



BYLAWS

The American Association of Certified Orthoptists, Inc.

Amended October 2019

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ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this organization shall be The American Association of Certified Orthoptists, Inc., also referred to in these bylaws as "The AACO" and "The Association".

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The purpose of this Association, a 501(c)3 organization, is to provide continuing education and promote orthoptics as an allied health profession in ophthalmology.

ARTICLE III

Membership

Section 1 Categories of Membership shall include:

- a. Active member
- b. Associate member
- c. Life member
- d. Orthoptic student
- e. Honorary member

Section 2 Active Member

- a. Those orthoptists holding a current American Orthoptic Council certificate and whose AACO dues are paid by June 30th of the fiscal year.
- b. Active members shall be eligible to vote, run for office and participate in Association activities.
- a. C. Members shall be automatically dropped from Active status if AA C O dues are not paid by June 30th of the fiscal year. Members can be reinstated to the Active status during the same fiscal year, by paying the late fee and dues.

Section 3 Associate Member

- a. Those orthoptists who do not hold a current AOC certification but have paid AACO dues by June 30th of the fiscal year
- b. Associate members may participate in Association activities but shall be ineligible to vote or hold office.
- c. Associate members shall be automatically dropped from Associate status if dues are not paid by June 30th of the fiscal year. Associate members can be reinstated to Associate status during that fiscal year by paying the late fee and dues.

Section 4 Life Member

- a. An active or associate member may become a life member following retirement from orthoptics [the cessation of full or part time work as an orthoptist] after a minimum of twenty years of membership or a minimum of fifteen years of membership and retirement due to disability.
- b. Life members are not required to pay dues, are ineligible to vote or hold office, but may receive correspondence from the Association.

Section 5 Orthoptic Student Member

- a. Those orthoptic students attending American Orthoptic Council certified programs are automatically members of the AACO for the duration of the fellowship program and are not required to pay dues.
- b. Orthoptic student members may participate in Association activities but are ineligible to vote or hold office.

Section 6 Honorary Member

- a. Honorary membership may be conferred by the membership in recognition of outstanding contributions to orthoptics.
- b. Honorary members are not required to pay dues, are ineligible to vote, hold office, or serve on a committee.

Section 7 Dues

- a. Dues shall be determined by the membership.
- b. A dues notice shall be sent out each year by the membership chair.
- c. Must be paid within 60 days of the due date, before a late fee is charged.
- d. A penalty in an amount to be determined by the Board of Directors may be charged for late payment of dues.
- e. The membership may determine a full or reduced amount in dues for associate and life members.
- f. The membership may determine a reinstatement fee for orthoptists who have allowed their membership to lapse.
- g. Orthoptists newly certified by the American Orthoptic Council will have free membership till the start of the fiscal year which begins January 1st and then will be charged half price dues for their first year as Active members of the AACO

Section 8 Change of name or address

Each member is responsible for notifying the membership chair of any change of name, postal mailing and/or electronic address.

Section 9 Reinstatement

A reinstatement fee may be determined by the Association. Orthoptists who have allowed their membership to lapse may be reinstated as:

- a. Active members upon payment of AACO dues and proof of current AOC certification.
- b. Associate members upon payment of Association dues.

ARTICLE IV Board of Directors

Section 1 The Board of Directors shall consist of the:

- a. Executive Committee
- b. Director of Finance
- c. Regional Representatives
- d. Representative to the International Orthoptic Association [IOA]
- e. Elected Representative to the Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology [JCAHPO]
- f. Elected Representatives to the American Orthoptic Council [AOC]

Section 2 Chairman of the Board

The president of the Association shall serve as chairman.

Section 3 Invited Guests

The president may invite others to the meeting with the approval of the Board.

Section 4 The Board of Directors shall meet prior to the national business meeting to review the recommendations of the executive committee and approve the agenda.

- a. A quorum shall consist of a majority of directors.
- b. The Board of Directors will be notified 30 days in advance of the meeting.

Section 5 The Board of Directors may confer by meeting, conference call, or other form of electronic communication from time to time throughout the year as necessary to:

- a. Review and approve the activities of the executive committee.

