and Department Chairs from the public and private universities in Mississippi
- Literacy professors (and other instructors) of education from the public and private universities in Mississippi
- Literacy instructors from the 2+2 teacher preparation programs located on Community College and satellite campuses.
- Representatives from IHL, including the Commissioner and his staff.

- Mississippi Department of Education professionals associated with literacy, including members of the Literacy-based Promotion Act Reading Panel
- Non-profit organizations in Mississippi supporting literacy instruction, including but not limited to, the Center for Excellence in Literacy Instruction (CELI), and the Barksdale Reading Institute (BRI).

## **Section 2. Dues**

There are no dues related to membership in HELC and participation is voluntary.

## **Section 3. Rights and Responsibilities of Members**

Each member organization shall be eligible to appoint one voting representative to cast the vote in decisions and elections. Members are responsible for their own expenses related to participation in meetings, including travel and lodging.

# **ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS OF MEMBERS**

## **Section 1. Regular Meetings**

Regular meetings of the members shall be held at least once during each of the fall and spring academic semester at a time and place designated by the Executive Committee (Article V, Section 1).

## **Section 2. Special Meetings**

Special meetings may be called by the President, the Executive Committee, or a simple majority of the board of directors. A petition signed by five percent (5%) of voting members may also call a special meeting.

## **Section 3 Notice of Meetings**

Notice of meetings shall be given by email to each member of record, no less than two weeks prior to the meeting.

## **Section 4. Quorum**

A quorum for a meeting of the members shall consist of at least twenty percent (20)% of the active designated voting membership\*.

## **Section 5. Voting**

All issues to be voted on shall be decided by a simple majority of the voting membership\* present at the meeting in which the vote takes place. \**Voting membership* shall mean one vote per institution and organization represented.

## **ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS**

All members are eligible to serve as officers by election of the Membership. The officers of this Organization shall be the President, Vice-President, Secretary, a member at-large from a public university/college, and a member at large from a private university/college.

### **Section 1. President**

The President shall preside at all meetings of the membership. The President shall have the following duties:

- a. S/he shall preside at all meetings of the Executive Committee.
- b. S/he shall see that all discussions and recommendations of the Executive Committee are communicated to the Membership.
- c. S/he shall provide direction to all other officers of this organization and see that their duties are properly performed.
- d. S/he shall be Ex-officio member of the Nominating Committee.

### **Section 2. Vice-President**

The Vice-President shall be vested with all the powers and shall perform all the duties of the President during the absence of the latter.

- a. S/he shall assist the President in making arrangements for all meetings of the Membership.
- b. S/he shall record proceedings of all meetings in the absence of the Secretary.

### **Section 3. Secretary**

The Secretary shall attend all meetings of the Executive Committee, and all meetings of members, and will act as a clerk thereof. The Secretary's duties shall consist of:

- a. S/he shall record all votes and minutes of all proceedings in a book to be kept for that purpose.
- b. S/he in concert with the President shall make the arrangements for all meetings of the Membership.
- c. S/he shall send notices of all meetings to the members.
- d. S/he shall perform all official correspondence from Executive Committee and Membership, including press releases initiated and approved by the Membership.

### **Section 4. At-Large Members**

Two at-large members shall serve on the Executive Committee. One at-large member shall represent the public universities/colleges; one at-large member shall represent the private university/colleges.

### **Section 5. Election of Officers**

The Nominating Committee shall submit at the meeting prior to the Fall Semester meeting the names of those persons for the respective offices of the Executive Committee. Nominations may also be received from the floor after the report of the Nominating Committee. The election shall be held at the Fall Semester meeting of the Membership. Those officers elected shall serve a term of two (2) years, commencing at the next meeting following election.

Officers of the Executive Committee shall be eligible to succeed themselves in their respective offices for two (2) terms only.

### **Section 6. Vacancies**

The Nominating Committee shall also be responsible for nominating persons to fill vacancies that occur between annual elections, including those of officers. Nominations shall be sent via email to members of the Membership at least two (2) weeks prior to the next meeting at which the election will be held. The persons so elected shall hold membership or office for the unexpired term in respect of which such vacancy occurred.

## **ARTICLE V. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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

An Executive Committee shall include the President, Vice-President, Secretary, two members-at-large, and may include any Working Group Facilitators as may be active at the time of a meeting. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for proposing agendas for member meetings, ensuring that meeting dates are established and communicated to the membership, and overseeing any communications with the media.

### **Section 2. Tenure and Qualifications**

All members of the Executive Committee must be approved by a majority vote of the members present and voting. No vote on new members of the Executive Committee may be held unless a quorum of the Membership is present as provided in Article IV.

Members of the Executive Committee may serve for a term of two (2) years and may be reelected for one additional consecutive term of two years.

### **Section 3. Meetings of the Executive Committee**

Meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by or at the request of the President or any two members of Executive Committee. Meetings may be held in person or via teleconferencing.

### **Section 9. Compensation**

Members of the Executive Committee shall not receive any compensation for their services as Officers of HELC.

### **Section 13. Parliamentary Procedure**

Meetings will be conducted by the President (or the Vice President in his/her absence) following Robert's Rules of Order.

## **ARTICLE VII. COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS**

### **Section 1. Committee Formation**

The board may create committees or working groups as needed to carry out the mission of HELC.

### **Section 2. Executive Committee**

The three officers, plus two at-large members shall serve as the members of the Executive Committee. Except for the power to amend the By-laws, the Executive Committee shall have all the powers and authority of the Membership in the intervals between meetings and is responsible for communicating to the Membership any decisions made or actions taken.

## **ARTICLE XII. ADOPTION & AMENDMENTS OF BY-LAWS**

### **Section 1. Adoption**

We, the undersigned, representing the eligible membership and present at the initial meeting of the Higher Education Literacy Council consent to, and hereby do, adopt the foregoing By-laws, consisting of the preceding pages, as the Bylaws of this organization

ADOPTED AND APPROVED by the Higher Education Literacy Council on this 19<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2016.

### **Section 2. Bylaws**

The Membership may amend these By-laws by majority vote at any regular or special meeting. Written notice setting forth the proposed amendment or summary of the changes to be effected thereby shall be given to each member within the time and the manner provided for the giving of notice of meetings of the Membership.

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