Rho Kappa Constitution

The Rho Kappa: The National Social Studies Honor Society

Sponsored by National Council for the Social Studies

*Approved August 2011

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Article 1 Name and Purpose

Section 1:

The name of this organization shall be the Rho Kappa Social Studies Honor Society

Section 2:

The mission and the purposes of this organization shall be:

* to promote scholarship and to recognize academic excellence in social studies among high school students.
* to provide through its local chapters opportunities for exploration in the social studies in secondary school environments and the community.
* to encourage interest in, understanding of, and appreciation for the social studies

Article 2 National Rho Kappa Advisory Council

Section 1:

The oversight of this organization shall be with an Ad Hoc committee of 6 members of the National Council for the Social Studies appointed by the NCSS president.

Section 2:

The NCSS Executive Director shall be an ex-officio voting member of the Advisory Council. A staff member from External Relations and Council Communications should be attendance to advise but not vote.

Section 3:

Each of the six appointed members shall serve a three-year term, renewable once.

Section 4:

At least three of the appointed members of this body shall be full-time secondary school teachers with at least 5 years’ experience whose primary teaching responsibilities are in the field of social studies.

Section 5:

The National Rho Kappa Advisory Council shall be an official entity of NCSS and therefore all regulations, rules, and by-laws concerning representation and behavior pursuant to such committee will apply.

Section 6:

A Chair of Advisory Council shall be selected by the president in consultation with the group. The Chair shall serve a one-year term which can be renewable once.

Section 7:

The Chair of the Advisory Council shall preside at all meetings for this body and report annually to the Board of Directors of NCSS.

Section 8:

Members of the Advisory Council shall share the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the council except for those specifically stated otherwise. These obligations shall include but not be limited to: disseminating information to local chapters in their regions, encouraging and stimulating active chapters, and encouraging formation of new chapters, and serving in full capacity of the organization.

Section 9:

Rho Kappa Advisory Council meeting shall be held once a year at the NCSS national conference. All other meetings or correspondence are at the discretion of the members and the Chair of this council.

Article 3 Committees

Section 1:

The Rho Kappa Advisory Council may create committees as necessary as needed.

Section 2:

The Chair of the Advisory Council shall appoint the members of these committees.

Section 3:

The Chair shall be ex-officio member of all committees within the Advisory Council.

Section 4:

The committees shall report to the Advisory Council regarding the fulfillment of the charges given to them by the council.

Article 4 Faculty Sponsor

Section 1:

Each local chapter of Rho Kappa shall have a designated faculty sponsor approved by the high school principal and may serve consecutive terms.

Section 2:

The chapter sponsor will be responsible for the chapter’s day-to-day activities, act as a supervisor over the chapter, and perform the duties of a liaison among administration, faculty, students, and community members.

Section 3:

The chapter sponsor has the responsibility for the maintenance of accurate and up-to-date files that consist of membership lists, financial transactions, chapter history, chapter activities, chapter publications and correspondence, and chapter by-laws.

Section 4:

The chapter sponsor shall regularly review each member to ensure membership in good standing as determined by the chapter’s by-laws.

Section 5:

The chapter sponsor shall assist the chapter officers to understand and carry out their duties to the best of their abilities.

Section 6:

The chapter sponsor shall be a Rho Kappa honorary member .

Section 7:

The chapter sponsor shall be the main liaison between the local chapter and the national organization. This sponsor is responsible for submitting all membership lists and associated fees along with any other information requested by the Rho Kappa Advisory Council.

Article 5 Local Chapters

Section 1:

Any accredited public high school or non-public secondary school accredited or approved by a state department of education or by an accrediting agency is eligible to apply for a charter of a local chapter. Each high school shall have their own chapter unless there is not a faculty sponsor available. In such instances, one chapter may be shared as long as all other constitutional requirements are met and fulfilled.

