

Bylaws

Article I — Accredited Membership

Section 1. Requirements for accredited membership

- a. Each accredited member institution must freely subscribe to the Tenets of Faith, evidenced by an annual reaffirmation as an official act of its board of control at the time of filing the Association's annual report.
- b. Each accredited member institution must maintain accredited status with the Commission on Accreditation.
- c. Each accredited member institution must report to the Association annually via the Association's annual report form.
- d. Each accredited member institution must pay annual dues according to the formula established by the Board of Directors and approved by the membership.

Section 2. Procedures for attaining accredited status

- a. An institution eligible for and desiring accredited status will conduct an institutional self-study with respect to its own mission and objectives and the Association's Standards for Accreditation. The institution will submit self-study materials consisting of an assessment plan, compliance document, and an institutional planning document to the Commission on Accreditation.
- b. It is expected that institutional representatives will participate annually in the Association's self-study seminar. In addition, each institution pursuing accredited status will submit annual progress reports to the Commission on Accreditation's Committee on Applicant and Candidate Status for a determination whether adequate progress is being made.
- c. An evaluation team will be appointed to visit the institution in order to (1) verify claims made in the institution's self-study materials, (2) formulate recommendations relative to the institution's compliance with the Association's Standards for Accreditation; and (3) make an overall recommendation

regarding the institution's readiness to receive accredited status. The evaluation team will communicate both its findings and recommendations to the Commission on Accreditation via a written team report. The institution will receive a copy of the team report, which it is free to distribute, and provide the Commission with a written response to the team report. All fees and expenses associated with an evaluation team visit will be paid by the hosting institution.

- d. Institutional representatives will be given an opportunity to appear before the Commission on Accreditation as it reviews all materials and determines whether to grant or deny accredited status or defer action. The Commission's decision will be based upon the Principle for Accreditation, i.e., that the institution is substantially achieving and can be reasonably expected to continue to achieve, the Standards for Accreditation, and that the institution has demonstrated its commitment to an ongoing pursuit of excellence. If accredited status is denied, the institution must wait one year before being able to reapply at the level of its choice.
- e. In accord with the Association's "Policy and Procedures for Appeals," an institution may appeal a denial of its request for accredited status.
- f. An institution may voluntarily withdraw its request for accredited status, without prejudice, at any time prior to the decision of the Commission on Accreditation.

Section 3. Maintaining accredited status

- a. Each accredited institution must host a supplementary evaluation visit by a member of the professional staff during accreditation year three.
- b. During accreditation year four, and every ten years thereafter, each accredited institution will conduct an institutional self-study with respect to its own mission and objectives and the Association's Standards for Accreditation. The institution will submit self-study materials, consisting of an assessment plan, compliance document, and an institutional planning document, to the Commission on Accreditation.

- c. During accreditation year five, and every ten years thereafter, an evaluation team will be appointed to visit the institution in order to (1) verify claims made in the institution's self-study materials, (2) formulate recommendations relative to the institution's continued compliance with the Association's Standards for Accreditation, and (3) make an overall recommendation regarding the reaffirmation of the institution's accredited status. The evaluation team will communicate both its findings and recommendations to the Commission on Accreditation via a written team report. The institution will receive a copy of the team report, which it is free to distribute, and provide the Commission with a written response to the team report. All fees and expenses associated with an evaluation team visit will be paid by the hosting institution.
- d. When considering reaffirmation cases, the Commission will request that institutional representatives appear before it only if the team recommends that the institution be placed on warning or probation, receive a show-cause order, or have its accredited status withdrawn. The Commission's decision, with respect to the reaffirmation of accredited status, will be based upon the Principle of Accreditation outlined above. The ABHE "Policy and Procedures for Appeals" does not permit appeal of a Commission sanction. However, when the Commission issues a sanction, the letter to the institution will indicate that the institution may, at its option, request an on-site visit by an ABHE representative. The purpose of the on-site visit would be to ensure that the decisions of the Commission would be based on the most accurate assessment possible of prevailing conditions at the institution.
- e. In accord with the Association's "Policy and Procedures for Appeals," an institution may appeal the termination of its accredited status.
- f. Accreditation is not guaranteed for any length of time. Negative developments at an institution, with respect to the Standards for Accreditation, may trigger a review that could result in the loss of accreditation.