- b. Act on all matters pertaining to the welfare of the Association not otherwise provided for in these bylaws.
- c. A 10 day notice of these meetings shall be provided.

Section 6 AACO shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless all current and former directors, officers, employees and agents of the AACO against liability and expenses to the maximum extent permitted by law and may purchase such insurance for same as the Board of Directors deems appropriate.

ARTICLE V

Executive Committee

Section 1 Members

The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the Association and the immediate past president.

- 1. President
- 2. President Elect in those years that this position is in effect
- 3. Vice President
- 4. Vice President designate in those years that this position is in effect
- 5. Secretary
- 6. Treasurer
- 7. Immediate Past President

Section 2 Chairman

The President of the Association shall serve as chairman.

Section 3 The Association may, in considering matters of business other than changes to the bylaws, affirmatively empower the executive committee to take action on its behalf in accordance with its orders. None of the committee's acts shall conflict with actions authorized by the Association. The Executive Committee shall:

- a. Approve matters regarding the policies of the Association.
- b. Be the governing body and have general supervision of the affairs of the Association between its annual meetings.
- c. At their discretion, appoint a substitute representative to replace an elected representative who is unable to attend a scheduled business meeting. The appointment shall be effective until such time as the elected representative is able to resume that position or until such time as a new election takes place.
- d. Make recommendations to the AOC.

- e. Meet prior to the annual business meeting.
- f. Review and approve the standing committee reports and review other matters of concern in order to make recommendations to the Association.
- g. Approve the agenda for the Association business meeting.
- h. Perform such duties as are specified in these bylaws.

ARTICLE VI

Officers

Section 1 Officers

The officers shall perform the activities described in these bylaws and by the parliamentary authority adopted by the Association. The officers of the Association shall be:

- a. President
- b. President-elect
- c. Vice-president
- d. Vice-president designate
- e. Secretary
- f. Treasurer

Section 2 Election terms

- a. The president-elect shall serve for one year and then assume the office of president for a three year term.
- b. The vice-president shall be elected one year prior to taking office and shall serve as the vice-president designate for one year. The vice president will then assume a three year term of office.
- c. The president, president-elect, vice-president and the vice-president designate shall assume their offices immediately following the national meeting.
- d. Neither the president nor the vice-president may run for the same office for consecutive terms.
- e. The secretary shall serve a two year term of office to begin immediately after the national meeting.
- f. The treasurer shall serve a three year term of office to begin immediately after the national meeting.

Section 3 The president shall:

- a. Preside at the executive committee meeting, the board of directors meeting and the national business meeting.

- b. Present to the executive committee a list of suggested standing committee chairmen for its approval.
- c. Serve ex-officio as a member of all committees except that of the nominating committee.
- d. Serve as a member of the Canadian Orthoptic Council or appoint a designate to represent the AACO
- e. Receive reports from each committee chairman.
- f. Keep the president-elect and vice-president informed of all official business.
- g. Serve as a member of the AOC and present a written report of AACO activities or concerns for the AOC annual and Mid-year meetings.
- h. Appoint an active member to fill the term of any vacated office or elected representative (except that of president).
- i. Serve as IOA representative if the fully elected representative is unable to perform the duties.
- j. Perform such other duties as regularly pertain to the office of president.

Section 4 The president-elect shall:

- a. Assume the office of president at the conclusion of the national meeting, one year following election as president-elect, or fill an unexpired term of president during the president-elect year.
- b. Maintain contact with the president regarding official business throughout the year.
- c. Serve as a member of the executive committee and the board of directors.

Section 5 The vice-president shall:

- a. Perform the duties of the president in his/her absence.
- b. Fill the vacated office of president in those years when there is no president-elect until such time that an election can take place.
- c. Coordinate the scheduling of regional meetings with each regional chair and inform the membership of the dates and programs of the regional meetings.
- d. Inform the membership of the date, location, and program for the national meeting.
- e. Be in communication with the president regarding all official business.
- f. Serve as a member of the executive committee and the board of directors.
- g. Serve ex-officio as a member of the program committee.
- h. Serve as chairman of the instruction committee.
- i. Serve as a member of the AOC.

