Revised: July 29, 2026

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Bylaws of the Rural Sociological Society

Article I. CLASSES OF MEMBERSHIP AND DUES.

Section l. Selection of membership class. Prospective members must select the membership class for which they qualify. This selection is subject to review by the Executive Director. All members are entitled and encouraged to participate in the activities of the Society, including the Annual Meeting and Annual Business Meeting.

Section 2. Membership classes and dues. The Council shall review the classes of membership and the dues associated with each no less frequently than every three years at the mid-year Council meeting and shall direct the Executive Director/Treasurer to implement any changes prior to registration for the following Annual Meeting.

Section 3. Publications. All members are entitled to one subscription to the official journal of the Society and to such other publications of the Society as may be determined by Council.

Article II. STANDING COMMITTEES.

Section l. Standing committees. There shall be eight standing committees of the Society: Awards and Endowment; Development; Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI); Ethics; Membership; Nominations; Program; and Publications.

Section 2. Guidelines for selection of committee members. Major guidelines to be used in selecting members of committees are (1) representativeness, (2) widespread involvement of members, and (3) continuity in program and function. In order to attain widespread involvement of the membership, no member shall hold more than one office at a given time, including leadership on standing committees, except in an ex-officio capacity as designated by the Bylaws. An officer or a member of a standing committee may, however, serve as a consultant to one or more additional committees when deemed desirable by the President and the Council.

Prior to the Annual Meeting, the incoming President in consultation with the newly elected President-elect, shall appoint the Chairs-elect for the following standing committees: Awards and Endowment, Development, JEDI, Membership, and Publications. These appointments shall be made from the three newly elected At-large Council members and the two new Council members that that incoming President will appoint from the general membership. This committee leadership shall serve a two-year term on Council and a three-year term on their assigned committees; the Chairs-elect shall serve a one-year term and then ascend automatically to the Chair position in the year that corresponds to the President-elect's term of office as President. The Chair descends automatically in the third year to an informal past-Chair role to advise the incoming Chair and provide continuity on the committee.

The newly elected President-elect shall appoint the incoming student member of Council to the standing committees as a student member.

Any vacancies in the Chairs of standing committees shall be appointed by the President.

The Chairs of the Ethics and Nominations Committees shall be elected by the general membership in the Society's annual election.

Section 4. Committee composition and function. With the exception of the Ethics Committee (see below), each standing committee shall have a minimum of six members. Membership will include the committee Chair and Chair-elect, three active or emeritus professional members and one student representative. Other members may be added as appropriate.

Committee members will serve three-year staggered terms, with the exception of student members. Student members serve a one-year term.

As needed, committee chairs may also expand the committee membership by consulting with the President to invite ad hoc members to serve on special projects for one-year terms. Notice of such ad hoc appointments shall be given to the President and the Executive Director/Treasurer. The composition of the Society's Standing Committees shall be as follows:

A. **Awards and Endowment Committee.** The Awards and Endowment Committee shall organize and implement the Society's efforts to recognize and honor those persons whose diverse efforts have enhanced the field of rural sociology and/or improved the conditions of rural people and places. It supports scholarship and practice to improve the quality of rural life through the distribution of funds from the Endowment.

B. **Development Committee.** The Development Committee shall be concerned with the status and development of rural sociology and the Society. This committee reviews policies and procedures of the Society and recommends needed changes. The Committee shall conduct deliberations and develop recommendations, as directed by the President or the Council, and it may also initiate its own recommendations for the good of the Society. In addition to the appointed members, the President and President-elect shall serve as ex-officio members of this committee.

C. **Ethics Committee.** The Ethics Committee shall promote ethical conduct of members, investigate complaints concerning the ethical conduct of members, and impose sanctions when a violation of the Code of Ethics has occurred. The Ethics Committee shall have five committee members. Three of these members will be elected by a vote of active RSS members. One new committee member shall be elected annually and will serve a three-year term as Chair-elect in their first year, Chair in year 2 and Past Chair in year 3. One at-large member and one graduate student member will be appointed each year by the President to serve 1-year terms.

D. **Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee.** The JEDI Committee shall seek to increase the participation, development, and advancement of under-represented individuals and groups within the Society. The committee shall also

recommend programs and policies to the Council to increase and encourage diversity within the Society.