Section 4. Termination of accredited membership

Accredited membership in the Association may be terminated by:

- a. Voluntary withdrawal in writing.
- b. Withdrawal of accredited status by the Commission on Accreditation. An institution may appeal this action in accord with the Association's "Policy and Procedures for Appeals."
- c. Failure to submit satisfactory required reports to the Commission on Accreditation in a timely fashion or nonpayment of annual membership dues upon receipt of an invoice. In extenuating circumstances, a grace period of up to six months may be requested.
- d. Failure to send a delegate to the Association's annual meeting for three consecutive years.

Article II — Candidate Membership

Section 1. Requirements for candidate membership

- a. Each candidate member institution must freely subscribe to the Tenets of Faith, evidenced by an annual reaffirmation as an official act of its board of control at the time of filing the Association's annual report.
- b. Each candidate member institution must maintain candidate status with the Commission on Accreditation.
- c. Each candidate member institution must report to the Association annually via the Association's annual report form.
- d. Each candidate member institution must pay annual dues according to the formula established by the Board of Directors and approved by the membership.
- e. Each candidate member institution must submit an annual progress report to the Committee on Applicant and Candidate Status.

- f. Each candidate member institution must demonstrate progress in moving toward accredited status.

Section 2. Procedures for attaining candidate status

- a. An institution eligible for and desiring candidate status will host an initial consultative visit by a member of the professional staff. In addition to providing information regarding the accreditation and self-study processes, the consultant will analyze the institution in relation to the Association's Standards for Accreditation and provide a report of the same.
- b. It is expected that institutional representatives participate annually in the Association's self-study seminar. In addition, each institution pursuing candidate status will submit annual progress reports to the Commission on Accreditation's Committee on Applicant and Candidate Status for a determination whether adequate progress is being made.
- c. The institution will conduct an institutional self study with respect to its own mission and objectives and the Association's Standards for Accreditation. The institution will submit self-study materials, consisting of an assessment plan, compliance document, and an institutional planning document to the Commission on Accreditation.
- d. An evaluation team will be appointed to visit the institution in order to (1) verify claims made in the institution's self-study materials, (2) formulate recommendations relative to the institution's achievement of the Association's Standards for Accreditation, and (3) make an overall recommendation regarding the institution's readiness to receive candidate status. The evaluation team will communicate both its findings and recommendation to the Commission on Accreditation via a written team report. The institution will receive a copy of the team report, which it is free to distribute, and will provide the Commission with a written response to the team report. All fees and expenses associated with an evaluation team visit will be paid by the hosting institution.
- e. Institutional representatives will be given an opportunity to appear before the Commission on Accreditation as it reviews all materials and determines whether to grant or deny candidate

status or defer action. The Commission's decision will be based upon whether the institution can be reasonably expected to achieve accredited status within four years. If candidate status is denied, the institution must wait one year before being able to reapply for applicant status.

- f. In accord with the Association's "Policy and Procedures for Appeals," an institution may appeal a decision to deny candidate status.
- g. An institution may voluntarily withdraw its request for candidate status, without prejudice, at any time prior to the decision of the Commission on Accreditation.

Section 3. Termination of candidate membership

Candidate membership in the Association may be terminated by:

- a. Voluntary withdrawal in writing.
- b. Withdrawal of candidate status by the Commission on Accreditation. An institution may appeal this action in accord with the Association's "Policy and Procedures for Appeals."
- c. Failure to submit satisfactory required reports to the Commission on Accreditation in a timely fashion or nonpayment of annual membership dues upon receipt of an invoice. In extenuating circumstances, a grace period of up to six months may be requested.
- d. Failure to send a delegate to the Association's annual meeting for three consecutive years.

Article III — Applicant Status

Section 1. Definition

Applicant status is a pre-membership status. Membership in the Association is limited to institutions that hold either candidate or accredited status with the Commission on Accreditation and have been accepted into either candidate or accredited membership by the Association.