Section 6 The vice-president designate shall:

- a. Assume the office of vice-president at the conclusion of the national meeting, one year following the election of the vice-president designate, or fill an unexpired term of vice-president during the vice-president designate year.
- b. Serve as a member of the executive committee and the board of directors.

Section 7 The secretary shall:

- a. Keep accurate minutes of the executive committee meeting and the board of directors meetings and distribute them to the members of those committees.
- b. Keep accurate minutes of the Association business meeting and distribute them to the membership prior to the next national meeting.
- c. Keep a current file of all members and advise the membership chair, newsletter chair and treasurer of any changes in membership names or addresses.
- d. Distribute materials as instructed by the president and vice- president.
- e. Assist in preparing the Association directory.

Section 8 The treasurer shall:

- a. Give bond by a reliable surety company in such sums as the executive committee shall require, the cost of which shall be borne by the Association.
- b. Collect all monies of the Association and deposit it in a bank account in the name of the Association.
- c. Arrange for checks to be drawn on the Association bank account by the treasurer and president without the necessity of both signatures.
- d. Disburse money as budgeted on approval of the Association.
- e. Obtain the executive committee's approval for unbudgeted expenditures exceeding an amount to be determined by the Board of Directors.
- f. Close the books in accordance with the fiscal year of the Association.
- g. Have the books reviewed by a certified public accountant every year prior to the national meeting and present this information to the executive committee.
- h. Work with the director of finance to prepare an annual budget.

Section 9 Removal:

Officers may be removed from office by the membership. Removal with or without cause of any elected officer shall require the affirmative vote of 2/3 of the Board and affirmation by the majority of the entire voting membership by ballot.

ARTICLE VII

Elected Representatives and Appointed Positions

Section 1 Representatives to the American Orthoptic Council [AOC]

There shall be two representatives to the AOC who shall:

- a. Each be elected by the membership, each to serve a four year term. They shall not both be elected in the same calendar year. Assuming office shall take place immediately following the national meeting.
- b. Serve as members of the AOC representing the interests of the Association.
- c. Serve as members of the board of directors, and present a written report at the national meeting of the AACO.

Section 2 Representative to the International Orthoptic Association [IOA]

The representative shall:

- a. Be elected by the membership every four years with the term to begin immediately following the national meeting.
- b. Serve on the board of directors and the AOC representing the interests of the AACO.
- c. Serve as liaison between the Association and the IOA; report any changes in policy to the board of directors and the Association; and inform the membership of meeting dates and programs of the IOA.
- d. Submit an annual written report to the Association.

Section 3 Representative to The Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology [JCAHPO]

The representative shall:

- a. Serve as liaison to the AACO Board of Directors, the Association, and the AOC.
- b. Serve a three year term, with possibility of one re-election, for a total of six consecutive years of service.
- c. Submit an annual written report to the Association.

Section 4 Representative to the Canadian Orthoptic Council [COC] shall:

- a. Be the AACO president or his or her designee
- b. Attend the annual COC meeting and serve as liaison to the AACO Board of Directors and the Association
- c. Submit an annual written report to the Association

Section 5 Regional Representatives shall:

- a. Be elected annually by each of the four regions, one representative per region, term to begin immediately following the regional meeting.
- b. Serve following the regional meeting or following appointment by the president in the event of no regional meeting.
- c. Serve as members of the Board of Directors, representing the interests of their respective regions.
- d. Conduct the regional business meeting.
- e. Submit an annual written report to the Association.

Section 6 The Associate Editor of the American Orthoptic Journal [AOJ] shall:

- a. Be appointed by the president.
- b. Serve as Associate Editor of the AOJ and member of the AOJ editorial board.
- c. Submit an annual written report to the Association.

