

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

A. The Constitution of Lambda Iota Tau

I. NAME AND OBJECT

A. NAME

The name of the honor society is Lambda Iota Tau. These Greek letters stand for the motto of the society, **Logos Idean Telei**, "The word gives form to the idea."

B. OBJECT

The purpose of Lambda Iota Tau, a national association of local chapters, shall be the recognition and promotion of excellence in the study of literature, all languages.

II. MEMBERSHIP

A. LOCAL CHAPTERS

The affiliating unit is the local chapter. Each chapter shall bear its own Greek-letter identification.

B. CHARTERED CHAPTERS

1. Local chapters shall be established, maintained and reactivated only at colleges or universities that grant the baccalaureate or higher degrees and that are accredited by the appropriate regional agency and certain appropriate professional accrediting agencies.
2. The chapter shall be approved by the administration of its institution.
3. Before the date of formal installation, the chapter shall file with the executive secretary four copies of its chapter constitution and one copy of the current catalogue of courses of its institution.
4. Provisions of the chapter constitution may not be less than national membership requirements, but a chapter may, at its own discretion, require more literature credits and higher grade averages than the national minimum. If at any time subsequent to chartering the chapter amends its constitution so as to affect its membership requirements, a copy of the amendment shall be sent to the national board for approval or rejection.
5. A chapter seeking to be chartered by Lambda Iota Tau shall mail its petition and its accompanying paperwork to the Executive Secretary who will present the material to the National Board of Chapter Advisors. The Board will examine the objectives, standards, and governance of the petitioning chapter. A four-fifth affirmative vote

is necessary for the petitioning chapter to be approved to become a chartered chapter.

6. A chapter shall activate formally with an installation meeting held not later than four academic months from the date of the letter from the Executive Secretary of Lambda Iota Tau notifying it of its acceptance into the national society.
7. Should active student membership fall below two, the chapter shall be considered inactive until it can again meet the minimal required number of two members.
8. A chapter failing to pay dues to LIT, or to make an annual report of its activities, or to vote on a national ballot shall be placed on probation by majority vote of the national board.

C. NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

1. Undergraduate members shall
 - a) be literature majors or minors, all languages
 - b) have provided such evidence of superior scholarship in the study of literature as is satisfactory to the institution in which they are enrolled, to the national honor society of Lambda Iota Tau, and to the Association of College Honor Societies. ACHS By-laws require students to be in the upper 35 percent of their class in cumulative average.
 - c) be students enrolled in at least their fifth college semester, or seventh college term, or local equivalent;
 - d) have such faculty approval as the local chapter shall require;
 - e) present an initiation paper in such manner as the local chapter shall require, of a quality certified by the chapter adviser and on a literary topic (research or critical) or of creative nature (short story, essay, poem, drama);
 - f) be recognized as having national membership only when their names have been registered in the office of the national treasurer;
 - g) have paid through their chapter adviser current national dues within two months of the date of their initiation into the chapter, or shall have paid double that amount, in addition to the original dues, cumulatively, for each month beyond the original dues deadline;
2. Graduate members shall be those graduate students who have completed one semester/term with an A- average.
3. Alumni members shall be persons who have satisfied, as undergraduate or graduate students in residence and prior to their degrees, membership requirements listed above under II, C, 1 and who:
 - a) continue their membership in local chapters;
 - b) affiliate with the local chapter nearest them; or

- c) initiate a new chapter containing a minimum of five members.
4. Honorary members may be designated by each chapter from among persons who have distinguished themselves in literature through writing, teaching, or research. No chapter may initiate more than two honorary members in any one school year, and permission to initiate honorary members shall be obtained in each instance from the executive secretary and national board.

III. NATIONAL OFFICERS

A. ELECTIVE OFFICERS

Elective officers are the national executive secretary, board president, the national assistant executive secretary, five national chapter advisers comprising the national board; one of these five is to be elected by the board as their president.

B. NATIONAL BOARD OF CHAPTER ADVISERS

1. All chapters are classified as belonging to one of five geographical categories:
 - a. Northeast (Region I)
 - b. East Central (Region II)
 - c. Southeast (Region III)
 - d. Midwest Region (IV)
 - e. West (Region V)

Chapters on the boundaries of two of the above geographical categories will be assigned to one of the categories at the discretion of the executive secretary.

2. The National Board of Chapter Advisors will conduct its business at occasional regional meetings when finances allow all Board members and the elected officers to be present, or with all Board members and elected officers participating in a meeting through conference telephone or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time, and such participation shall constitute presence in person at the meeting. The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the meeting.

C. QUALIFICATIONS OF OFFICERS

All officers shall be members of the administration or faculty of an institution with a local chapter in good standing.

D. TERMS OF OFFICE

1. The regular elective term of office for the national executive secretary and national assistant executive secretary is four years.
2. The regular elective term of office for the members of the national board is four years.

E. INDEMNIFICATION

The Society shall have the power to indemnify any person who is or was a Board representative, officer, Executive Committee member, employee, or agent of the Association or who is or was serving at the request of the Society as a delegate, director, officer employee, or agent of another association, society, corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, to the full extent permitted by law.

The Society may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of such persons against any liability asserted against him or her and incurred by him or her in any such capacity or arising out of his or her status as such, whether or not the Society would have the power to indemnify him or her against any such liability. Such persons shall not be personally liable, for monetary damages for any action taken unless the person has breached or failed to perform the duties of the office and the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct, or recklessness.

Exception: The above shall not apply to the responsibility or liability of a person pursuant to any criminal statute or the liability for the payment of taxes pursuant to Federal, State or local law.

F. ELECTION PROCEDURE

1. Three months before the expiration of any term of elective office, the executive secretary shall notify the national board, who then shall nominate a slate of candidates for each vacancy.
2. Candidates for any office may also be nominated by any chapter with a second by another chapter, provided that at least one candidate for each office is nominated by the national board.
3. This slate shall be circularized and voted upon preferentially by local chapters within six weeks of nomination.
4. Each chapter in good standing shall have one vote.

G. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. The national executive secretary
 - a) conducts the national affairs of the society;
 - b) arranges for and presides at all national meetings;

- c) consults with the national board in all actions affecting the society as a whole;
 - d) assigns Greek-letter names to new chapters;
 - e) signs and provides distribution of membership certificates;
 - f) submits an annual report to the society;
 - g) appoints associate secretaries with the approval of the national board;
 - h) is responsible for the maintenance of national archives.
2. The national assistant executive secretary
- a) assists the national executive secretary;
 - b) presides at meetings in the absence of the executive secretary;
 - c) tallies the ballot in all national elections and submits the tally to the national board and executive secretary;
 - d) carries on the publicity for the national society.
3. The national board of chapter advisors
- a) provide a check on arbitrary actions by the executive secretary;
 - b) determine and initiate new policies within constitutional limitations;
 - c) ratify the appointment of associate secretaries;
 - d) correspond with and represent chapters in their geographical categories;
 - e) nominate candidates for all elective offices except their own and except as qualified, below, by bylaws;
 - f) submit annual and intermediate reports to the executive secretary and editor of the Newsletter;
 - g) determine international dues.
4. Replacement of officers
- a) Impeachment proceedings directed against any national elective officer may be initiated by any chapter seconded by any other three chapters, all active and in good standing. A majority vote of active chapters shall require the resignation of the impeached officer and a special election, conducted by the national board, to replace him or her.
 - b) In the event of the vacancy of an national officer caused by death or resignation, the vacancy shall be filled in the following manner:
 - 1) A vacancy in the executive secretaryship shall be filled by advancing the assistant executive secretary to the vacant office.
 - 2) A vacancy in the assistant executive secretaryship shall be filled by appointment by the executive secretary, to be ratified by a majority vote of the national board.

- 3) A vacancy in the national board of chapter advisers shall be filled by appointment by the executive secretary, to be ratified by both the remaining members of the national board.

All officers chosen in these manners shall serve for the unexpired terms of the officers they replace.

5. Associate secretaries

The executive secretary may appoint secretaries for the purpose of carrying out specific administrative or editorial assignments. These appointments shall be ratified by a majority vote of the national board.

IV. NATIONAL TREASURY

- A. The national treasury shall be conducted either by an associate secretary, or by the executive secretary himself/herself, at his/her own discretion, but only with the majority approval of the national board.

- B. The duties of the national treasurer (or of the executive secretary, acting also as national treasurer) shall be:

1. to notify chapter advisers or to see that they are notified, of all dues deadlines;
2. to receive all fees due to national treasury;
3. to maintain a roster of current and past members of each chapter;
4. to give an accurate list of numbers of members in good standing in each chapter to any national officer engaged in the pursuit of his duties, upon request;
5. to submit an annual audit of books at the end of the fiscal year to the national board, this audit to be issued to chapter advisers by such means as the executive secretary will determine;
6. to supply any officer of the national society at any time with a statement certified accurate by the executive secretary of the balance of money on hand, of past expenditures during the fiscal year, and of contracts of over \$25.00 to which the society has been committed, as well as with the name of the contracting party;
7. to issue membership certification to chapters only upon receipt of initial dues of new members;
8. to pay financial obligations of the society and otherwise disburse funds for the conduct of the society's business, such payments and disbursements to be made only upon explicit written authorization by the executive secretary or by the executive

secretary and/or the assistant executive secretary should the executive secretary be the treasurer.