Section 2. Procedures for attaining applicant status

- a. An institution eligible for and desiring applicant status will provide the Commission on Accreditation's Committee on Applicant and Candidate Status (1) an official letter from the chief executive officer stating the board of control's desire for the institution to pursue accreditation with the Association, (2) a completed ABHE application form, (3) an official statement from the chief executive officer reflecting a board of control decision to affirm support of the ABHE Tenets of Faith, and (4) a document that demonstrates compliance with the Association's Conditions of Eligibility.
- b. The Committee on Applicant and Candidate Status will review all materials and determine whether to grant or deny applicant status or defer action. The committee's decision will be based upon whether the institution (1) is in compliance with the Association's Conditions of Eligibility and (2) appears to be able to achieve candidate status within four years (no extensions). If applicant status is denied, the institution must wait one year before being able to reapply.
- c. In accord with the Association's "Policy and Procedures for Appeals," an institution may appeal a decision denying applicant status.
- d. An institution may voluntarily withdraw its request for applicant status, without prejudice, at any time prior to the decision of the Committee on Applicant and Candidate Status.

Section 3. Requirements for applicant institutions

- a. Each applicant institution must freely subscribe to the Tenets of Faith, evidenced by an annual reaffirmation as an official act of its board of control at the time of filing the Association's annual report.
- b. Each applicant institution must report to the Association annually via the Association's annual report form.
- c. Each applicant institution must pay annual dues according to the formula established by the Board of Directors and approved by the membership.

- d. Each applicant institution must submit an annual progress report to the Committee on Applicant and Candidate Status.
- e. Each applicant institution must demonstrate progress in moving toward candidate status.

Section 4. Termination of applicant status

Applicant status with the Commission on Accreditation may be terminated by:

- a. Voluntary withdrawal in writing.
- b. Withdrawal of applicant status by the Commission on Accreditation. An institution may appeal this action in accord with the Association's "Policy and Procedures for Appeals."
- c. Failure to submit satisfactory required reports to the Commission on Accreditation in a timely fashion and payment of annual membership dues upon receipt. In extenuating circumstances, a grace period of up to six months may be requested.

Article IV — Appeal Procedures

The Association shall adhere to the principle of due process and provide appeal procedures for each step of the accrediting process. These procedures are presented in detail in the Association's "Policy and Procedures for Appeals."

Article V — Affiliate Status

Affiliate status has been established to enable non-member institutions to relate to the Association for purposes of taking advantage of its many programs and services. Because affiliate institutions are not members, they are not eligible to participate in the governance of the Association. Affiliate institutions may elect to pursue membership by satisfying the Association's Conditions of Eligibility.

Article VI — Board of Directors and Officers

Section I. Nomination and election

- a. Nomination. A nominating committee shall be appointed by the

Board of Directors and shall submit a slate of two or more names for each office to be filled, except for the two public members who are appointed by the Board of Directors. The nominating committee shall assure that the final board composition will be in accord with the Constitution and the "Policy Regarding the Nominating Committee."

- b. Election. These, with any other names nominated from the floor, shall be voted upon until a candidate receives a majority vote, which shall constitute an election. Officers shall be elected by the entire body of voting delegates. Members-at-large shall be elected by the voting delegates from the institutions that are to be represented by the respective nominees.

Section 2. Duties of officers of the Association

The officers of the Association shall serve as the executive committee of the board and shall represent the Association to relevant educational and governmental agencies. They shall also serve as the finance committee of the Association. Additionally, the officers will function as the decision-making body of the Association for purposes of granting affiliate status to non-accredited institutions.

- a. President. The president shall act as chairman of the meetings of the Board of Directors and the Association; he shall give overall leadership to the activities of the Association in achieving its objectives and implementing its policies; he shall follow through on actions delegated to individuals and committees for performance; and he shall, with the other officers, represent the Association to relevant educational and governmental agencies.
- b. Vice-President. The vice-president shall serve on the Board of Directors as chairman in the absence of the president, and carry out such responsibilities as may be delegated to him.
- c. Secretary. The secretary shall record the minutes of the Board of Directors and the annual meeting of the Association.
- d. Treasurer. The treasurer shall supervise the financial activities of the Association subject to the policies of the Association and the Board of Directors and serve as chairman of the budget committee.

Section 3. Duties of the Board of Directors

- a. The Board of Directors is charged with formulating and implementing policies and carrying out the purposes of the Association.
- b. The Board of Directors shall have the right and authority to represent the Association in all matters during the interim between sessions of the Association.
- c. The Board of Directors will, with the approval of the Association, engage an executive director to serve under its direction in promoting the affairs of the Association and the cause of Bible-integrated higher education generally. It may also, with the approval of the Association, engage additional personnel to work under the executive director in the implementation of executive functions.

