

THE BIOETHICS SOCIETY OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN (*BSEC*)

CONSTITUTION

Article 1: **NAME:**

The name of the Society shall be "The Bioethics Society of the English-Speaking Caribbean" (abbreviated "BSEC")

Article 2: **MISSION:**

To increase knowledge and understanding of bioethics through promoting and fostering deliberations across the English-speaking Caribbean, as well as through international collaboration, thereby making a significant contribution to development and implementation of bioethics in human and animal healthcare, research and policy-making.

Article 3: **OBJECTIVES:**

- 3.1 The Society's structure and activities shall reflect the theoretical, clinical, and policy approaches existing in the study and discussion of bioethics (including health care ethics, research ethics, professional ethics, and ethics in health policy).
- 3.2 The Society shall provide a forum for all interested professionals to exchange ideas and address problems in bioethics.
- 3.3 The Society shall promote the teaching of bioethics at all levels of undergraduate, post-graduate, and continuing education, and promote the development of institutional mechanisms for addressing ethical issues arising in all aspects of health.
- 3.4 The Society shall promote research and publication thereof, and provide ethics-based information for practicing professionals and the general public.
- 3.5 The business of the Society shall be conducted without the purpose of financial gain for its members, and any profit accruing to the Society shall be used in promoting its objectives.

Article 4: **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- 4.1 The Society shall be managed efficiently, democratically and transparently by an Executive Committee which shall be responsible to the general membership.
- 4.2 The Executive Committee shall derive its authority from the Constitution of the Society, and is charged with conducting the day-to-day business of the Society. Decisions made and other actions taken by the Executive Committee shall be reported to the Society's members at the Annual Business Meeting of the Society. All members of the Executive Committee shall be regular members of the Society.
- 4.3 The Executive Committee shall consist of:
 - President
 - Immediate Past-President
 - Vice President
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Web Site Coordinator
 - Up to 5 Regular Members (to be elected to represent the five regional groupings in the Caribbean (see below) where these may not have been represented by persons holding the positions of Immediate Past-President, President, Secretary, and Treasurer)

The regional grouping shall be geographical as follows:

<i>North:</i>	Bermuda, The Bahamas, The British Virgin Islands, Turks & Caicos Islands, The US Virgin Islands
<i>West:</i>	Belize, Jamaica, The Cayman Islands
<i>North-East:</i>	Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Montserrat, St Kitts & Nevis
<i>South-East:</i>	Dominica, St. Lucia, St Vincent & The Grenadines, Barbados
<i>South:</i>	Grenada, Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana

4.4 Terms of reference for members of the Executive Committee.

4.4.1 President

- Ensure that the Society meets all objectives and functions efficiently
- Develop annual plans for the Society; monitor progress
- Coordinate the various tasks of the Society
- Actively engage in increasing the awareness in the general public regarding the Society's activities
- Delegate responsibilities to co-opted members
- Interact regularly with other Societies / Organisations
- Set meeting agenda with Secretary
- Preside over all meetings of Executive Committee, and Annual Business Meeting
- Release all official correspondence
- Serve as an ex-officio member of any sub-committee

4.4.2 Immediate Past President

- Provide continuity of leadership and direction to new Executive Committee, affording a seamless transition of responsibilities and activities
- Shall be a non-voting member

4.4.3 Vice-President

- Assist the President in organizing the various activities of the Society
- Execute the tasks of the President in his/her absence
- In the event of resignation or death of the President nominate a new Vice President (with majority Executive Committee agreement)
- Coordinate publicity of the Society; strive to expand its membership
- Coordinate fund raising events along with Secretary

4.4.4 Secretary

- Maintain and update the list of members of the Society
- Coordinate fund raising events along with Vice President
- Internal publicity within the Society of the various issues raised; preparation of mailing lists, newsletters, etc.
- Coordinate the meetings of the Society; set up agenda with President; review and maintain the minutes of meetings
- Coordinate projects along with Project Coordinator (co-opted)

4.4.5 Treasurer

- Collect contributions from members and other sources
- Maintain accounts of the Society
- Make disbursements with President
- Update Executive Committee / Annual Business Meeting with the financial accounts of the Society
- Submit financial reports to auditors

4.4.6 Website Coordinator

- Update the Society's website / page regularly
- Make the Society's website professional and easy-to-use

4.4.7 Regional Representative (where these have not been included in any of the above positions)

Resource persons who interact with and represent the interests of members of the Society resident in one or more of the regional groupings

4.5 Terms of office for members of the Executive Committee:

- Terms of office for all members shall be for 2 years; a process of rotation shall begin after the 2nd year with Secretary and half of the members; President and Treasurer should be skipped over in the first rotation
- President and Treasurer: not more than 2 consecutive terms of 2 years
- Secretary and other Executive members: not more than 3 consecutive terms of 2 years (6 years)
- Provision of recall of any member of the Executive exists within the Executive Committee (majority vote) to guard against non-performance

4.6 Members of the Executive Committee shall be elected at the Annual Business Meeting of the Society relevant to the terms of their appointments. Election to positions on the Executive Committee shall require a majority of the votes of the total number of *bona fide* members present and voting *bona fide* members who submitted mail-ballot votes or voting submitted by electronic means, where the latter practice is in accordance with the Society's policies governing mail-ballot and electronic voting (to be developed).