E. Membership Committee. The Membership Committee shall provide leadership in recruiting and retaining members of the Society and shall seek ways to expand and diversify the membership base. In addition to the appointed members, the Executive Director/Treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of this committee.

F. Nominations Committee. The Nominations Committee shall recruit and nominate candidates for the elective offices of the Society. The Chair of the Nominations Committee shall be elected by the membership for a two-year term, the first year serving as Chair-elect and the second year serving as Chair. One additional member shall be elected by the membership for a one-year term. The President shall appoint two additional Active or Emeritus Members of the Society, plus one Student Member of the Society, with attention given to the overall diversity of Nominations Committee membership.

G. Program Committee. The Program Committee shall oversee the development of the program for the Annual Meeting. Committee members shall be appointed for a one-year term. The President, Vice President, and Program Chair shall serve in an ex-officio capacity. Chairs of the Research and Interest Groups also serve on this committee.

H. Publications Committee. The Publications Committee shall supervise the publication of the official journal and all other professional or scholarly publications sponsored by the Society. This Committee shall be responsible for recruiting editors for these publications and for recommending to the Council a preferred candidate for editor of each publication.

Section 5. Standing Committees of Council. There shall be a single Standing Committee of Council: the Executive Committee. Its overall purpose shall be to devote more concentrated attention and follow-through to issues deemed by Council to require additional attention between officially convened Council meetings. The functions and composition of the Executive Committee shall be as follows:

A. Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall consist of the following officers of the Society: Past President, President, President-elect, Vice President, Secretary, and Executive Director/Treasurer.

The Past President shall serve as Chair of the Executive Committee. The responsibilities of the Committee shall be to oversee the financial affairs of the Society and to establish policy and other guidelines as appropriate for the operations of the RSS Business Office. The Committee shall approve the annual Operating and Annual Meeting budgets of the Society, and the Committee shall periodically review and recommend changes as necessary. The Committee shall oversee the RSS Financial Plan to ensure responsible fiduciary policies and practices are followed and recommend changes to Council regarding its implementation as necessary. The Committee shall address other related tasks as assigned by the President.

Section 6. Reports. All committee Chairs shall submit written reports in advance of Council meetings which will be incorporated into the Council meeting minutes and posted to the RSS website for access by members and the general public.

Article III: RESEARCH AND INTEREST GROUPS.

Research and Interest Groups (RIGs) focused on issues related to the mission of the Rural Sociological Society may be established, continued, or dissolved by Council according to existing policy. Society members can voluntarily join an interest group by paying annual dues to the RIG. RIGs will select chairpersons by a majority vote of members present. RIG chairs will manage the business of each RIG. A Chair of each RIG will serve as a member of the RSS Program Committee.

Article IV. THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL.

Section 1. Title. *Rural Sociology* shall be the official publication of the Society.

Section 2. Management of the journal. Management of the journal, *Rural Sociology*, shall be vested in the Publications Committee. The approval of journal subscription rates and of other charges shall be included in the overall budgeting process under the direction of the Executive Committee.

Section 3. Income and expenses. The Society shall receive all income from subscriptions, advertisements, sale of back issues, and other income from the journal *Rural Sociology*. All fiduciary responsibilities for the journal will be maintained by the Society.

Article V. ELECTIONS.

Section l. Nominating and Voting. The Nominations Committee shall nominate two candidates each for President-elect, Vice President, and Nomination Chair, and every third year, for Secretary. In addition, the committee shall nominate six candidates for the three Council-at-large positions, two student candidates for the student position on Council, two candidates for the at-large position on the Ethics Committee, and two candidates for one

Nomination Committee member position. All nominations will be sent to the Executive Director/Treasurer within a timeframe articulated in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

Likewise, within a timeframe articulated in the Policies and Procedures Manual, the Executive Director/Treasurer shall notify each RSS voting member of the upcoming election, send them instructions for accessing the ballot. Reminders may be sent as necessary. Electronic access to the election ballot shall be maintained for 30 days to give members adequate opportunity to register their votes.

Section 2. Vote Counting. The Executive Director/Treasurer shall have responsibility for assuring the ballots are counted accurately and shall report to the Nominations Committee the names of the persons who have received the largest number of votes for each position. The Chair of the Nominations Committee shall be responsible for notifying all candidates of the results of the election. The Executive Director/Treasurer shall share the names of the winners with the broader membership of the Society.