Section 4. Vacancies

Any vacancies that may occur on the Board of Directors shall be filled by vote of the remaining members until the next annual meeting, excepting the office of president which shall automatically be filled by the vice-president until the next annual meeting.

Section 5. Qualifications

All officers of the Association shall be officially and actively connected with an institution holding accredited membership in the Association.

Article VII — Executive Director

Section 1. Selection

- a. The executive director shall be engaged by the Board of Directors with the approval of the Association. When the position becomes vacant, the board shall appoint a search committee to find qualified applicants and make nominations to the board, which shall, in turn, present one candidate to the Association for its approval by majority vote.

- b. Qualifications of the executive director shall include a knowledge of higher education and its accreditation processes, Christian experience and agreement with the Association's Tenets of Faith, and communicative skills necessary to represent the Association well at public and governmental levels.

Section 2. Duties

- a. The executive director shall serve under the direction of the Board of Directors in promoting the affairs of the Association and the cause of biblical higher education in general. He shall attend the meetings of the board on a nonvoting basis, and shall look to the president of the Association for guidance as necessary between meetings.
- b. The executive director shall maintain the Association's office and the files essential to its work, shall gather data from member institutions and present an annual report of them to the Board of Directors and to the Association, and shall compile and publish an official list of member institutions annually.
- c. The executive director shall serve the accrediting function of the Association by devising and keeping under review the accrediting instruments of the Association, by visiting and counseling with member or applicant institutions, by making annual checks on members' conformity to Standards as reflected in catalogs and annual reports, and by facilitating the work of the Commission on Accreditation.
- d. The executive director shall aid the Association's public relations by publishing a newsletter; by cooperating with the Committee on Communication in preparing publicity materials, books, articles, and reports; by encouraging studies on biblical higher education; by promoting greater acceptance of biblical higher education among public and private officials and various agencies; by providing student recruitment aids to member institutions; and by assisting officers and the budget committee in finding funds to carry on the Association's work.
- e. The executive director shall work toward excellence in biblical higher education through such means as promoting regional or national workshops through the Association or in cooperation with other educational organizations, and by encouraging

institutional studies on objectives, instructional methods, curricula, library utilization, and the like.

Section 3. Term of office

- a. The executive director's initial term of office shall be three years and subsequently five years. The Board of Directors shall review his performance at the beginning of the last year of his term and at other times as deemed necessary.
- b. Any proposed change in office, either on the part of the board or the executive director, shall require six-month notice to the other party, except when the board considers removal of the executive director for cause.
- c. Removal for cause other than financial necessity may involve immediate suspension, with pay, pending the outcome of a fair and reasonable process. Causes for removal may include immorality, deviation from the Association's Tenets of Faith, incompetence, insubordination, malfeasance, or financial necessity. A fair and reasonable process shall consist of (1) written notice as to cause of suspension, (2) opportunity to confront any accusers and to provide testimony on his behalf, (3) opportunity for a hearing by an impartial body of not less than three persons appointed by the Board of Directors, and (4) adequate notice as to the time and place of hearing and adequate time to prepare his defense.
- d. Temporary vacancies in office may be filled by an acting executive director as determined by the Board of Directors.

Article VIII — Representation and Voting Privileges

Section I. Delegates and visiting representatives

Accredited members shall be entitled to representation at meetings on the following basis:

- » One delegate for each member institution holding programmatic accreditation.

- » One delegate for each member institution holding institutional accreditation with 200 or less FTE students.
- » Two delegates for each member institution holding institutional accreditation with 201 to 400 FTE students.
- » Three delegates for each member institution holding institutional accreditation with more than 400 FTE students.

Section 2. Voting privileges

- a. Each delegate shall have one vote. Proxy voting shall not be permitted.
- b. Delegates representing accredited member institutions shall have full privileges of voting.
- c. Delegates from candidate member institutions shall have the privilege of discussion from the floor and of voting by acclamation. They shall not exercise the privilege of nominating or voting on officers or of voting on a roll call or on amendments to the Constitution or Bylaws.