V. HONORARY PRESIDENT

The national board of chapter advisers shall name some outstanding person in the field of literature, if possible someone who combines talents of both scholarship and creativity, to serve as honorary president of the society for five years.

VI. AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

This constitution may be amended by a majority vote of all balloting chapters reckoned active according to above provisions. Proposed amendments to the constitution shall be circulated at least one month before being voted upon.

VII. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the society in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this constitution and any special rules of order the society may adopt.

VIII. PERMANENT HEADQUARTERS

Permanent headquarters of the Society shall be at the institution of the Executive Secretary.

IX. DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS ON DISSOLUTION

Upon dissolution, all assets shall be used to discharge any obligations, and the funds remaining shall be distributed to one or more duly organized not-for-profit charitable, educational, scientific, or philanthropic organization[s] to be selected by the international board of chapter advisers.

B. The Bylaws of Lambda Iota Tau

The purpose of the following bylaws is to regulate the conduct of the chapters of Lambda Iota Tau and of the national officers toward one another and to provide, along with the national constitution which they supplement, a routine pattern for the conduct of national

business. These bylaws can be amended by a majority vote of the national board of chapter advisers.

I. THE CHARTERING OF CHAPTERS AND THEIR CONTINUING STATUS

- A. Chapters will be chartered according to the provisions specified by the national constitution, as further qualified by the following bylaws. The charters granted after the effective date of these bylaws will be granted only upon the recommendation of the executive secretary and national board chapter adviser for the geographical area in which the new chapter will be included, and after a majority vote of the national board.
- B. Newly chartered chapters will submit their initiation papers to the executive secretary for the first year after their chartering.
- C. Chapter charters may be suspended for a period as long as two years by the unanimous vote of the national board of chapter advisers, or at the request of the chapter adviser, certified by the immediate academic superior of the adviser.
 - 1. Suspension of charter may be suggested to any chapter by the national board of chapter advisers for any reasons that they deem to warrant such suspension.
 - 2. Suspension of charter may be requested by the chapter adviser because of an insufficient number of qualified students of literature to sustain the chapter at the required minimal membership of two.
 - 3. A chapter with suspended charter will be considered as inactive until it initiates at least two members and brings its chapter activity into conformity with the provisions of the national constitution and of these bylaws and with any stipulations that may be made by the national board of chapter advisers.
 - 4. In the event that a chapter is reinstated to active status after a probational period or temporary suspension of chapter charter, the national board of chapter advisers, by majority vote, may levy against the chapter a reinstatement fee.
 - 5. A charter suspended for a period of more than two years will automatically be revoked, and the chapter Greek-letter designation will be reassigned by the executive secretary.

- D. Chapter charters may be revoked, either at the request of the institution at which the chapter was chartered; by any of the automatic provisions for revocation stipulated in these bylaws; or by the three-quarters vote of the members of the national board of chapter advisers for any reasons that they deem necessary for the welfare of the society.
 - 1. In the event of automatic revocation of charter, the presiding officer of the college or university where the chapter was chartered will be notified of the revocation by the executive secretary.
 - 2. In the event of revocation of charter by action of the national board of chapter advisers, notification of such revocation will be made by formal letter from the executive secretary to the presiding officer of the college or university where the chapter was chartered.

II. THE CHAPTER ADVISER

- A. Communications from the chapter to the national executive secretary or associate secretaries or the national board of chapter advisers will be by the chapter adviser, who must have faculty status at the institution where the chapter is chartered.
- B. The chapter adviser will have such local powers in the chapter to enable the enforcement of the chapter's conformity with the requirements for individual membership, as specified by the national constitution. The chapter adviser will be held responsible for the maintenance of such minimal requirements.

III. THE CHAPTER IN ITS RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL OFFICERS AND OTHER CHAPTERS

- A. The normal line of communication from a chapter to the national headquarters will be from the chapter to the executive secretary, except in such instances where the correspondence is initiated by the executive secretary.
- B. Chapters are at liberty to correspond, through their chapter adviser, with other chapter advisers, especially in the arrangement of regional meetings or other matters.
- C. Chapters are encouraged to correspond with the executive secretary or national board of chapter advisers, forwarding their suggestions, recommendations, complaints, grievances, criticisms, thus enabling

the national board of chapter advisers to be sufficiently informed to formulate sound policy for the society.

- D. At any time, the executive secretary or the national board of chapters adviser may poll the chapters to secure counsel or necessary information for the executive secretary.

