

The Constitution

- I. Name. Founded in 1937 by a group of Black scholars and educators as The Teachers of English in Negro Colleges, the name of this organization shall be the College Language Association, hereafter referred to as the “Association.”
- II. Mission. The Association promotes and cultivates the study of languages and literatures to improve higher education experiences for students and teachers at colleges and universities across the world. Our annual Convention and peer-reviewed academic journal, the *College Language Association Journal (CLAJ)*, support our commitments to literary excellence, inclusivity, and advocacy for scholarly research in and the teaching of Black literatures and cultures as necessary aspects of higher education.
- III. Membership.
 - 3.1. Any active or retired teacher of languages, literatures, or cultural studies in a college or university may become a regular member of this Association, with the right to vote or hold office, upon payment of the membership fee as set forth by the Executive Committee and may remain so by payment of the same each year. The membership includes subscription to the *CLA Journal*.
 - 3.2. Any active or retired teacher of languages, literatures, or cultural studies in a college or university may become a life member of the Association upon payment of life membership fees as set by the Executive Committee and approved by the Association.
 - 3.3. Any college or university student, undergraduate or graduate, may become a member of the Association, without the right to hold executive office but with all other rights and privileges, upon payment of the annual membership fee and may remain so by payment of the same each year.
 - 3.4. Any college or university represented by the membership and willing to support the work of the Association may become an Institutional Member upon the payment of the annual institutional membership fee as set by the Executive Committee and approved by the Association. Institutional members receive one journal subscription and one waiver of convention registration fees.
 - 3.5. Any active or retired secondary teacher of languages, literatures, or cultural studies may become an associate of this Association, without the right to vote or hold office but with all other rights and privileges, upon payment of the membership fee and may remain so by payment of the same each year.

- 3.6. Upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, distinguished writers, journalists, or educators in allied fields are eligible for honorary life membership by majority vote of the Association.
 - 3.7. Members of the Association are expected to adhere to the Association's "Affirmation of Core Communal Values and Expectations for Collegial and Respectful Behavior."
- IV. Officers. The officers of this Association shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, Membership Engagement Director, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, English Area Representative, World Languages Area Representative, and Editor of the *CLA Journal*. All officers must be current members of the Association and in good financial standing.
- V. Administration.
- 5.1. There shall be an Executive Committee composed of the officers of the Association and the *ex-officio* members of the Executive Committee.
 - 5.1.1 The Immediate Past President and the Public Relations Director are *ex-officio* members of the Executive Committee.
 - 5.1.2 To establish quorum for an Executive Committee meeting, two-thirds of the committee must be present.
 - 5.1.3 All members of the Executive Committee are voting members including *ex-officio* members of the committee.
 - 5.2. All officers of the Association, except where otherwise noted, shall be elected for a term of two years. All *ex-officio* members of the Executive Committee must be current members of the Association and in good financial standing.
 - 5.2.1 At the end of the two-year term of the President, the Vice President shall succeed to the presidency.
 - 5.2.2 At the end of the two-year term of the English Area Representative and World Languages Area Representative, they ascend in alternating election years to the position of Vice President. The elected representatives from the English and World Languages disciplines shall serve for no more than two consecutive terms.
 - 5.2.3 For the purpose of continuity, the Secretary and Treasurer shall serve longer terms, as determined by the Executive Committee.
 - 5.2.4 The Editor of the *CLA Journal* shall serve at the pleasure of the Executive Committee. The appointment of the Editor shall be reviewed every five years.

5.2.5 The Public Relations Director shall serve at the pleasure of the Executive Committee. The appointment of the Public Relations Director shall be reviewed every two years.

5.3 The Executive Committee shall recommend the policies of the Association and transact all other business delegated to it by the Association. It shall report its activities at the annual business meeting, and its policies shall be subject to the direction and approval of the Association.

5.4 The Association shall sponsor special projects, which shall be administered by a Director, to be appointed as needed by the Executive Committee.

