

Constitution of the PSSA

Constitution of the Philosophical Society of Southern Africa

(as amended by the PSSA AGM Fern Hill 2005; see Minutes 2005)

(as amended by the PSSA AGM University of Stellenbosch 2007; see minutes 2007)

(latest amendments added January 2010 by the Executive Committee; amendments proposed by:
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1. Introductory

The Philosophical Society of Southern Africa (PSSA) is the official organization representing the professional interests of the philosophical community of the Southern African region.

1.1. By 'philosophical community of the Southern African region' we understand all academic philosophers, employed or unemployed, and all tertiary level students of philosophy living in the region irrespective of nationality, gender, race, religion or ethnicity. We openly embrace the diversity of our region and we actively encourage the expression of this diversity in the spaces provided by our society.

1.2. The PSSA is a non-profit organization aimed at promoting the ideals that define our profession. Any profits that may be made will be channeled into a fund that will have as its sole purpose the promotion of the ideals in question. Any work done by members of the Society for the Society will be voluntary.

2. Aims of the Society

The primary aim of the Society is to foster and enhance the professional interests of the community of philosophers it serves. It seeks to do this in two general ways:

2.1. by promoting the establishment of rich philosophical dialogue between members of the entire philosophical community of Southern Africa, an aim which finds expression in the annual PSSA Conference and the South African Journal of Philosophy

2.2. by fostering excellence in research and in teaching. We strongly believe that our philosophical community has a unique and powerful voice and the Society wishes to do all it can to keep up the standards and to improve the quality of the community wherever necessary. We understand that the only way in which we can constructively promote excellence is through the concerted effort of our entire community not to succumb to the pressures that compromise academic excellence, such as the pressures of the market or the related pressures stemming from top-down managerialism.

3. Office Bearers of the Society and their Duties

The Society shall elect for itself six (6) officers constituting an Executive Committee of the PSSA. The purpose of the Executive Committee is to take such decisions and oversee such operations as are deemed necessary for the good of the Society when and where it is not possible for a full Annual General Meeting of the Society to do so. The Executive Committee shall be deemed to be quorate or have a majority when four (4) members are present or concur.

The Society shall also elect for itself an Editorial Board for the South African Journal of Philosophy (SAJP).(see 3.6 below)

The Executive Committee of the PSSA shall consist of the following:

3.1. President

The President of the PSSA is the chief executive of the PSSA and bears overall responsibility for the efficient and responsible functioning of the PSSA. The President will co-ordinate all activities of the PSSA and serve as the primary interface between the PSSA and other organizations, such as government, business, university administrations, and the general public.

There was a complaint that this description of the President's role is vague and incomplete. Please offer suggestions for improving this, if still required.

3.2. Secretary

The Secretary shall be responsible for the administration and correspondence of the PSSA and the Executive Committee, including:

- 3.2.1. Taking minutes at each AGM and circulating them in advance of the following AGM.
- 3.2.2. Taking minutes at meetings of the Executive Committee, and recording decisions of the Executive Committee.
- 3.2.3. Advising members of the society of resolutions and decisions of the AGM and the Executive Committee.
- 3.2.4. Maintaining an up to date copy of the constitution of the PSSA, and of resolutions and decisions of the AGM and the Executive Committee.
- 3.2.5. Handling the correspondence of the PSSA, including ensuring that the contact details of the society are correctly updated with organizations with which the PSSA is affiliated, and reporting to the AGM on correspondence over the preceding year.
- 3.2.6. Calling for nominations when positions on the Executive Committee are vacated by resignation or when a term of office approaches its end. In years when nominations are required all members should be advised of this at least three months before the annual conference of the PSSA, and a secretary should prepare a message regarding the vacancies that the conference organizers can send to delegates as a reminder.
- 3.2.7. In other ways recording the business and managing of the documents of the PSSA except where this constitution specifies otherwise.

3.3. Treasurer

The PSSA treasurer shall, in consultation with members of the Executive Committee, manage the bank account of the society, and also:

- 3.3.1. Maintain a list of current society members, their postal addresses and fee status for each of

the years of their membership of the PSSA for at least six years prior to the current financial year.

3.3.2. Update the list referred to above in response to payments by members, advice from members of changes of address, etc.