Section 3. Tie votes. In the event of a tie vote between candidates for any offices, the Executive Director/Treasurer shall immediately notify the President and the Secretary of the Society and shall prepare a special ballot containing the names of the candidates involved. These ballots shall be distributed at the Annual Business Meeting of the Society. The candidate receiving a majority of the votes cast by members present and voting at the Annual Business Meeting shall be elected to office. Notice of this special election and a copy of the special ballot shall be posted at the registration desk for the Annual Meeting of the Society. If the above procedure should result in another tie vote, the members of the Council shall vote to break the tie.

New officers and Council members shall assume office immediately following each Annual Business Meeting and attend the Annual and mid-year Council meetings as detailed in the Policies and Procedures manual.

Article VI. DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/TREASURER.

The Executive Director/Treasurer shall manage the day-to-day business functions of the Society and serve as the chief financial officer of the Society. The Executive Director/Treasurer shall manage the RSS Business Office and supervise any Business Office staff. The Executive Director/Treasurer shall submit financial reports to the Council which shall be posted on the Society's official website for unrestricted access by membership. The Executive Director/Treasurer shall be bonded, shall manage all incomes of the Society, shall invest funds in secure accounts, and shall see that an external financial review is conducted annually and that the results are shared with the Executive Committee within 30 days of the completion of the review. Other specific Executive Director/Treasurer responsibilities are detailed in the Policies and Procedures manual. To avoid potential or apparent conflicts of interest in the affairs of the RSS, The Executive Director/Treasurer shall be a non-voting member of Council.

Article VII. DISPUTES.

The Council shall interpret the Constitution and Bylaws and rule on any disputes.

Article VIII. VACANCIES.

Vacancies in appointed positions in standing committees shall be filled by appointment by the President with the approval of the Council. The Council is empowered to fill any vacancy that may occur among the officers and elected committee members.

Article IX. ANNUAL MEETING FACILITIES.

The Society shall make every reasonable effort to hold its annual meeting in facilities that are fully accessible to members, without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. Where practical, the Society will give preference to facilities where staff have union representation, and refrain from holding its annual meeting at any facility with a sanctioned labor dispute that is unresolved.

Article X. AMENDMENTS.

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws must be circulated to the Society's Officers and Council members in writing, at least two weeks in advance of a regularly scheduled meeting of the Council. The amendments shall take effect immediately if a quorum of the Council is present or participating remotely, and if the amendments are supported by two-thirds of the Council members who are present or participating remotely.

Article XI. COUNCIL MEETINGS.

The Council may meet and conduct Society business in person or remotely, via teleconference, Internet interface, or other relevant technologies, at times and places it deems suitable and convenient for its purposes. Council decisions may be made at any officially convened Council meeting.

Article XII. OFFICIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The RSS Council recognizes the need to codify and maintain its policies and procedures in a form that is publicly available and can be readily maintained and transmitted over time. Therefore, Council will compile and maintain a Manual of the Official Policies and Procedures of the Rural Sociological Society. This manual shall be organized to facilitate transparency, ease, and speed of reference, and continuity of decisions over time. To the greatest extent feasible, the policies and procedures should be listed along with the dates when they were enacted and/or amended by Council action. The topics in the manual shall include, but need not be limited to:

- The Financial Plan of the Society, including matters related to the endowment account(s);

- Policies regarding Annual and other meetings, including but not limited to RSS procedures and criteria for selecting locations, setting fees, requirements for participation, and accessibility;

- Policies regarding categories and costs of memberships and of institutional and/or other subscriptions;

- Policies regarding any other fees and payments; and,

- Policies regarding the selection of personnel, filling of vacancies, plans for succession, and removal or replacement of officers or other personnel who are unable or unwilling to perform their duties in the manner required by the Society's policies.

This Manual of the Official Policies and Procedures of the Rural Sociological Society shall be maintained by the Executive Director/Treasurer of the RSS and modified as appropriate as the result of Council actions.

While the contents of this Manual do not replace any requirements of the RSS Constitution and Bylaws, this Manual shall otherwise govern Council actions and may be changed by approval of the Council.