Section 2:

Each chapter shall complete a charter application, supplied by the Rho Kappa Advisory Council and pay a chartering fee of $150

Section 3:

Each chapter shall pay an annual affiliation fee to the national organization of $75

Section 4:

Each chapter shall pay an annual induction fee of $5 per new inductee.

Section 5:

Local chapter membership dues, if any, shall be determined by the local chapter and shall be subject to the approval of the faculty advisor and the school administrator.

Section 6:

Local chapters shall adhere to this Rho Kappa national constitution and failure to do so may result in the loss of chapter membership.

Section 7:

Each chapter shall submit its current membership list and any associated fees or dues responsibilities to the National Advisory Council by October 1 each year.

Section 8:

Any chapter that does not submit annually (1) current membership list and (2) annual national affiliation fees shall be deemed inactive. After two years of inactive status, the chapter shall forfeit its charter. The chapter may apply for reinstatement upon resubmitting reactivation papers and fees to be determined by the National Advisory Council.

Section 9:

Local councils may be named in honor of an individual who has made contributions to the social studies or the local community.

Article 6 Membership

Section 1:

Membership in a local chapter is bestowed upon a student by that local chapter. A faculty selection committee assembled at the high school in which the chapter resides shall confer the memberships. The selection committee shall consist of the chapter faculty sponsor and other faculty members within the school. Membership is based upon academic achievement in courses within the field of social studies as well as overall academic GPA.

Section 2:

Once selected, members have the responsibility to continue to demonstrate high academic standards; including maintaining high grades in their social studies courses. Failure to do so will result in removal from the organization.

Section 3:

There are three types of membership: active, alumni, and honorary. The definitions are:

* Active members are current high school students and shall remain active members while they maintain the required GPA until their graduation, at which time they will become alumni members.
* Alumni members are members who have graduated with good standing within the organization and may be invited by the high school to attend or participate in chapter events; however, they have no voice and no vote in chapter affairs.
* Honorary memberships may be awarded by consent of the faculty sponsor and the high school faculty body, to school officials, principals, teachers, community members, and former graduates whose achievements in the advancement of social studies and related fields merit such recognition. Chapters may induct up to two honorary members per year. Honorary members have no voice and no vote in chapter affairs.

Section 4:

Active members shall demonstrate an ability to work with others, to conduct research and inquiry in the field of social studies and shall possess qualities of industry, initiative, and reliability as they pertain to academic excellence.

Section 5:

Active members shall also exhibit a genuine interest in, and enthusiasm for, social studies scholarship and topics.

Section 6:

Active members shall contribute service to the high school or the community in which the chapter resides at the direction and discretion of the school’s principal and the chapter’s sponsor.

Section 7:

Any current Rho Kappa member in good standing who transfers to another high school and brings a letter of verification from their former principal or chapter sponsor to the new school shall be automatically accepted as a member into the new school’s chapter.

Section 8:

Selection into Rho Kappa shall not be based, in any way, on the basis of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or physical or mental disabilities.

Article 7 Selection of Members

Section 1:

Each candidate for membership shall be selected to a designated chapter of Rho Kappa.

Section 2:

Candidates for membership must have been in attendance at the high school in which the chapter resides for the equivalent of one semester prior to being considered. If special or unique circumstances merit, the high school administration may waive the semester requirement, providing a letter of explanation to the National Advisory Council.

Section 3:

Candidates for membership must have completed two core courses in the field of social studies and be prepared to complete at least three core courses. The minimum grade point average for these courses is an unweighted 3.00 or the numerical equivalent

Section 4:

The candidate’s overall cumulative high school GPA shall be a minimum of 3.00 or the numerical equivalent. . Individual chapters may choose to increase the GPA requirements for their chapter but may not decrease them.

Section 5:

Candidates achieving the minimal GPA requirements may be invited to apply for membership into Rho Kappa. The application process will require candidates to show participation in activities that demonstrate civic engagement in school or community and their desire and aspiration to be a member of the organization. Applicants must have a letter of recommendation from a current faculty member.