3.3.3. Advise members of the fees due by them, and the methods of payment that are possible. At least one physical letter should be sent to each member in this regard every year.

3.3.4. Produce a list of addresses of members to which the SAJP should be sent (in virtue of society members receiving the journal) upon request by the editor(s) and/or treasurer of the journal.

3.3.5. Make such payments as are necessary to maintain membership(s) of the PSSA in other organizations as decided at the AGM.

3.3.6. Report to the society at the AGM on the finances of the society, and make recommendations when necessary on the matter of fees and the management of society finances.

3.3.7. Transfer authority to operate the society bank account, and the address of the account, to the succeeding treasurer upon conclusion of a term of office. (The term of office shall be deemed concluded once this process is complete.)

3.4. Ordinary Executive Committee Members

The Society shall appoint three other members of the PSSA to serve as Ordinary Members of the PSSA Executive Committee. These Ordinary Members will serve in a regularity and advisory capacity.

3.5. Election of Office Bearers

3.5.1. Members of the Executive Committee shall be elected for a period of two years in office.

This will occur during the Annual General Meeting of the PSSA and each member present will be expected to cast his or her vote. Individual members can belong to both the Executive Committee and be an editor of the SAJP simultaneously, but they cannot, unless in exceptional circumstances, occupy two posts in the Executive Committee. More than one post can be taken up simultaneously by one individual in the SAJP Editorial Board, but no more than a total of three posts can be occupied simultaneously by one individual at any given time. If one member of the Executive Committee were temporarily to become unavailable for a period not exceeding 6 months then the other members of the Executive Committee will take responsibility for his or her duties. If a member of the Executive Committee were to become unavailable for over six months it is his or her responsibility to resign from the post, unless all members of the Executive Committee

were to decide otherwise. All information regarding dismissals and appointments either to the Executive Committee of the PSSA or to the Board must be discussed during the Annual General Meeting and decisions must be ratified by vote.

3.5.2. Executive Committee members can be re-elected provided that no member shall hold the same office for more than six consecutive years, unless support from those present at the AGM is overwhelming and unambiguous, and unless no other candidate has comparable support.

3.5.3. Were one or more of the members of the Executive Committee to resign then a new Executive Committee member, chosen by the Executive Committee, will be asked to step-in in the interim, but only until the subsequent AGM, where an Executive Committee member will be voted in by all present members of the Society.

3.5.4. Any member of the PSSA Executive Committee can be forced to resign if he or she is not properly performing his or her required duties. This decision can be made by the remaining members of the Council, subject to ratification by PSSA members present during the subsequent AGM. A decision to reinstate the ousted Executive Committee member can also be made.

3.5.5. Generally, all voting will take place during an AGM, unless the voting is on specific issues relating to the day-to-day running of the society or unless an urgent decision needs to be made. In cases of this sort decisions will be made collectively by members of the Executive Committee and informed to members of the Society during the first AGM subsequent to the decision, and subject to vote where necessary.

3.5.6. As a general rule all important decisions made during the year by the Executive Committee will be discussed during the AGM and subject to vote where necessary, and so will all issues relating to finance, including any issues relating to changes in fees. Members not participating in an AGM will be understood to be forfeiting their right to participate in decisions concerning the Society, and as endorsing any decisions taken at and AGM.

3.6. Editorship of the South African Journal of Philosophy

3.6.1. The Society shall appoint an Editor (or group of Editors) and a Treasurer to manage the academic and administrative affairs of the South African Journal of Philosophy (SAJP). The SAJP

is, and is to remain, a peer-reviewed international journal accepting submissions in any area of philosophy. The Editors shall seek to maintain, and if possible raise, the quality of papers appearing in the journal, and the profile of the journal as manifest in subscriptions and submissions.

3.6.2. The SAJP Editor and Treasurer appointments will run for four years, on the understanding that such appointments are renewable. The Editor(s) bear full responsibility for all matters pertaining to the running of the journal, including the content, publishing and distribution of the journal. The Editor(s) and treasurer are accountable to, and shall report to, the AGM of the PSSA.

3.6.3. The Editor(s) may appoint one or more Editorial Managers to assist with the administration of the Journal.

3.6.4. Where more than one Editor is appointed, should it happen that one member of the Editorial team or the SAJP Treasurer resigns before the completion of the four year term, the remaining Editor(s) may either complete the term without replacement, or propose to co-opt one or more others, with the proposal to be ratified by next the PSSA AGM.