VI. Convention.

6.1. The Association shall hold a convention in the spring of each year, preferably in April, at a place chosen with due regard to favoring the several geographical regions represented in the Association and subject to venue availability. The Executive Committee is empowered to establish the time and place for the convention.

6.2 The Program Committee, which plans the annual convention, is chaired by the Vice President and is composed of the English Area and World Languages Area Representatives, the Assistant Treasurer, and the Public Relations Director.

6.3. One must be a current member of the Association to propose a convention presentation. Presenters at the convention must be current financial members and must pay the convention registration fee.

6.4. All members in good standing are entitled to attend all business and committee meetings in accordance with the type of membership status held. To attend other convention events, such as the banquet and sessions, members must pay the convention registration fee.

6.5 The Association may invite as participants in discussions high school teachers of languages, literatures, and cultural studies within the area of the convention and all students in the host college.

6.6. To transact business, two-thirds of members attending the convention shall constitute a quorum for an Association business meeting.

VII. Dissolution. Upon dissolution, the Association shall, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all of the liabilities of the Association, dispose of all assets of the Association exclusively for the purposes of the Association in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable or

education purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Executive Committee shall determine. No part of the net earnings of the Association shall inure to the benefit of, or to be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the Association shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the Constitution of the Association.

- VIII. Amendments. This Constitution shall be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at regular business meetings during any convention provided the proposed amendments have been disseminated to all members one month prior to the meeting.

The Bylaws

I. The Officers.

- 1.1. All officers, except the Editor of the *CLA Journal*, shall be elected at the convention by majority vote. In the event that a majority is not reached in an election of more than two candidates, a runoff must take place between the top two vote recipients until said majority is reached.
- 1.2. All officers shall hold offices until their successors have been chosen. Newly elected officers are expected to attend the post-convention Executive Committee meeting and will assume their roles at the next monthly meeting. All records and Association officer accounts should be transitioned to successors within seven business days.
- 1.3. The President shall lead the Association, preside at all official business meetings of the Association and of the Executive Committee, and appoint committees with the advice of the Executive Committee. This officer shall deliver an address on some subject of general or professional interest to the members during the convention. This officer is able to bestow Presidential Awards.
- 1.4. The Vice President shall perform all the duties of the President in the absence of the latter, chair the Program Committee, and preside over the Association convention banquet.
- 1.5. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the Association, compile such minutes for distribution, maintain records of all financial reports, assist in preserving archives of the Association, and serve as Secretary of the Executive Committee. The Secretary shall present an annual written report for approval at the official business meeting of the Association during the convention.
- 1.6. The Membership Engagement Director shall chair the Membership Committee, serve as the Executive Committee liaison to the Standing Committee Chairs, and shall perform the duties of the Secretary in the absence of the latter.
- 1.7. The Editor of the *CLA Journal* shall chair the Editorial Board and Special Publications and shall be responsible for the publication of the *CLA Journal*. The Editor shall present an annual written report for approval at the official business meeting of the Association during the convention.
- 1.8. The Treasurer shall have custody of all funds of the Association, propose an annual budget, and pay all bills properly incurred by the Association. This officer shall present an annual report for approval at

the official business meeting of the Association during the convention.

- 1.9. The Assistant Treasurer shall perform all duties of the Treasurer in the absence of the latter. The Assistant Treasurer shall manage the database of members and shall organize the registration systems for the annual convention.
- 1.10. The English Area Representative and the World Languages Area Representative, in consultation with the Program Committee Chair, shall help craft the call for papers for the annual convention, review proposals submitted for their respective areas to ensure they adhere to the peer-review process and align with the standards and mission of the Association, organize individual papers into sessions around the convention theme, and develop the convention program.
- 1.11. The Immediate Past President shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the Executive Committee.
- 1.12. The Public Relations Director is an *ex officio* member of the Executive Committee. The Public Relations Director shall assist in ensuring strong relationships with the general public and membership in addition to raising awareness and promoting the organization.