Article 5: MEETINGS

5.1 The Society shall hold an annual meeting and any other meeting it so desires, at times and places to be decided by the Executive Committee. Preferably, the Executive Committee shall rotate the meeting site across the English-speaking Caribbean.

- 5.2 Notification of any meeting of the Society must be sent in writing or by electronic notification to all members of the Society at least two months in advance
- 5.3 Annually, a Business Meeting (ABM) and a Bioethics Forum shall be held. The Bioethics Forum shall provide the opportunity for the presentation of work related to the field of bioethics, the exchange of ideas, and the discussion of bioethical issues germane to the English-speaking Caribbean. The Society shall seek to publish a Newsletter at least annually, which may include articles in bioethics presented at its Annual Bioethics Forum
- 5.4 An Extraordinary Business Meeting (EBM) may be called by two-thirds majority of the voting members of the Society who are in good financial standing.
- 5.5 Where consensus has not been achieved, decisions at meetings shall be by majority vote, except where otherwise provided in this Constitution, and each member who is entitled to vote shall have one vote. However in the event of a tie, the President shall have a casting vote in addition to his or her original vote.
- 5.6 In furtherance to Article 3.2, members of the Society may engage in active communication about bioethical issues through email- or online-discussions throughout the year.

Article 6: AMENDMENTS

- 6.1 This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended by a majority of two-thirds of those voting members present at an Annual Business Meeting of the Society.
- 6.2 Amendments to the Constitution or By-laws must be proposed in writing to the Executive Committee by three *bona fide* members.
- 6.3 Proposed amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Society must be sent in writing to all members at least two months before the Annual Meeting at which the proposed amendments are to be considered and acted upon.

BY-LAWS

Article 7: MEMBERSHIP

- 7.1 The Society is primarily for persons who have or intend to have a significant involvement in the discussion, teaching, research, or clinical aspects of bioethics in the English-speaking Caribbean. New members of the Society shall be accepted subject to approval by the Executive Committee. Where deemed necessary, written recommendations for membership from 2 existing members of the Society may be requested. The categories of membership are:
- 7.1.1 **Regular:** Regular membership in the Society shall be available to any person who is a registered member of a health care profession, possess formal qualifications in fields related to ethics, law, religious studies, science, social science, or other interested professional person
- 7.1.2 **Contributing:** Contributing membership in the Society shall be available to any person who meets the qualifications for regular membership and is either an inmate in a penal institution; a senior citizen (65 years or older); a student regularly enrolled in a recognized tertiary level institution; an active volunteer with the Society; or unable to afford the dues required of regular members. Non voting.
- 7.1.3 **Benefactor:** A benefactor in the Society is any person who meets the qualifications for regular membership and who contributes an amount in excess of the dues required for regular members.
- 7.1.4 **Corporate/Organization:** Corporate or organization membership in the Society is available to any corporation or organization that meets the qualifications for regular membership. Non voting.
- 7.1.5 **Life:** Life membership shall be conferred on each person who meets the qualification for regular membership and makes a single contribution to the Society in an amount determined from time to time by the Executive Committee.
- 7.1.6 **Honorary:** Honorary membership in the Society may be recommended by the Executive Committee and conferred by 2/3 majority of the membership at the Annual Business Meeting of the Society on the basis of extraordinary and meritorious service to the Society over a period of years, or on the basis of some outstanding accomplishment in the area of bioethics. No dues are paid.
- 7.1.7 **Patron:** Patron of the Society may recommended by the Executive Committee and conferred by 2/3 majority of the membership at the Annual Business Meeting of the Society. The terms of reference of the patron are as follows:
- 7.1.7.1 The Patron shall actively support the mission and objectives of the Society.
- 7.1.7.2 No subscription fees are due.
- 7.1.7.3 The Patron shall be a non-voting member of the Society.

7.2 The Executive Committee may revoke the membership of any member of the Society who fails to pay the annual subscription fee to the Society (excess of two years), or for unethical professional or personal conduct.

Article 8: **SUBSCRIPTION FEES**

8.1 The Society's subscription fees shall be assessed annually; the amount proposed by the Executive Committee must be approved by its Members.

Article 9: **QUORUM FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

9.1 The quorum for Executive Committee meeting shall be 1/3 of membership, but should include the President (or Vice President) and 2 Regular members

9.2 The quorum for the Annual Business Meeting shall be met when the number of Regular, Benefactor or Honorary members in attendance exceeds the number of Executive Committee members (in including the President, or Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer).