

Constitution

[draft revised for circulation to ABHE membership, October 2008]

Article I — Name

The name of this organization shall be the Association for Biblical Higher Education.

Article II — Mission

The mission of the Association for Biblical Higher Education is to enhance the quality and credibility of postsecondary educational institutions that distinctively engage students in biblical, transformational, experiential, and missional higher education. The Association seeks to fulfill its mission by:

- 1.1. Articulating biblical higher education's distinctives and communicating the excellence and effectiveness of its members to internal and external stakeholders, including prospective students and parents, donors, students, alumni, faculty, the higher education community, the church, governmental and regulatory entities, and society.
- 1.2. Providing professional resources and services that exemplify and stimulate excellence among administrators, trustees, faculty, and students at member and affiliate institutions.
- 1.3. Fostering networking and synergy among member and affiliate institutions and with the broader higher education community.
- 1.4. Supporting the work of a separate and independent Commission on Accreditation to assure quality and integrity among biblical higher education institutions and programs through accreditation standards and peer review processes. (Hereafter in the constitution and related bylaws, the term institution shall be understood to apply also to qualified educational units or programs where appropriate.)

Article III — Tenets of Faith

We believe that there is one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in his virgin birth, in his sinless life, in his miracles, in his vicarious atonement through his shed blood, in his bodily resurrection, in his ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in his personal and visible return in power and glory.

We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he was tempted by Satan and fell, and that, because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary for salvation.

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life, and by whom the church is empowered to carry out Christ's Great Commission.

We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost; those who are saved unto the resurrection of life and those who are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

Article IV — Membership

Membership in the Association is institutional, not individual. Institutions which have been granted accredited or pre-accredited (candidate) status by the Commission on Accreditation (c.f., Article VII) are considered members whose delegates are eligible to participate in Association governance according to provisions of Article V.

Institutions for which the Commission on Accreditation has granted accreditation to one or more educational units or programs are also considered members whose delegates are eligible to participate in association governance subject to provisions of Article V.

Applicant status is a non-member classification granted to qualifying institutions that, having met the Commission's *Conditions of Eligibility*, are actively pursuing accreditation.

Affiliate status is a non-member designation for institutions that are not seeking accreditation with the Commission on Accreditation. Applicant and Affiliate institutions may receive and contribute to the Association's programs, resources, networks, and services, but may not claim ABHE accreditation and are not eligible to participate in Association governance.

Article V — Delegate Assembly

Delegates of member institutions (c.f., Article IV) constitute the Association's Delegate Assembly. The bylaws stipulate delegate eligibility and member institution representation criteria.

Section I. Regular meetings

Regular meetings of the Delegate Assembly shall be held annually, at a time and place to be determined by the Board of Directors. Public notification of all regular meetings shall be made at least 60 days in advance, by announcement at the prior annual meeting or publication in an official print or electronic instrument of the

Association. The total of eligible and certified institutional delegates present at a regular meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2. Special meetings

Special meetings may be called by the Board of Directors at any time, provided that the purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the notices calling the same. Such notices shall be disseminated at least one month before the date of such meeting. The right of initiative in calling a special session shall be granted each member of the Association. A petition for same, stating the reasons therefore, and signed by official representatives of at least twenty percent of the Association membership may be filed with the Board Chair at any time and shall be considered sufficient reason for such a call, whereupon the Board of Directors shall call the special session, setting the time and place.

Section 3. Purposes and Prerogatives

- 3.1 Budget adoption. The Delegate Assembly shall adopt the annual Association budget, including Association membership dues.
- 3.2 Board Representation. The Delegate Assembly shall elect ten (10) members of the Board of Directors to serve 4-year terms of office on a rotating basis, in accordance with corresponding bylaws.
- 3.3 Commission on Accreditation. The Delegate Assembly shall elect twelve (12) Commission on Accreditation members to serve 4-year terms of office on a rotating basis, in accordance with corresponding bylaws.
- 3.4 President. The delegate assembly shall ratify the Board's initial appointment of the Association's President by a two-thirds majority.
- 3.5 Accreditation Standards. The delegate assembly shall ratify proposals of the Commission on Accreditation to establish and/or amend accreditation standards and related policies, in accordance with corresponding bylaws.

Article VI — Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall be composed of ten (10) members elected by the delegate assembly and two (2) public members appointed by the board. It shall be responsible to exercise fiduciary, strategic, and generative leadership in pursuit of the Association's mission and to establish policies, parameters, and plans to which the Association President is accountable. Representation on the board of the Association's national, theological, ecclesiastical, enrollment, gender, and ethnic diversity shall be in accord with the *Policy Regarding the Nominating Committee*. The Board functions as the decision-making body of the Association for purposes of granting Affiliate status.

Section 1. Officers

The Board of Directors shall designate from among its elected members the following officers: chair, vice chair, secretary, and treasurer. These officers shall constitute the Executive Committee. In selecting

the executive committee, the Board shall take care to provide for the continuity and stability of the Board and the Association.