3.6.5. Where only one Editor is appointed, should it happen that the Editor resigns before the completion of the four year term, the Executive Committee of the PSSA may appoint an acting Editor to continue the work of the Journal until a new Editor can be appointed at the next PSSA AGM.

3.6.6. The Editor(s) shall be supported by an advisory panel, the Editorial Board. The Editorial Board shall be made up of actively publishing scholars of high standing from around the world. The Editor(s) are responsible for nominating scholars for membership of the Editorial Board, and the appointment of new members of the Editorial Board must be ratified by the AGM of the PSSA. Membership of the Editorial Board may be rescinded if the member resigns, or on the recommendation of the Editor(s) where this recommendation is ratified by the AGM of the PSSA. Grounds for removal from the Editorial Board include unwillingness or inability to contribute to the business of the journal, and general academic inactivity.

3.6.7. Members of the Editorial Board will support the Editor(s) by being willing to act as a

referee for the Journal approximately once a year. Members of the Editorial Board may also be approached for advice by the Editor(s), or to adjudicate in difficult cases pertaining to papers submitted to the journal or relevant to the running of the journal.

3.6.8. The Editor(s) are responsible for ensuring that members of the Editorial Board receive a copy of the report presented by the Editor(s) at the AGM of the PSSA.

3.6.9. Members of the Editorial Board who are not members of the PSSA shall be sent complementary copies of the journal.

4. Membership of the PSSA

4.1. The following types of membership are available: Full, Student and Honorary. Full membership status is granted to salaried people, whether working as professional philosophers or not. Student membership status is granted to those who are fulltime students of any discipline and who are also not salaried. Honorary membership status is granted at the discretion of the Executive Committee, or by majority decision at the AGM. It can be granted to recognize services rendered to the PSSA or to the philosophical community of South Africa or any other country. Honorary membership can be revoked at the discretion of the Executive Committee or by a majority decision at the AGM.

5. Finance and Funds

5.1. The Treasurer of the PSSA is the chief financial officer of the PSSA

5.2. Funds for the PSSA and for the SAJP shall be managed separately. However, funds can be transferred from one account to another if necessary and only if both the PSSA Executive Committee and the SAJP Editorial Board by simple majority agree to the transfer. Information of such transactions will be communicated by the treasurers to the members of the Society during the AGM.

5.3. All financial matters shall be recorded in writing and all documents relating to finance must be freely available for inspection on request by individual members of the Society, insofar as this is legally permissible. These tasks should be carried out by the respective Secretaries and Treasurers.

5.4. Full, student, and honorary members of the PSSA will pay different membership fees. The

fees for each following year are to be decided at the AGM.

6. Annual General Meeting of the PSSA

6.1. The AGM of the PSSA will be the main decision-making body of the PSSA, and a quorate AGM has the power to over-rule or rescind any decisions made by the PSSA Executive Committee or the Editorial Board of the SAJP.

6.2. The AGM shall be deemed quorate if two fifths (i.e., 40%) of the paid-up membership is present.

6.3. Decisions by the AGM will be deemed binding provided they are supported by a simple majority (excluding Constitutional Amendments).

6.4. The Annual General Meeting shall take place during the Annual Congress of the PSSA, and all members have the duty to attend if at all possible.

6.5. The AGM shall be chaired by the President of the PSSA with the Secretary and Treasurer in attendance, all of whom will give a report on their respective portfolios.

6.6. The hosting institution and venue for the following year's PSSA conference will be discussed and finalized at the AGM. University Departments with members in the PSSA are expected to take their turn in hosting the conference.

7. Organisation of the Annual PSSA Conference

7.1. Hosting departments will be responsible for funding, organizing, advertising and running the annual conference. Conference fees charged to all participants (whether presenting a paper or not) can be used to partly fund the conference, but the host department is required to keep costs to participants to a minimum in order to attract both professional and non-professional (eg. student) participants.

8. Amendments to the PSSA Constitution

8.1. All proposed amendments to this Constitution are to be circulated in advance of an AGM and must be proposed by no less than five (5) members in good standing.

8.2. Amendments to the Constitution require ratification by four fifths (80%) of members present at a quorate AGM.