Section 7 The Director of Finance shall:

- a. Be appointed by the president.
- b. Prepare the Association's yearly budget in cooperation with the treasurer and oversee the budget throughout the fiscal year in an advisory capacity.
- c. Serve as a member of the Board of Directors.
- d. Submit an annual written report to the Association.

Section 8 The Education Committee Chair shall:

- a. Be appointed by the president.
- b. Preside over the annual meeting of the education committee.
- c. Conduct business pertaining to AOC accredited Orthoptic Programs.
- d. Serve as a member of the AOC and as such be the liaison between the education committee and the AOC.
- e. Submit an annual written report to the Association.

Section 9 The Practice Management Committee Chair shall:

- a. Be appointed by the president
- b. Carry out the business described under the standing committee section for this committee
- c. Submit an annual written report to the Association

Section 10 The Program Committee Chair shall:

- a. Be appointed by the president.
- b. Organize the Association's scientific program at the national meeting.
- c. Submit an annual written report to the Association.

Section 11 The Tribute Fund Committee Chair shall:

- a. Be appointed by the president.
- b. The committee shall organize activities and facilitate the attainment of the goals of the tribute fund committee.
- c. Submit an annual written report to the Association.

**ARTICLE VIII
Standing Committees**

Section 1 The president shall, with approval from the executive committee, appoint committee chairs annually unless otherwise stipulated.

Section 2 Committee chairs shall select their committees unless otherwise stipulated.

Section 3 Each committee chair shall prepare a written annual budget and submit a written report of committee business to the president for the national meeting.

Section 4 There shall be the following standing committees:

- a. Bylaws Committee
- b. Education Committee
- c. Ethics Committee
- d. Finance Committee
- e. Fundraising Committee
- f. Historical Committee
- g. Honor Certificate Committee
- h. Instruction Committee
- i. Jean Robinson Library Committee
- j. Lancaster Award Committee
- k. Membership Committee
- l. Newsletter Committee
- m. Nominating Committee
- n. Practice Management Committee

- o. Program Committee
- p. Public Relations Committee
- q. Registration Committee
- r. Scobee Memorial Committee
- s. Student Advisory Committee
- t. Tribute Fund Committee

Section 5 Bylaws Committee

The chair and committee shall:

- a. Maintain a current copy of the bylaws.
- b. Be advisory to the Association regarding the bylaws and make recommendations to the membership for bylaw modifications.
- c. Make changes to the Bylaws to reflect amendments enacted by the Association members

Section 6 Education Committee

The committee shall consist of orthoptists teaching in Orthoptic Programs registered with the AOC. The committee shall:

- a. Conduct business pertaining to Orthoptic Programs.
- b. Meet at least once a year.

Section 7 Ethics Committee

The committee shall:

- a. Consist of the immediate past chair of the ethics committee, the AACO president (ex-officio member), and four regional members, who have each been active AACO members for at least five years, and who shall be selected at the regional business meetings; one from each region.
- b. Receive communications and inquiries concerning ethical conduct of its members as relates to the Code of Ethics for orthoptists governed by the AOC.
- c. Investigate all charges against members.
- d. Report infractions to the executive committee and the chair of the AOC ethics committee.
- e. Keep all inquiries and investigations confidential.

Section 8 Finance Committee:

The committee shall consist of a chair, who shall be a former Treasurer or Director of Finance, approved by the Board of Directors; four Members-at-Large; The AACO Treasurer and Director

of Finance, who will be non-voting members of the committee. The committee shall work with the Treasurer and DOF to:

- a. Develop an annual operating budget.
- b. Set long term financial goals for the association.
- c. Monitor and suggest investments.
- d. Monitor and report the financial activity of the association.
- e. Perform an annual audit.
- f. Develop financial internal controls for the association.
- g. Maintain a policy and procedure manual for the Treasurer and Director of Finance.
- h. Advise the Board of Directors of any misconduct to ensure the assets of the organization are appropriately protected.