Executive committee members are the designated officers of the corporation and serve as the Association's audit committee.

- 1.1. Chair. The chair will preside at Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and Association Delegate Assembly meetings. The chair exercises leadership in formulating the Board's agenda and working with the Association's chief executive officer to ensure integrity and effectiveness in achieving the Association's mission, implementing its policies, and serving its constituents.
- 1.2. Vice-Chair. The vice chair will preside in the absence, incapacity, or recusal (i.e., due to conflict of interest) of the Chair and carry out such other responsibilities as may be delegated by the chair.
- 1.3. Secretary. The secretary shall ensure that minutes of the Board of Directors and Association Delegate Assembly meetings are accurately recorded, properly approved, appropriately disseminated, and adequately secured.
- 1.4. Treasurer. The treasurer shall work with the Association's chief executive, auditor, and financial advisors to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the Association's financial activities and statements. The treasurer shall report annually to the Association's Delegate Assembly regarding the Association's audited financial statements and shall present the Board's budget recommendations for Delegate Assembly ratification.

Section 2. Terms of office

Elected members of the Board of Directors shall serve a four-year term and may be elected to a successive four-year term, after which they may not be re-elected for at least 4 years. Board members shall be elected annually according to rotating classes for staggered four-year terms. Board members serving three years of an unexpired term will be deemed to have served a full term. Public members of the Board will be appointed by the Board to four-year terms and may not succeed themselves.

Section 3. Vacancies

Any vacancies that may occur on the Board of Directors may be filled by vote of the remaining Board members until the next annual Delegate Assembly meeting.

Section 4. Qualifications

All elected members of the Board of Directors shall be officially and actively connected with an Association member institution (see Article IV above). Elected Board members whose official connection with an Association member institution is severed may, at the discretion of the Board, continue to serve on the Board until a replacement is elected at the next official meeting of the Delegate Assembly. Board-appointed public members may not be employed or otherwise unofficially or officially associated with Association member institutions and must otherwise conform to the Association's *Policy on Public Representatives*.

Article VII — Commission on Accreditation

Section 1. Nature and function

A separate and independent Commission on Accreditation exercises authority over accreditation decisions, policies, procedures and peer review processes. Through its *Standards* and peer review accreditation process, the Commission is responsible to ensure institutional quality and integrity and to serve as a catalyst toward excellence among institutions in accord with the Association's educational distinctives.

Section 2. Goals

To implement its purpose of accreditation, the Commission on Accreditation seeks to fulfill the following goals:

- 2.1.1 To establish policies and procedures that safeguard the integrity and external recognition of accreditation's quality assurance peer review processes.
- 2.1.2 To promulgate to the Delegate Assembly accreditation standards that induce an institution or program to achieve the following objectives:
 - 2.1.2.1 Provide evidence that it has established and documented the adequate and increasingly effective achievement of a soundly conceived educational mission that is clearly understood and supported, serves the cause of Christ, and is consonant with the distinctives of the Association;
 - 2.1.2.2 Provide evidence that it has established and documented the adequacy and increasing effectiveness of structures and procedures for governance and administration to achieve its mission;
 - 2.1.2.3 Provide evidence that its faculty, instructional, and facility resources are adequate and increasingly effective in achieving the institutional mission and producing student learning and development;
 - 2.1.2.4 Provide evidence that has established and documented the appropriateness and increasing effectiveness of curricular content and structures consonant with its mission its and corresponding student learning goals;
 - 2.1.2.5 Provide evidence that it has established and documented appropriate and increasingly effective programs for student admissions, development, and services consistent with its mission and corresponding student learning goals.
- 2.1.3 To establish a curriculum and develop a program and supporting resources for orienting and training Commissioners and peer evaluators in the implementation of the Commission's accreditation *Standards*, policies and procedures.

Article VIII — Amendments

Section 1. Substantive amendments

Amendments to the Constitution may be made at any regular meeting of the Delegate Assembly, provided that the proposed amendment(s) shall be disseminated among the membership 60 days prior to the meeting at which it is to be considered. Those delegates present at a duly called Delegate Assembly meeting shall constitute a quorum. A two-thirds vote of all delegates present shall be necessary for adoption of Constitutional amendments.

Section 2. Editorial amendments

Editorial amendments, including but not limited to: nomenclature consistency and updates, compositional and grammatical corrections or modifications, clarification of ambiguities, and other amendments intended to ensure the accuracy and consistency of this constitution without introducing substantive alterations, may be effected on behalf of the Delegate Assembly by the Board of Directors on an “act and inform” basis. Such editorial changes will be considered ratified when reported to the Delegate Assembly unless specific delegate action is undertaken to declare the proposed amendments substantive, in which case they will be nullified pending Delegate Assembly approval by means of the normal amendment procedures specified above.