Section 6:

The method of selection of eligible students and their election to the organization shall be determined by the faculty sponsor, the faculty selection committee, and the chapter’s high school administration. The candidates must meet the GPA, and social studies course completion requirements and the application requirements listed in Section 5, but all other methods of selecting candidates shall be left up to the individual chapters.

Section 7:

Any members whose social studies grades drop below the chapter’s minimum GPA requirement for two consecutive semesters shall be dismissed from Rho Kappa. Such members may reapply to the organization and can be readmitted when those requirements are met but the candidate is subject to selection from the faculty selection committee again.

Section 8:

A description of the selection procedures and the local chapter criteria shall be widely available in a timely fashion to all the school’s administration, faculty, students, parents, and community members.

Section 9:

The National Rho Kappa Advisory Council shall not review the judgment of the faculty selection committee regarding the selection of individual members to the local chapters.

Article 8 Induction of New Members

Section 1:

Each local chapter may design and execute an appropriate ceremony for the induction of its new members. The procedures and proceedings for this ceremony shall be determined by the local chapter, the chapter faculty sponsor, and the high school administration. Chapters are forbidden to initiate, haze, blackball, or do anything similar, as any part of the Rho Kappa process. Any chapter found engaged in any of these shall lose its charter. "Induction" is to be used in any reference to the induction of new members. Newly inducted members shall receive their membership certificates and any other appropriate Rho Kappa materials when their membership has been affirmed.

Section 2:

The date and time of the induction ceremony is at the discretion of the local chapter, the chapter faculty advisor, and the high school administration.

Section 3:

In an event that a particular individual qualifies for membership after the date of the induction ceremony, he or she may be inducted at a regular chapter meeting provided the membership forms and fees have already been submitted to the national Advisory Council.

Article 9 Removal from Membership

Section 1:

The procedure for removal shall be determined by the faculty sponsor, the school faculty selection committee, and the school administration and shall be in compliance with the rules and regulations stated by the National Advisory Council. A written description of these procedures and the removal process shall be available to all members at the time of their induction.

Section 2:

Members who fall below the required standards that were used as the basis of membership selection shall be provided one written warning from the chapter sponsor. The member shall have a reasonable amount of time to correct the deficiency prior to removal proceedings beginning.

Section 3:

In the event that a serious violation of school rules/policies or civil laws has occurred, the chapter sponsor and faculty selection committee may forgo the written warning.

Section 4:

In the case of impending removal proceedings, the member has the right to request a formal hearing before the chapter sponsor and the faculty selection committee. This request must be made in writing by the member in question two weeks prior to the hearing being set.

Section 5:

A removed member may be reinstated into the local chapter when the faculty sponsor and the faculty selection committee determine that the removed member qualifies for reinstatement. Such members must reapply and are subject to selection from the faculty selection committee again.

Section 6:

The chapter sponsor shall notify the National Rho Kappa Advisory Council promptly of any member dismissals and any member reinstatements.

Section 7:

The National Rho Kappa Advisory Council shall hear no appeals in the cases of membership removal and shall respect the decision of each local chapter regarding their membership.

Article 10 Chapter Officers of Local Chapter

Section 1:

The chapter officers, their corresponding duties, and their method of election shall be determined by each individual chapter with the approval of the faculty sponsor, the members of the local chapter, and the school administration.

Section 2:

New officers shall be elected each spring and shall assume office the first day of the following school year.

Section 3:

The chapter officers and the chapter sponsor shall have general supervision of the chapter affairs and business. They shall also conduct the regular business meetings, make recommendations to the chapter body, and determine and perform such other duties that are specified by the chapter bylaws. All actions and recommendations of these officers shall be subject to the review of the entire chapter membership.

Section 4:

The chapter officers shall have the responsibility of ensuring that the chapter activities, functions, and procedures follow school policy, regulations, and guidelines.

Article 11 Meetings

Section 1:

Each chapter shall hold regular meetings during the school year on days and times that are designated by the chapter officers and the chapter sponsor. These meetings shall be in accordance with the school policy and regulations for club and activities meetings.

