

**CONSTITUTION FOR THE DIVISION OF PUBLIC OPINION AND POLICY**  
**A DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY**

**I. Name of the Organization**

The name of the division is The Division of Public Opinion and Policy. The Division is a constituent unit of the American Society of Criminology [hereinafter ASC] and will function in accordance with the Constitution, By-Laws, and policies of the ASC.

**II. Mission Statement**

The Division of Public Opinion and Policy seeks to provide an intellectual home for all who are interested in the study of the nature, sources, and policy impacts of public opinion about crime and criminal justice. The Division recognizes that studies of public opinion have long been an integral part of the criminological enterprise. Increasingly, sophisticated studies are proliferating criminology focusing on crucial policy issues with practical and important implications as the “will of the people” often informs policy debates. Acknowledging the importance of public opinion research, the Division is committed to continually advancing the science of public opinion. To achieve this mission, the Division seeks to: 1) foster and promote sound research focused on public opinion, 2) provide a forum for the dissemination of scientific knowledge, and 3) create partnerships among scholars, students, policymakers, and community members.

**III. Purposes and Objectives**

The objectives of the Division of Public Opinion and Policy are as follows:

- A. To advance the scientific understanding of the nature of public opinion and its implications for crime and justice policy;
- B. To educate researchers on extant interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological developments in the study of public opinion and their implications for criminological inquiry;
- C. To provide a forum for the presentation and dissemination of scientific knowledge on public opinion and policy;
- D. To engage in public criminology so as to share policy-relevant public opinion with concerned stakeholders, ranging from community members to elected officials;
- E. To serve as a means for mentoring students and early-career-stage scholars in the study of public opinion research.

## **IV. Membership**

- A. Membership in the Division is open to all ASC members in good standing.

The membership of the Division will be divided into the following categories: 1) Regular membership and 2) Student membership.

1. Regular members shall include any member in good standing of the ASC, who is paying regular membership dues to the Division, and who does not fall within, or falling within does not choose to be included within, the Student membership. Regular members who have paid Divisional dues will be considered eligible to vote in all general Division matters (i.e., Division meetings, officer elections, proposed Constitutional amendments), they may hold office, and serve on standing and ad-hoc committees.
  2. Student membership shall be open to any graduate or undergraduate student enrolled at an institution of higher education whose enrollment is certified by a regular faculty or administrative official of the institution, and who is a student member in good standing of the ASC. Student members, if appointed by the chair and approved by a 2/3 vote of the Executive Board, may serve on standing and ad-hoc committees and they can vote in general Division matters, but they cannot hold office.
- B. Annual dues for all categories of Division membership shall be set by the Executive Board of the Division. Dues shall be paid annually, generally in concert with the dues of the ASC.
- C. A member in good standing is one who is current in both their ASC and Division dues.
1. Divisional dues will be collected by the ASC Office, who shall maintain a list of Divisional members. The ASC Office will maintain and manage all dues and other Division funds that may be raised.
- D. Regular members in good standing will be considered eligible for voting, to serve as officers in the Division, and to serve on Division Committees as stipulated in this Constitution, By-Laws, and/or the Division's Policies and Procedures.
- E. Student members in good standing will be considered eligible for voting and, if appointed by the chair and approved by a 2/3 vote of the Executive Board, may serve on standing and ad-hoc committees as stipulated in this Constitution, By-Laws, and/or the Division's Policies and Procedures. Student members cannot hold office.

## **V. The Executive Board**

- A. There will be an Executive Board consisting of the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary/Treasurer, Chair-Elect, and four (4) Executive Counselors.

1. The Division Chair will chair and convene the Executive Board.
  2. A quorum of the Executive Board shall consist of one-half of the voting members plus one.
  3. Duties of the Executive Board shall include:
    - a. Establishing policies for the Division with majority vote;
    - b. Providing advice and decide on the budget for the Division;
    - c. Approving committees and committee chairs;
    - d. Deciding the amount of Division dues for Regular and Student membership.
- B. All members of the Executive Board must be members of the Division in good standing.
- C. The Executive Board will arrange and organize the Division's Annual Membership Meeting in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the ASC, and any other planned events.

## **VI. The Executive Committee**

- A. The Executive Committee will consist of the Chair, Vice-Chair, the Chair-Elect, and the Immediate Past-Chair.
- B. Duties of the Executive Committee shall include:
1. Establishing policies for the Division with a majority vote, but only if the issue(s) cannot wait until the next full Board Meeting;
  2. Reporting all activities and decisions made by this Committee to the Executive Board at or before the Board's next regularly scheduled meeting.