Section 9 Fundraising Committee

The committee shall:

- a. Contact businesses that may be interested in exhibiting during the meeting in exchange for a donation to the Association
- b. Report committee activities to the Vice-President, Treasurer, and Director of Finance including the projected income from the exhibits prior to the National Meeting.
- c. Submit an annual written report to the Association

Section 10 Historical Committee

The committee shall:

- a. Keep up to date files including membership directories and records of honorary and deceased members as well as other noteworthy events or changes in the Association.
- b. Update and maintain the Association family tree.

Section 11 Honor Certificate Committee

The committee shall:

- a. Be comprised of a member selected from each region
- b. Identify prospective candidates, process application forms and prepare certificates.
- c. Have the certificate(s) presented at the annual business meeting.

Section 12 Instruction Committee

- a. The chair shall be the vice-president of the Association
- b. The committee shall organize the instruction courses offered at the national meeting

Section 13 Jean Robinson Library Committee

The committee shall maintain the library collection for use by the membership and promote its access and growth.

Section 14. Lancaster Award Committee

The committee shall:

- a. Consist of five (5) previous Lancaster award recipients, starting with the five (5) most recent recipients.
 - 1) Each member shall serve a five (5) year term; serving as Chair in the fifth year.
 - 2) No member shall serve on the Committee for longer than five (5) consecutive years, but members may serve more than one term.
 - 3) The Chair will ensure that the Committee has five (5) members; a vacancy will be filled by a willing replacement from the list of previous Lancaster award recipients.
- b. By unanimous vote select an award recipient who has earned this highest honor as evidenced by distinguished achievement to the orthoptic profession.
- c. Arrange for the award presentation at the annual national meeting.

Section 15 Membership Committee

The committee shall:

- a. Maintain a current file of the membership
- b. Receive requests from members who desire life membership status and grant it to those who fulfill the requirements.
- c. Send a request for annual AACO membership dues.
- d. Prepare and arrange for the annual membership directory.
- e. Coordinate the distribution of AACO emblem pins.

Section 16 Newsletter Committee

The chair (editor) and committee shall be responsible for the publication and distribution of the Association's newsletter [aka The Prism].

Section 17 Nominating Committee

The committee of five members shall:

- a. Consist of one representative selected from each of the four regions.
- b. Be chaired by a member selected from and by the previous year's committee.
- c. Accept nominations for all elected positions at regional business meetings, and throughout the year; report all such recommendations to the chair in a timely fashion.

- d. Prepare a ballot with all the names of all nominees willing to run for the elected office. The ballot shall be distributed to the voting membership in a timely manner, such that the results can be reported to the President prior to the annual business meeting.
- e. In the event of more than two candidates for a single office, the ballot will be constructed in such a way that the voters rank candidates in the order of preference, so that if no candidates obtain majority, the ranking system will determine the winner.
- f. Notify each newly elected individual and report the results to the AACO President.

Section 18 Practice Management Committee

The committee shall gather, maintain and disseminate information regarding policies or practice procedures that may impact AACO members in their role as orthoptists in the work place.

Section 19 Program Committee

- a. The vice-president shall serve ex-officio as a member of the committee.
- b. The committee shall organize the AACO scientific session at the national meeting.

Section 20 Public Relations Committee

The committee shall:

- a. Work with AACO and AOC committees to disseminate information about orthoptics.
- b. Promote the recruitment of qualified orthoptic students.
- c. Review and create publications as directed by the Association.
- d. Make all arrangements for the creation and display of an exhibit at the national meeting or other exhibits as required.
- e. Keep a record, including current location, of all past exhibits.

Section 21 Registration Committee

The committee shall prepare and arrange for pre-registration and on-site registration at the national meeting, including registration of the AACO instruction courses.

Section 22 Scobee Memorial Committee

The committee shall:

- a. Consist of a representative selected from each of the four regions and the last three orthoptist Scobee Memorial Lecturers who, in their last two years, shall serve as chair.
- b. Select and invite a speaker to present the Scobee Memorial Lecture at the time of the scientific session at the national meeting. Have a plaque prepared to present to Scobee Lecturer.