II. The Executive Committee.

- 2.1. The Executive Committee shall have the authority to fill temporarily any vacancy occurring among the officers of the Association until a successor can be regularly elected at the annual convention.
- 2.2. The Executive Committee shall meet in the Fall to conduct the Association's business and to solidify convention plans, preferably at the site of the next convention, or if that is not possible, at a place so designated by the President. The Executive Committee also shall hold pre- and post-convention meetings at the site of the convention for the purpose of conducting the Association's business. Virtual monthly meetings shall be scheduled to expedite the transaction of such business as determined by the Executive Committee.
- 2.3. The Executive Committee shall oversee the negotiation, signing, and implementation of all Association-related contracts. Upon the approval of the committee, all contracts and financial documents shall require two Executive Committee signatures.

III. Select Committees.

- 3.1. Select committees shall be administered by the Executive Committee.
- 3.2. The **Program Committee** shall be composed of the Vice President (Chair), the elected representatives from the English and World

Languages disciplines in the Association, the Assistant Treasurer, and the Public Relations Director.

- 3.3. **The Editorial Board**, together with the Editor, Associate Editor, Assistant Editor, Managing Editor, and Book Review Editor, shall be comprised of six to eight Advisory Editors drawn from the membership of the Association, representing both English and the World Languages, and appointed to staggered five-year terms with the prior approval of the Executive Committee. No Advisory Editor may serve more than two consecutive five-year terms. The Editor is authorized to appoint and remove for cause any member of the Editorial Board with the approval of the Executive Committee. The Editorial Board shall make a recommendation to the Awards Committee on recipients of the Darwin T. Turner Best Essay Award.

IV. Standing Committees.

- 4.1 Standing committees shall advance the mission of the Association and shall have responsibilities to conceive and monitor Association interests within their jurisdiction in consultation with the Executive Committee. The Chairs and members of the standing committees of the Association shall be financial members of the Association.
- 4.2. All standing committees shall make annual written reports for approval at the official business meeting of the Association.
- 4.3 Except as otherwise indicated, standing committees shall establish a regular rotation of chairpersons so that no chairperson serves more than three consecutive two-year terms.
- 4.4 Defunct Standing Committees may be dissolved by majority vote at the annual business meeting following the recommendation of the Executive Committee.
- 4.5. The **Committee on Archives** shall preserve and promote the records of the Association and solicit pertinent materials and artifacts from members for deposit in the repository that reflect their contribution to the Association. Members of this committee shall be drawn from among the general membership. The Chair shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee.
- 4.6. The **Committee on Awards** shall select the Scholarship Award recipients from among scholarly and creative works in languages, literatures, and cultural studies by the members of the Association. This committee also shall select the Service Award recipients who have demonstrated outstanding commitments to the Association and to the academic community. . The Committee on Awards also selects

the Daryl Dance Award recipient in alternate years. The five members of this committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee from among the general membership to staggered terms of no more than five years, making sure that the English and World Languages disciplines are represented. The Chair of the Committee on Awards shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee.

- 4.7 The **Committee on Black Studies** shall promote research and scholarly publication among members of the Association as well as among interested students, emphasizing both African and African American Studies and embracing trends and projects in related areas. The members of this committee shall be drawn from among the general membership of the Association and the committee members shall elect their own chair, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.
- 4.8 The **Committee on CLA and Historically Black Colleges** shall seek ways of improving communications and strengthening relationships among CLA members at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and further conduct joint projects and insure the exposure of students and faculty to the Association, its ideals, and its offerings. The membership shall be drawn from among the general membership of the Association and the committee members shall elect their own chair from among those actively employed at a historically Black institution, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.
- 4.9 The **Committee on CLA and Historically White Colleges** shall promote the Association as an academic resource to faculty at historically white colleges, promote the Association to graduate students in the disciplines of languages, literatures, and cultural studies at historically white colleges, promote the teaching of literatures of the African diaspora at historically white colleges, increase the representation of Black faculty in language and literature departments of historically white colleges, and promote the status of African American literature as part of the literary canon. The membership shall be drawn from among the general membership of the Association and the committee members shall elect their own chair from among those actively employed at a historically white institution, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.
- 4.10 The **Committee on the Constitution** shall receive from members and present to the Association all proposed amendments to the

Constitution. The committee shall review annually the Association's Constitution and Bylaws to ensure that the procedures of the Association are consistent with practice. The membership shall be drawn from among the general membership. The Chair shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee.