## **VII. Officers**

- A. Chair
1. The Chair is an elected official.
  2. Term of office for the Chair shall be two (2) years, beginning one (1) year after their election to the position of Chair. The Chair, upon election, shall serve one (1) year on the Executive Committee and Executive Board in the role of Chair-Elect. Once the term of the Chair ends and they are not elected for another term,

the Chair will serve for one (1) year as part of the Executive Committee as Immediate Past-Chair to assist in the transition and continuity of the Board and Division.

3. The Chair will provide overall direction for the Division and organize and preside over Division meetings.
4. The Chair or their designee will serve as liaison with the ASC Annual Meeting Program to ensure the inclusion of panels and other relevant material relating to issues on public opinion and policy in the ASC program.
5. The Chair or their designee shall bring issues regarding public opinion and policy, as decided by the Division, or when appropriate by the Division Executive Board, to the attention of the ASC Executive Board, and to the appropriate ASC committees for their consideration.
6. The Chair coordinates with ASC leaders and other division chairs as necessary.
7. The Chair will appoint all Committees and Committee Chairs, with the approval of the Executive Board.
8. The Chair communicates with Division members via the Division website, the Division email listserv, and the Division social media.
9. The Chair will prepare a midyear report of Division activities for presentation to the ASC Executive Board at the mid-year meeting and an annual report of Division activities for presentation at the ASC Annual Meeting

#### B. Vice-Chair

1. The Vice-Chair is an elected official.
2. Term of office for the Vice-Chair shall be two (2) years and begin at the close of the Division's Annual Membership Meeting following their election
3. The Vice-Chair shall preside over Division meetings in the absence of the Chair and shall be empowered to conduct all necessary business of the Division if the office of Chair is vacant or if the Chair is unable to serve.
4. The Vice-Chair or their designee shall chair the Awards Committee for duration of their two (2) year term.
5. The Vice-Chair or their designee shall chair the Constitution and By-Laws Committee for duration of their two (2) year term.

#### C. Secretary/Treasurer

1. The Secretary/Treasurer is an elected official.
2. Term of office for the Secretary/Treasurer shall be two (2) years and begin at the close of the Division's Annual Membership Meeting following their election.
3. The Secretary/Treasurer shall record minutes of each meeting of the Division and forward a copy to each member of the Executive Committee, Executive Board, and the Communications Committee for publication on the Division website.
4. The Secretary/Treasurer shall maintain all Division records, including, but not limited to, financial and membership records and minutes.
5. The Secretary/Treasurer will manage the membership list for the Division, including the email/contact system for members.
6. The Secretary/Treasurer shall remain in contact with the Treasurer of ASC who will maintain a separate account in the ASC treasury for the Division. The Secretary/Treasurer will inform Division membership of the Division's balance, debts, credits, etc. at the Division's Annual Membership Meeting. The Secretary/Treasurer will notify the Executive Board of any financial issues that arise between Annual Membership Meetings.
7. With the Division Chair's approval, the Secretary/Treasurer will coordinate all purchases for the Division, including, but not limited to, awards, annual meeting supplies, and receptions.
8. The Secretary/Treasurer will be responsible for assistance to the Division Historian, Newsletter Editor, the Communications Committee, and the Publications Committee in the dissemination of Division information.

#### D. Executive Counselors

1. The Executive Counselors are elected officials.
2. There will be four (4) Executive Counselors, elected in alternating years. Two (2) Executive Counselors will be elected on even years and two (2) on odd years.
3. Term of office for each Executive Counselor shall be two (2) years and begin at the close of the Division's Annual Membership Meeting following their election.
4. Each Executive Counselor will chair one (1) of the Standing Committees.
  - a. One (1) Executive Counselor will be appointed by the Division Chair, with approval of the Executive Board, to assume the role of Chair of the Communications Committee for the duration of their two (2) year term,

taking overall responsibility for Division website and serving as the Division social media coordinator. As such, the Executive Counselor/Chair of the Communications Committee should work closely with the Division Historian, Newsletter Editor, Publications Committee, and Executive Board to disseminate Division information.

- i. The website will serve as a location to provide members of the Division, and interested individuals globally, access to information on the research, teaching, and policy related to public opinion. The website will include minutes of the Executive Board meetings.
    - ii. Social media includes but is not limited to Facebook and Twitter pages, which will highlight the news and announcements of the Division. The Chair of the Communications Committee will assist the Division Historian, Newsletter Editor, all Committees, the Executive Board, and the Executive Committee in the dissemination of information.
  - b. One (1) Executive Counselor will be appointed by the Division Chair, with approval of the Executive Board, to assume the role of Chair of the Publications Committee for the duration of their two (2) year term, working closely with the Newsletter Editor to create and publish a minimum of two (2) newsletters each year.
  - c. One (1) Executive Counselor will be appointed by the Division Chair, with approval of the Executive Board, to assume the role of Chair of the Nominations Committee for the duration of their two (2) year term.
  - d. One (1) Executive Counselor will be appointed by the Division Chair, with approval of the Executive Board, to assume the role of Chair of the Program Committee for the duration of their two (2) year term.
5. All Executive Counselors will assist the Division Chair with executive decisions for the Division.