- c. Have the Scobee Award for the Outstanding Orthoptic Student of the year prepared and present this award at the scientific session at the national meeting. Have an award prepared and presented to the Orthoptic Program that trained the student.
- d. Correspond with 3m and Fresnel Prism and Lens Company, sponsors of the awards, and submit the costs of the awards and honoraria to them for reimbursement.

Section 23 Student Advisory Committee

The committee shall:

- a. Notify AOC orthoptic programs of qualified, available student applicants.
- b. Inform applicants of program openings.

Section 24 Tribute Fund Committee

The committee shall:

- a. Consist of seven AACO members; the chair, the treasurer, the immediate past-president and one member selected from each of the four regions.
- b. Receive donations to commemorate major life events (retirement, certification, anniversary, special awards, memorials, etc) honoring a past or present AACO member. Such donations shall be restricted funds and be used for educational purposes.
- c. Acknowledge the contributions received to the appropriate person or persons and if permission is granted to do so, publicize the receipt of said gift in association publications.

ARTICLE IX

Regions

Section 1 Membership

Members of the Association may also be regional members.

- a. A member's geographic location will determine his/her regional affiliation.
- b. No member may belong to more than one region at any one time.
- c. Members who reside outside the United States may affiliate with a region.

Section 2 There shall be four designated regions:

- a. Eastern Region: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.
- b. Midwestern Region: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Wisconsin.

- c. Southern Region: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas.
- d. Western Region: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming.

Section 3 Meetings

- a. Regional meetings may be held throughout the year.
- b. A regional meeting chair, selected by that region's membership, will determine the exact location and dates of the meeting under advisement of the vice-president.

Section 4 Representatives

- a. An elected representative from each region will serve on the board of directors.
- b. The term of office shall be one year effective immediately following the regional meeting.

Section 5 Each region shall select one member annually to serve on the ethics committee of the national Association.

Section 6 Each region shall select one member annually to serve on the nominating committee of the national Association.

Section 7 Each region shall select one member annually to serve on the Scobee committee of the national Association.

Section 8 Each region shall select one member annually to serve on the Tribute Committee of the national Association.

Section 8 In the event that a regional meeting is not held in a given year, the president shall appoint a member from that region to the ethics, nominating, Scobee and Tribute committees and a regional representative to serve on the Board of Directors.

Section 9 When a regional meeting is not held in a given year business can be conducted electronically.

ARTICLE X
National Business Meeting

Section 1 The national business meeting shall be held at least once a year at a time and place designated by the officers.

Section 2 Members shall be notified of the meeting at least one month prior to such meeting. A mailed (postal or electronic) notice to the last address in the current membership database shall constitute official notice.

Section 3 The number of active members present at the national business meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Section 4 When voting is conducted via electronic mail, a quorum shall consist of the number of votes received thirty days from sending the ballot.

Section 5 There shall be no proxy voting.

ARTICLE XI
Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall run from January 1 to December 31 of a given year.

ARTICLE XII
Rules Governing Conduct of Meetings and the Association

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Association in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws or any special rules of order that the Association may adopt.

ARTICLE XIII
Policy of Nondiscrimination

The American Association of Certified Orthoptists admits members who are certified as orthoptists by the AOC without regard to age, sex, race, color, handicap, religious preference or national origin.

ARTICLE XIV
Amending the Bylaws

These bylaws may be amended:

- a. At any national meeting by a two-thirds vote of the Active members present, provided a written or electronic notice stating the present bylaw as well as the proposed rewording shall have been mailed to each member thirty days prior to the national meeting.
- b. By mail or electronic notice provided a notice stating the present bylaw as well as the proposed rewording is sent to all Active members thirty days prior to counting of the ballots.

Ratified November 1984

Revised November 1986

Amended November 1987

Substitute document accepted October 1989

Amended October 1990

Amended November 1993

Substitute document accepted October 1997

Amended August 2004

Amended June 2005

Amended May 2006

Amended December 2006

Amended June 2007

Amended October 2009

Amended September 2011

Amended 10/28/2018 The American Association of Certified Orthoptists Business Meeting

Amended 2/22/2020 The American Association of Certified orthoptists Business Meeting and Formatting