

CONSTITUTION OF THE WESTERN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION
Adopted 1974; revised 1981, 2012, and 2015

Article I

Sec. 1 The name of the organization shall be the Western Literature Association.

Article II

Sec. 1 Its purpose shall be to foster and to promote the study of the literature of the American West in all its varied aspects. The literature of the American West is interpreted to include the literature of the American frontier in any region of the United States, the literature of the Trans-Mississippi United States and the literature of other nations sharing with the United States the frontier experience.

Sec. 2 The Western Literature Association shall be a nonprofit organization whose revenues shall support the aforementioned purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. Specifically:

- (a) Upon the winding up and dissolution of this corporation, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the corporation, the remaining assets shall be distributed to a nonprofit fund, foundation, or corporation, which is organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, or religious and/or scientific purposes and which has established its tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- (b) No part of the net earnings of this corporation shall ever inure to or for the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the exempt purposes for which it was formed.
- (c) Notwithstanding any other provisions of these articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

Sec. 3 Membership is open to all persons.

Sec. 4 Scholarly institutions and organizations may have institutional membership in the organization. Universities and similar organizations

interested in promoting the study of western American literature may become institutional sponsors.

Article III

Membership

Sec. 1 There shall be six categories of membership: student, regular, sponsor and patron, life, honorary life, and institutional members. The dues structure within each category shall be determined annually by the Editor of *Western American Literature* and the Executive Council.

- (1) *Student Members.* Students may become student members of the Association, provided that they do not hold full-time teaching positions or a PhD.
- (2) *Regular Members.* Persons interested in western American literature, languages, and history may become regular members of the Association. Joint membership and foreign membership shall be included within this category.
- (3) *Sponsor and Patron.* Persons who wish to contribute to the Association shall be designated as sponsors or patrons, depending on the amount of their contribution.
- (4) *Life Members.* Persons eligible for regular membership may become life members exempt from annual payment of dues by a single payment. With each completed decade of membership, the fees for life membership shall be diminished by one-fourth. Persons who have paid membership dues for thirty years become life members without further payment. Persons who for twenty years or more have been members and who have retired from active service may notify the Association of their retirement and shall thereafter become life members without further payment.
- (5) *Honorary Life Members.* Honorary life members shall be those distinguished men and women of letters who have been named as recipients of the Western Literature Association annual award. Honorary life members shall be nominated by the Executive Council and elected by a simple majority of the Executive Council members. In any one year, the number of honorary life members shall ordinarily be one, and shall not exceed two. Honorary life members are exempt from dues payment but may enjoy all the privileges and benefits of active members.

(6) *Institutional Membership.* Scholarly institutions and organizations may have institutional membership in the Association. Universities and similar organizations interested in promoting the study of western American literature, languages, and history may become institutional sponsors.

Sec. 2 The dues structure of the Association shall be determined by the Editor of *Western American Literature* and the Executive Council.

Sec. 3 Active membership shall begin when the office of *Western American Literature* receives the first payment of annual dues, which will include a subscription to *Western American Literature*. Any member whose dues are in arrears one month after the mailing of a second notice to his last recorded address shall be dropped from membership rolls. Those who have been thus dropped may be reinstated upon payment of one year's dues in advance. No retroactive payments shall be assessed.

Sec. 4 Annual membership shall be on a year's basis and only members may vote or hold office in the Western Literature Association.

Article IV

Sec. 1 The officers shall be a President, President-Elect, Vice President, Executive Secretary, and Treasurer. Terms of office shall be for one year except that the Executive Secretary and the Treasurer shall be appointed by the Executive Council for terms of five years, which can be renewed. The President-Elect shall succeed to the Presidency and the Vice President shall succeed to the position of President-Elect.

Sec. 2 The Executive Council of the Association shall consist of the President, President-Elect, Vice President, Executive Secretary, Treasurer, Editor of *Western American Literature*, and a representative of the university sponsoring *Western American Literature*, the Past President during the year following his/her term of office, and 12 elected members. Elected members shall serve rotated terms of three years and shall not succeed themselves for at least one year.

Sec. 3 The Executive Council of the Association shall meet at least once a year. It shall be responsible for the general policy and conduct of the Association. The President shall be responsible for implementing the policy of the Association. The Executive Secretary shall preside at the meetings of the Executive Council and of the Association in general. The Executive Secretary shall assist the President in the arrangement of the annual meeting, in the awarding of life memberships, and in making the annual report of the affairs and progress of the Association. The Treasurer shall assist the President and Editor in receiving, disbursing, and recording

finances and shall make an annual financial report. The Editor shall be responsible for the management of *Western American Literature* in cooperation with an Editorial Board. In the event of an emergency, an executive committee, consisting of the Past President, the President, the President-elect, the Vice President, and the Executive Secretary shall be responsible for the conduct of the Association, with the consent of the Executive Council.

Article V

Sec. 1 The Association shall publish in cooperation with a sponsoring institution a scholarly journal called *Western American Literature*. In an agreement written with the sponsoring institution, the Executive Council shall name the Editor of the journal. Editorial Board of 10 to 15 persons shall be nominated by the Editor, subject to the approval of the Executive Council.

Sec. 2 The duties of the Editorial Board shall be to advise the Editor in the policy and conduct of the journal.

Article VI

Sec. 1 A new Vice President must be elected each year to replace the Vice President who succeeds to the position of President-elect. Four elected members of the Executive Council shall be elected each year for a three-year term. Any retiring member of the Council cannot be reelected for at least one year.

Sec. 2 These officers and members shall be elected in the following manner. Nominations may be made by letter prior to the annual meeting and from the Executive Council at the meeting. From the names so placed in nomination, the Council shall select not more than two nominees for each position. Other names may be added from the floor at the annual business meeting. The persons in each position receiving the majority of the votes cast at the annual business meeting shall be named to that office.

Article VII

Sec. 1 By-laws for the detailed governance of the Association shall ordinarily be made by the Executive Council. The by-laws may be amended and altered by a majority vote of the membership at a general meeting which has been announced by mail at least one month in advance.

Article VIII

Sec. 1 The finances of the Association shall receive a classified auditing each year. This audit shall be included in the annual financial report of the Treasurer of the Association.

Sec. 2 In the event of a dissolution of the Association, all assets left after liabilities have been met shall be disposed of in a way amenable to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

Sec. 3 Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by a majority vote of the Executive Council and a majority vote of the membership present at a general meeting that has been announced by mail at least one month in advance. Such proposed amendments shall be submitted to the annual general business meeting. A majority of votes cast at that meeting shall determine approval or denial of the proposed amendment.

BY-LAWS

1. There shall be an annual meeting of the Association. The place shall ordinarily be selected by the President in consultation with the Executive Council.
2. The President shall be responsible for organizing a professional program for the meeting. S/he may call upon such help as needed.
3. The annual meeting shall be on a Thursday, Friday, and Saturday in late September or October.
4. The registration fee shall be determined by the person or persons in charge of the annual meeting.
5. A quorum at the annual business meeting shall be the number of persons who actually attend, providing that the exact time and place of this meeting has been sent in writing to all members at least one month in advance, preferably with the program of the annual meeting.
6. Only active members, including honorary members, patrons, life members, sustaining members, and student members, may vote or hold office in the Western Literature Association.
7. Membership categories include student, regular, sponsor, patron, life, and institutional sponsor. Annual memberships shall be on a calendar year basis and members shall receive a subscription to *Western American Literature*. The dues of the Association shall be determined annually by the Editor of *Western American Literature* and the Executive Council.