#### E. Historian

1. A member of the Division in good standing shall serve as the Division Historian.
2. The Historian is not to be a member of the Executive Board.
3. The Historian will be appointed by the Division Chair and approved by a 2/3 vote of the Executive Board.
4. The Historian shall serve a two (2) year term and may be reappointed.

5. The Historian shall document the history of the Division through photographs and summaries of important events.
6. The Historian shall work closely with the Secretary/Treasurer, the Newsletter Editor, the Communications Committee, and the Publications Committee to publish and maintain records.
7. The Historian shall maintain both electronic and paper copies of all the historical records of the Division.
8. The Historian shall turn over copies of all historical documents to the Secretary/Treasurer at the end of their term or whenever requested by the Division Chair.
9. The Historian may be removed from office by a 2/3 vote of the Executive Board.

#### F. Newsletter Editor

1. A member of the Division in good standing shall serve as the Division Newsletter Editor.
2. The Newsletter Editor is not to be a member of the Executive Board.
3. The Newsletter Editor will be appointed by the Division Chair as approved by a 2/3 vote of the Executive Board. The Newsletter Editor will be appointed for a three (3) year term and can serve additional terms if appointed by the current Division Chair with Executive Board approval.
4. The Newsletter Editor shall solicit materials for a minimum of two (2) newsletters each year.
5. The Newsletter Editor shall curate newsletter content working closely with the Publications Committee.
  - a. The Newsletter shall contain, at minimum, election results, calls for nominations, and information on the annual meetings. The Newsletter Editor shall strive to include information likely to be of interest to the members, information for other organizations, calls for papers, and articles of timely interest. The Newsletter Editor shall work cooperatively with the Division Historian and the Secretary/Treasurer to publish and maintain records of the Division.
6. The Newsletter Editor shall publish each newsletter through the Division's listserv and on the Division website and the Division social media.

- a. The Newsletter Editor shall work cooperatively with the Secretary/Treasurer and the Communications Committee on disseminating the newsletter on the Division website and on Division social media.
7. The Newsletter Editor may be removed from office by a 2/3 vote of the Executive Board.
- G. Any member of the Executive Board (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary/Treasurer, Chair-Elect, and four (4) Executive Counselors), may be suspended from office by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Board and may be removed from office by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Division members present at an Annual Membership Meeting. Non-attendance at meetings, failure to submit/present reports, non-response to email communications, and/or other failure to fulfill duties and responsibilities of the office may subject the member to the risk of removal from the Executive Board.

## **VIII. Elections**

- A. To run for and/or serve in any office in the Division, individuals must be Regular Division members in good standing and must have been Regular Division members in good standing for at least one (1) year prior to the nomination.
- B. Elections of Vice-Chair and two (2) Executive Counselors shall occur in even numbered years. Elections for the Chair, Secretary/Treasurer, and the other two (2) Executive Counselors shall occur in odd numbered years.
- C. Elected officers may serve a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms in the same position. Upon completion of the second consecutive term of office, a person must wait for a period of at least one full term before running again for the same position.
- D. The Executive Board will appoint a Nominations Committee consisting of at least two (2) members in good standing of the Division, along with an Executive Counselor appointed by the Division Chair, with approval of the Executive Board, who will Chair the Nominations Committee.
- E. The Nominations Committee will receive names for nominations to each office to be filled the following year. From these names, the Nominations Committee will select two (2) names to be included on the ballot for each office and write-ins will be allowed.
- F. The voting protocol for officer elections shall include the following provisions:
  1. The ballots will be distributed electronically to Division members in good standing.
  2. Division members in good standing have at least thirty (30) days to cast their ballots.



3. Ballots will be counted/votes verified, by the Chairs of the Communications Committee and the Nominations Committee. If either of these individuals have been nominated for office and are on the ballot, another member of the Executive Board will be appointed by the Division Chair to fulfill this role.
  4. The results of the vote will be reported to the Division Chair and Executive Board of the Division prior to the next Annual Division meeting.
  5. The results of the election will be announced in a timely fashion, typically in the Division newsletter, the Division website, and/or on the Division social media, and otherwise publicized as the Division Chair deems appropriate.
- G. Vacancies which occur during the term of office for the Vice-Chair, Secretary/Treasurer or Executive Counselor of the Division, shall be filled until the next election by appointment of the Chair and approved by a 2/3 vote of the Executive Board. A vacancy in the office of the Chair will be filled by the current Vice-Chair. Vacancies may be filled at any time, and shall be filled for the remainder of the term of office.
1. Interim officers shall not be prohibited from running for the vacant office.