Article IX — Meetings

Section 1. Time and place of meeting

The annual meeting shall be held in February. The exact date and place of meeting shall be set each year by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Quorum

Those delegates present at a duly called meeting of this Association shall be considered a quorum. A majority of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for its meetings.

Section 3. Parliamentary law

All business meetings of this Association shall be conducted according to the accepted rules of parliamentary procedure.

Article X — Commission on Accreditation

Section 1. Organization

- a. Commissioners will serve for four-year staggered terms. They may not succeed themselves. Commissioners serving three years of an unexpired term will be deemed to have served a full term.
- b. Each Commissioner will be assigned to one of four committees: a Committee on Applicant and Candidate Status (three members), a Committee on Progress Reports and Substantive Change (three members), a Committee on Criteria (three members), and a Committee on Financial Exigency (three members).
- c. The Commission chair will be appointed annually by the Commission on Accreditation. This person will determine the Commission's agenda, in consultation with the Director, Commission on Accreditation, and chair the meeting of the entire Commission. The Commission chair will also appoint the chairs of the various committees.
- d. A Commission secretary will be appointed annually by the Commission from among its members. The Commission chair will appoint secretaries to the various committees. The Commission secretary will serve as secretary for the meeting of the entire Commission and will be responsible for placing in the custody of the Director, Commission on Accreditation the final minutes for all committee and Commission deliberations.

Section 2. Responsibilities

- a. The Committee on Applicant and Candidate Status will have the authority to grant applicant status. It will also monitor the progress of applicant and candidate institutions, call for special reports and visits, and fulfill whatever other responsibilities are assigned to it by the Commission. Any recommendations of the committee for withdrawal of status will be referred to the entire Commission.

- b. The Committee on Progress Reports and Substantive Change will have the authority to approve accredited institution requests for substantive change, joint team visits, and delay of team visits, and to approve the progress reported in progress reports and supplementary evaluation reports. It will fulfill whatever other responsibilities are assigned to it by the Commission. Any recommendations of the committee for warning, probation, show cause, or withdrawal of status will be referred to the entire Commission.
- c. The Committee on Criteria will study proposals for changes in or additions to the Association's Conditions of Eligibility, Principle of Accreditation, Standards for Accreditation, and the Association's policies and procedures for accreditation. The committee's recommendations will be forwarded to the Commission as a whole, and then to the membership for review, comment, and where required approval.
- d. The Committee on Financial Exigency will monitor the progress of accredited institutions experiencing financial difficulties, call for focused reports and visits, and approve special financial reports. Any recommendations of the committee for warning, probation, issuance of a show-cause order, or withdrawal of status will be referred to the entire Commission.
- e. The Commission on Accreditation, as a whole, will have the authority to grant candidate and accredited status, and to reaffirm accreditation. It will also have authority to place institutions on warning or probation, issue show-cause orders, and withdraw applicant, candidate, or accredited status. It will consider recommendations of the Committee on Criteria regarding accreditation policies, procedures, and Standards prior to forwarding them, in original or amended form, to the membership.
- f. The Commission on Accreditation will establish its own budget independently of review or consultation with any other entity or organization. As part of this process, it will establish a schedule of fees related to its accreditation services. The Commission will pay fair market value for its proportionate share of personnel, services, equipment and facilities that it uses jointly with the ABHE membership Association.

Section 3. Meetings

The Commission on Accreditation will meet annually, just prior to the Association's annual meeting. The committees will meet just prior to the meeting of the entire Commission. If necessary, the Commission will also have a midyear meeting. The precise time and place of meetings are to be determined by the Commission's chair in consultation with the Director, Commission on Accreditation.

Section 4. Appeals

Appeals concerning certain decisions of the Commission on Accreditation may be made by an institution's chief administrator. Such appeals will be processed in accord with the Association's "Policy and Procedures for Appeals."

Article XI — Standing Committees

Section 1. Standing Committee on Communication

a. Function

The Committee on Communication will promote cooperation among member and affiliate institutions and communicate the Association's distinctives of higher education to society.

b. Organization

1. The Committee on Communication will consist of five members from accredited member institutions.
2. Committee members will be appointed by the Board of Directors in consultation with the executive director on the basis of the Association's "Policy on Committee Selection."
3. Committee members will serve three year staggered terms and may succeed themselves for one additional term. Committee members serving two years of an unexpired term will be deemed to have served one term.
4. The committee's chair will determine the committee's agenda in consultation with the executive director. The committee will

annually appoint a secretary from among its members. The secretary will keep minutes of the committee's deliberations and will place copies in the custody of the executive director.