IV. MEMBERSHIP

A. Regular Membership

1. Each chapter should initiate at least two members and submit dues by November 15 of each year.
2. All members initiated who submit their dues in full to the treasurer through the chapter adviser are entitled to all the rights and privileges of membership in the society.

V. DUES AND EXPENSES

A. Dues

National dues will be determined by the national board of chapter advisers as necessary to defray the operating expenses of the society as these expenses are estimated by the national board or recommended to them by the executive secretary and/or national treasurer.

B. Expenses

National officers may receive monetary compensation for their services, as may be determined from time to time by the national board of chapter advisers, and may be granted money from the national treasury for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties or be reimbursed for such expenses. Generally, these expenses should be estimated in advance of their being contracted, and should have the prior sanction of the executive secretary and/or national board of chapter advisers.

Amended July 2004

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION FOR A CHAPTER OF LAMBDA IOTA TAU

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this organization is the (Blank) Chapter of Lambda Iota Tau, national honor society.

ARTICLE II

Object

The purpose of this organization should be the recognition and promotion of excellence in the study of literature, all languages.

ARTICLE III

Membership

- Section 1. To be in good standing with the national organization, this chapter shall have no fewer than two duly initiated members.
- Section 2. Members are majors or minors in literature, no matter in what language that literature may be written, who are in the upper thirty-five percent of their class in cumulative grade average, have attained at least a full B average in at least twelve semester credit hours or eighteen term hours of literature and all prerequisites thereto, are enrolled in at least their fifth college semester or seventh college term, and have presented an initiation paper on a literary topic or of a creative nature.
- Section 3. Graduate members shall be those graduate students who have completed one semester/term with an A- average.
- Section 4. Initiation into membership shall consist of or include that the candidate present an initiation paper in such manner as the local chapter shall require, of a quality certified by the chapter adviser and on a literary topic (scholarly or critical research) or of creative nature (short story, essay, poem, drama).

- Section 5. Honorary members shall be approved by the national board of chapter advisers of Lambda Iota Tau before membership is conferred. They shall pay no dues and shall have no vote.
- Section 6. Alumni members shall be alumni of any chapter of Lambda Iota Tau who desire to affiliate with this chapter. They shall have all the privileges and responsibilities of full membership.
- Section 7. (In the event that any additional tests for membership are desired--none are required by the National organization--they may be inserted here: written recommendation by a faculty member; presubmission of the initiation paper to a committee of the chapter, to the adviser, or to a committee of the faculty; or anything else of the nature.)

ARTICLE IV

Officers

- Section 1. The officers of this chapter shall be the president, the vice-president, the secretary, and the treasurer. (The last two could be combined).
- Section 2. Officers shall be elected annually near the end of the academic year or at the first fall meeting; they may be re-elected.
- Section 3. The duties of the president shall be to preside over meetings, to conduct the business of the society, and to appoint such committees as may be necessary for the conduct of business.
- Section 4. The duties of the vice-president shall be to preside over meetings in the absence of the president and to assist the president in any way possible. (This office could be omitted).
- Section 5. The duties of the secretary shall be to send out notices of the meetings, to keep the minutes of the meetings, and when called on by the adviser, to conduct necessary correspondence with the national headquarters, provided that any item of such correspondence bear the endorsement of the adviser.
- Section 6. The duties of the treasurer shall be to collect the dues of members, to keep the accounts of the chapter, and to transmit national dues to the national treasury, provided that the letter covering such dues bear the endorsement of the adviser.

Section 7. The adviser of this chapter shall be a member of the literature faculty of this institution, and shall be appointed by its president or by the department chair, or elected by the chapter members.

Section 8. The chapter adviser may be appointed either to an indefinite term or to a term of four years.

ARTICLE V

Meetings

Section 1. Meetings shall be held regularly during the academic year.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the adviser, by the president of the chapter, or by any two chapter members. All members must be notified at least two days in advance of special meetings.

Section 3. A majority of members present shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE VI

Dues

Section 1. National dues for each member shall be determined by the national board of chapter advisers of Lambda Iota Tau.

Section 2. Local dues for each member will be any amount deemed necessary for proper functioning of the local chapter.

Section 3. In the event of financial emergency or the chapter's adoption of a project which will cost more than the treasury holds, a special levy upon the membership may be assessed by a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting.

ARTICLE VII

Distribution of Assets

Upon dissolution, the assets of this chapter shall be forwarded to the treasurer at the national headquarters of Lambda Iota Tau, to be used by that society in a manner that will further the purposes for which this chapter was organized. (This clause is necessary to ensure that the chapter has tax-exempt status.)

ARTICLE VIII

Amendments

This constitution may be amended at a regular meeting by a majority of those present. (Or "by two thirds of those present.")