## **IX. Division Policies**

- A. The Executive Board may establish policies for the Division with a majority vote of the Board.
- B. The Executive Committee may establish policies for the Division with a majority vote, but only on issues that cannot wait until the next full Board Meeting.

## **X. Public Policy Statements**

- A. The Division membership may not make public policy statements on behalf of the Division, nor may the Division Executive Board nor the Division Executive Committee.
- B. Public policy statements can be made by the Division, Executive Board, or Executive Committee. All public policy statements require the affirmative vote of three-quarters (3/4) of the Executive Board and the affirmative vote of three-quarters (3/4) of Division members in good standing who vote in the ballot concerning the public policy statement. Such an approved statement will carry the byline, Approved by the Division of Public Opinion and Policy of the American Society of Criminology.
- C. The voting protocol for public policy statements shall include the following provisions:

- a. The Executive Board will vote first concerning the public policy statement. If the statement receives an affirmative vote of three-quarters (3/4) of the Executive Board, the public policy statement will be presented to the Division members in good standing for a vote.
- b. The ballots will be distributed electronically to Division members in good standing.
- c. Division members in good standing have at least fifteen (15) days to cast their ballots.
- d. Ballots will be counted/votes verified, by the Chair of the Communications Committee. If the Chair of Communications Committee is unable to count the ballots/verify the votes, another member of the Executive Board will be appointed by the Division Chair to fulfill this role.
- e. The results of the vote will be reported to the Division Chair and Executive Board of the Division within two (2) of the closing of the ballots.
- f. If the public policy statement, after earning a three-quarters (3/4) affirmative vote of the Executive Board, earns the affirmative vote of three-quarters (3/4) of the Division membership, the public policy statement will be made on behalf of the Division and will carry the byline, Approved by the Division of Public Opinion and Policy of the American Society of Criminology.

## **XI. Amending the By-Laws**

- A. Proposed changes to the By-Laws may be:
  1. Submitted to the Constitution and By-Laws Committee by any Division member in good standing for review, or;
  2. Proposed to the Division Executive Board by the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, or;
  3. Proposed by a member of the Executive Board.
- B. At least a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Board in two (2) consecutive Executive Board meetings can amend the By-Laws.

- C. Approved changes in the By-Laws shall take effect immediately following approval.

## **XII. Amending the Constitution**

- A. Amendments may be proposed by any member of the Division (in writing and submitted to the Division Chair), by the Executive Board, or by the Constitutional and By-Laws Committee, but all such proposed amendments may only go forward as a qualified proposed amendment under one of the following four (4) conditions:
1. The proposed amendment receives the written support of one-fifth (1/5) of the Division's members in good standing;
  2. The proposed amendment is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Board;
  3. The proposed amendment comes from the Constitution and By-Laws Committee;
  4. The proposed amendment is introduced at the Division's Annual Meeting and receives at least a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Division's members in good standing who are present at the Division's Annual Business Meeting.
- B. A proposed amendment meeting any one of the requirements outlined in Paragraph A must be certified as a qualified amendment by at least a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Division Executive Board.
- C. A qualified amendment that has been certified by the Executive Board as outlined in Paragraph B, will be placed on a ballot and approved when it receives at least a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Division's members in good standing who vote in the said election.
1. The Division Chair will prepare the ballot and oversee the operational aspect of the vote, with assistance from the Chair of the Communications Committee and the Secretary/Treasurer.
  2. The qualified amendment shall be voted on utilizing electronic ballots.
  3. Division members in good standing have 14 days to cast their ballots.
  4. Ballots will be counted/votes verified, by at least two (2) Executive Board members, generally the Chair and the Vice-Chair.
  5. The results of the vote will be reported to the Chair and Executive Board of the prior to the next Annual Division meeting.

6. The results of the vote will be announced in a timely fashion, typically in the Division newsletter, on the Division website, and/or on the Division social media, and other media outlets as the Division Chair deems appropriate.
- D. An approved amendment shall take effect at the conclusion of the first Annual Meeting of the ASC following the Division vote on the amendment, or six (6) months after approved by the Division membership, whatever comes first.
  - E. Amendments are subject to the approval of the ASC Executive Board.