Section 2:

The regularity of these meetings (i.e., weekly, bimonthly, monthly, etc.) shall be designated by the local chapter but shall occur no less than twice a semester.

Section 3:

Special meetings may be called by the chapter officers and the chapter sponsor as so needed.

Section 4:

Local chapters shall, in all points not expressly designated by this constitution or the local chapter’s bylaws, conduct meetings according to Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

Article 12 Activities

Section 1:

Each local chapter shall determine, with the consent of the chapter membership, the chapter sponsor, and the school administration what activities are appropriate for each chapter to participate in.

Section 2:

These activities shall consist of the following criteria: They

* should fulfill a need within the school or community or provide a service to either group
* have the support of the faculty and the administration along with the membership body and the chapter sponsor
* are appropriately and educationally defensible
* are well planned and executed
* may or may not be directly related to the field of social studies but should honor the overall purpose, mission, and goals of such an organization

Section 3:

It is the responsibility of each chapter to represent the national Rho Kappa organization in a positive and suitable manner and the activities it engages in should be selected as such.

Article 13 Official Insignia

Section 1:

Rho Kappa shall have an official emblem selected by the Board of Directors of the National Council for the Social Studies. The National Advisory Council shall have the exclusive control of its use.

Section 2:

All Rho Kappa insignia must be procured from the Rho Kappa National Advisory Council and members and local chapters may not reproduce or substitute any officially designated insignia.

Section 3:

Only active, alumni, and honorary members are allowed to wear the official emblem.

Section 4:

Any member who resigns or is removed from membership shall not be permitted or entitled to wear the emblem.

Section 5:

The emblem shall bear the official name of the organization: Rho, meaning “resh” or “head” and Kappa, meaning “palm of the hand.” These words together symbolize the purpose and mission of the organization which is knowledge and wisdom combined with service.

Section 6:

The official colors of the emblem shall be NCSS blue and white.

Article 14 Awards and Recognitions

Section 1:

Senior members who are in good standing with the organization at the time of graduation shall be given the opportunity to purchase honor chords.

Section 2:

The honor chord colors shall be the official color[s] of Rho Kappa.

Article 15 Bylaws

Section 1:

Each chapter shall write bylaws to execute the national organization’s constitution and/or to further clarify the chapter’s operating procedures. Bylaws for each local chapter do not need the approval of the National Advisory Council but must be consistent with and not be in conflict with the national constitution.

Section 2:

The chapter bylaws shall contain but is not limited to, the information concerning:

* membership selection criteria
* the scheduling of meetings
* the election, duties, and responsibilities of officers
* the chapter sponsor duties and responsibilities
* criteria and procedures for removal from an office
* filling vacancies of officer positions
* criteria and procedures for removal from membership
* method and procedure for ratification of the bylaws

Section 3:

Each chapter must ensure that a copy of its bylaws is on file with the school.

Section 4:

Each local chapter shall submit to the National Advisory Council any changes made to their bylaws after initial affiliation.”

Article 16 Amendments

Section 1:

This Rho Kappa constitution may be amended at any meeting of the National Advisory Council or by mail (electronic or otherwise) by a majority affirmative vote of the National Advisory Council and with the approval of the NCSS Executive Director.

Section 2:

Local chapters may petition to the National Advisory Council with recommended amendments to this constitution.

Article 17 State and Regional Organizations

Section 1:

Local chapters may organize state or regional Rho Kappa affiliations, the purpose of which is to sponsor events for the local chapters and to engage in projects at the state or regional level.

Section 2:

Any state or regional Rho Kappa affiliation must conform to this constitution.

Section 3:

Any state or regional Rho Kappa affiliation shall not in any way supersede local chapter authority as delegated by this constitution.

Section 4:

Any state or regional Rho Kappa affiliation may choose to write and implement its own bylaws but these must conform to all official documents prepared by the national Rho Kappa organization.

Acknowledgements

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