- 4.11 The **Committee on Creative Writing** shall encourage and promote creative writing among members of the Association and among students in the institutions in which members are employed. . The Committee shall make a recommendation to the Awards Committee on recipients of the Margaret Walker Prizes in Creative Writing. The membership shall be drawn from among the general membership of the Association. The Chair shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee.
- 4.12 The **Committee on Curriculum: English** shall sponsor studies of college curricula in languages and literature, offer constructive criticism of existing curricula, strive to enhance the work of teachers-in-training and teachers-in-service, and call to the attention of the Association noteworthy curricula experiences in the field of English. The members shall be drawn from among the general membership. The Chair shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee.
- 4.13 The **Committee on Curriculum: World Languages** shall sponsor studies of college curricula in languages and literature, offer constructive criticism of existing curricula, strive to enhance the work of teachers-in-training and teachers-in-service, and call the attention of the Association to noteworthy curricula experiences in the fields of language and literature. The Committee shall make a recommendation to the Awards Committee on recipients of the Caroll Mills Young Study Abroad Scholarships. The members shall be drawn from among the general membership. The Chair shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee.
- 4.14 The **Committee on International Outreach and Exchange** shall promote linguistic diversity; translate the convention's annual call for papers into additional world languages; make available a team of translators for events; foster greater participation/attendance of international students, academics, writers/artists, and scholars to the annual convention; create a space of multilingual dialogue and exchange between Association members (individuals and

institutions); and promote and/or enhance the transnational, multicultural, and interdisciplinary scholarship between local/national and international members. The members of this committee shall be drawn from among the general membership of the Association and the committee members shall elect their own chair, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.

- 4.15 The **Committee on Membership** shall promote membership in the Association through regular recruitment activities and work to retain members by engaging and supporting them. The Membership Engagement Director serves as Chair of the Membership Committee. The committee members shall be drawn from among the general membership.
- 4.16 The **Committee on Nominations** shall solicit nominations for a slate of officers every two years to be recommended for election by the Association and prepare biographical statements on the nominees to be included on the Association website at least one month prior to the annual meeting. Members of the Association may nominate other names from the floor at the annual business meeting of the Association. The members shall be drawn from among the general membership. The Chair shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee.
- 4.17 The **Committee on Research** shall compile an annual annotated list of scholarly publications and creative projects of members for publication in the *CLA Journal*. The Committee also shall maintain a space for promoting members' books on the Association website, envision and promote opportunities for collaborative research, and establish more collaborative relationships with relevant organizations related to the study of languages, literature, and culture. The members shall be drawn from among the general membership. The Chair shall be appointed by the President with approval of the Executive Committee.
- 4.18 The **Committee on Undergraduate and Graduate Students** shall recruit and retain undergraduate and graduate students to the Association, foster mentorship spaces and relationships for students with junior and senior faculty across specializations and geographies, create workshops on effective mentoring, lead professional development workshops, serve as a point of contact for undergraduate and graduate students with the Association, and discern the needs of and help facilitate access to resources for undergraduate and graduate students as they relate to the Association or the fields of literature,

languages, and cultural studies. The members of this committee shall be drawn from among the general membership of the Association and the committee members shall elect their own chair, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.

- V. Budget. The fiscal year shall extend from July 1 to June 30.
- VI. Membership Year. Membership is annual. For regular, retiree, student, and institutional members, dues cover 365 days from the purchase date of a new membership, leap years excepted. The Membership year shall extend from January 1 to December 31.
- VII. Amendments. These Bylaws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at the regular business meetings provided the proposed amendments have been disseminated to all members one month prior to the meeting.