5. The Committee on Communication will facilitate the achievement of the Association's communications function by reviewing and recommending efforts to develop and promote publications, an annual directory, an annual statistical report, a referral service, articles in various periodicals, awareness of governmental and legal issues, an interpretation of biblical higher education to public decision makers, foundation research, marketing of biblical higher education, and other communication services.

c. Meetings

The Committee on Communication will meet annually, just prior to the Association's annual meeting. The committee may, in consultation with the executive director, schedule additional meetings and consultations as necessary and feasible. The precise time and place of the meetings are to be determined by the committee chair in consultation with the executive director.

Section 2. Standing Committee on Professional Development

- a. The Committee on Professional Development will provide services to stimulate excellence among member and affiliate institutional administrators, faculty, and students.
 1. The Committee on Professional Development will consist of five members from accredited member institutions.
 2. Members will be appointed by the Board of Directors in consultation with the executive director on the basis of the Association's "Policy on Committee Selection."
 3. Members will serve three year staggered terms and may succeed themselves for one additional term. Members serving two years of an unexpired term will be deemed to have served one term.
 4. The committee's chair will determine the committee's agenda in consultation with the executive director. The committee will

annually appoint a secretary from among its members. The secretary will keep minutes of the committee's deliberations and will place copies in the custody of the executive director.

5. The Committee on Professional Development will facilitate the achievement of the Association's professional development function by overseeing efforts to promote scholarship among Association institutional faculty members and students, conferences and annual meetings for administrators, faculty members, and students, and the development of assessment instruments.

b. Meetings

The Committee on Professional Development will meet annually, just prior to the Association's annual meeting. The committee will also have a semi-annual meeting if necessary. The precise time and place of the meetings are to be determined by the committee chair in consultation with the executive director.

Section 3. Standing Committee on Ethnic Diversity

a. Function

The Committee on Ethnic Diversity will promote biblical higher education among ethnically diverse constituencies. Specifically, the committee will endeavor:

1. To help the Association gain insight into the unique needs of ethnically diverse institutions and branch campuses as they attempt to meet such accreditation requirements as enrollment, curriculum, finances, facilities, and faculty.
2. To offer guidelines to Association institutions in developing programs to recruit and to serve the needs of ethnically diverse students.
3. To be an available resource to institutions predominantly and historically serving ethnic minorities in their ongoing relations within the Association.

b. Organization

1. The committee will consist of five members from accredited member institutions.
2. Committee members will be appointed by the Board of Directors in consultation with the executive director on the basis of the Association's "Policy on Committee Selection."
3. Committee members will serve three year staggered terms and may succeed themselves for one additional term. Committee members serving two years of an unexpired term will be deemed to have served one term.
4. The committee's chair will determine the committee's agenda in consultation with the executive director. The committee will annually appoint a secretary from among its members. The secretary will keep minutes of the committee's deliberations and will place copies in the custody of the executive director.

Article XII — Accreditation Standards

Section 1. Final authority in determining accreditation *Standards* shall reside in the Association.

Section 2. Recommended changes or additions to the *Standards* of the Association shall be acted upon by the accredited members of the Association upon recommendation of both the Commission on Accreditation and the Board of Directors.

Article XIII — Ethical Practices

A code of ethics relative to comity, relationship of member and affiliate institutions, transfer of faculty members or students, advertising accuracy, adherence to catalog statements, and kindred subjects shall be adhered to by member and affiliate institutions. The Board of Directors shall have power to recommend to the Association disciplinary measures for any infractions of the code of ethics.

Article XIV — Dissolution

The Association for Biblical Higher Education exists as an extension of its member institutions and operates for their primary benefit. All assets of the Association are owned by its membership. In the event of dissolution, after satisfaction of all legal obligations, any remaining assets shall be liquidated and resulting monies distributed pro rata to the membership existent at that time upon the basis of the most recent membership assessment.

Article XV — Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote at any duly called meeting of this Association.