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**SIGMA THETA TAU
INTERNATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY OF NURSING, INC.
BYLAWS**

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, Inc. (also referred to as Sigma or the society), and it shall have an official key and corporate seal. The organization is a nonprofit incorporated in the state of Indiana with headquarters located in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSES

The purposes of this society shall be to:

- Recognize superior achievement.
- Recognize the development of leadership qualities.
- Foster high professional standards.
- Encourage creative work.
- Strengthen commitment to the ideals and purposes of the profession.
- Provide support, including funding, to other organizations exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Assist and engage in any other activities which are permitted to be carried on by organizations exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERS

Section 1. Membership Categories

There shall be regular members and honorary members. Sigma does not discriminate. Candidates are qualified for membership so long as eligibility requirements are met.

Section 2. Regular Members

Regular members may be students in basic programs, in graduate programs, or be nurse leaders.

- A. Student member candidates are required to be enrolled in an institution of higher education where the chapter is located to be considered for membership in that chapter. If there is no chapter at the institution of higher education in which the student attends, student member candidates may be considered for membership in another chapter. Student candidates shall have demonstrated superior academic achievement, academic integrity, and professional leadership potential.
- B. Students in basic programs must be enrolled in an accredited baccalaureate or equivalent nursing degree program that leads to the first professional nursing

47 degree, have completed at least one-half of the required nursing curriculum, rank not
48 lower than the highest 35 percent of their class in scholarship, and have achieved
49 excellence according to standards approved by the society. Exceptions may be
50 made at the discretion of the chapter's governance committee following the
51 guidelines adopted by the Sigma board of directors.
52

53 C. Students in graduate programs must be enrolled in an accredited program of
54 graduate study in nursing such as master, post-master, doctoral, and post-doctoral;
55 have completed a minimum of one-quarter of the required graduate curriculum; and
56 have achieved excellence according to the standards approved by the society.
57 Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the chapter's governance committee
58 following the guidelines adopted by the Sigma board of directors.
59

60 D. A nurse leader who is a registered nurse, legally recognized to practice in their
61 country, with a minimum of a baccalaureate degree or the equivalent in any field,
62 and who has demonstrated achievement in nursing shall be eligible for membership.
63 Students in graduate programs who are registered nurses, are legally recognized to
64 practice in their country, and have a minimum of a baccalaureate degree or the
65 equivalent in any field shall be eligible to be considered as a nurse leader at any
66 point in the program. The nurse leader candidate may be selected for membership
67 by any chapter.
68

69 E. Active regular members shall have the right to vote and hold elective and appointive
70 office. Such members shall also receive official society publications, priority for
71 education programs, and priority for research funding. Active regular members may
72 hold membership in more than one chapter by remitting multiple chapter fees and
73 the society fee annually, and may transfer from one chapter to another.
74

75 Section 3. Honorary Members

76 An honorary member is a person who is not eligible for regular membership but who
77 has gained national or international recognition in the field of nursing or in any field
78 contributing to nursing. Any active member, through a chapter or the Sigma board of
79 directors, may nominate persons for honorary membership. Honorary membership is
80 awarded only by the Sigma board of directors. A vote of three-fourths of the Sigma
81 board of directors shall be necessary for election to honorary membership. Honorary
82 members shall be inducted and awarded the official key in locations and times decided
83 upon by the board, receive the society's publications, and be responsible for promoting
84 and supporting the purposes of the society. There shall be no induction or renewal fee
85 for an honorary member.
86

87 Section 4. Membership Fees

88 A. Each new member shall pay a society membership fee and a chapter induction fee
89 as described in the chapter bylaws, covering the cost of induction and active
90 membership for one, twelve-month period. For subsequent years, each member
91 shall pay an annual fee to maintain active member benefits.
92

- 93 B. Adjustments to the fee schedule shall be approved by the Sigma board of directors.
94 Fee schedule adjustments shall not occur more than once in a biennium and shall
95 not exceed the cumulative Consumer Price Index (CPI) percentage rate. Any
96 adjustments, accompanied by rationale, will be provided to membership sixty days in
97 advance of the effective date.
98

99 Section 5. Membership Inactivity and Revocation

- 100 A. Inactive members who have not paid annual chapter and international fees shall
101 become active at any time by paying current renewal fees. Members may also
102 formally request to discontinue membership.
103
104 B. Membership in the society may be revoked by the member's chapter for just cause
105 and after due process. Revocation shall require a three-fourths vote of those present
106 at a meeting of the chapter.
107
108 C. A member whose membership has been revoked may appeal to the Sigma board of
109 directors, whose decision shall be final.
110
111

112 **ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS**

113
114 Section 1. Positions

115 The elected officers of the society shall be: the president, the president-elect, the vice
116 president, the secretary, and the treasurer. Officers must be regular members of Sigma.

- 117 A. President – The president shall be the presiding officer and shall administer all
118 business as provided for by the bylaws.
119 B. Vice President – The vice president shall perform the duties of the president in the
120 president's absence.
121 C. Secretary – The secretary shall serve as the corporate secretary and fulfill duties as
122 authorized by the Sigma board of directors.
123 D. Treasurer – The treasurer shall serve as the corporate treasurer and fulfill duties as
124 authorized by the Sigma board of directors.
125

126 Section 2. Election and Terms of Office

- 127 A. Elections shall take place at biennial house of delegates meetings. A majority vote
128 shall elect officers. In the event of a tie, the election shall be determined by lot.
129 Members shall hold no more than one elected office at a time. Terms of office shall
130 begin at the close of the meeting at which the elections occur.
131
132 B. A member holding an elected position who has served more than half a term in that
133 position is considered to have served a full term. Terms shall be as follows:
134 • The president-elect shall be elected for a two-year term or until a successor is
135 elected and assumes office, after which shall succeed to a two-year term as
136 president.
137 • The vice president shall be elected for a two-year term or until a successor is
138 elected and assumes office. The vice president may serve a maximum of two

139 consecutive two-year terms in that position, after which they may not be
140 consecutively re-elected as an officer except as president-elect.
141 • The secretary and treasurer shall each be elected for a four-year term or until
142 their successors are elected and assume office. Terms shall be staggered so that
143 the secretary is elected in the same biennium as two non-officer directors and the
144 treasurer is elected in the same biennium as three non-officer directors. The
145 secretary and treasurer may serve a maximum of one four-year term, after which
146 they may not be consecutively re-elected as an officer except as president-elect.
147

148 **ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

149 **Section 1. Annual Meeting of Members**

- 150
- 151 A. Annual meetings of members shall be on a date and at a place set by the Sigma
152 board of directors. Active members shall receive notice of annual meetings through
153 Sigma publications and may register their intent to attend. The agenda of the annual
154 meeting shall include the presentation of annual reports and other appropriate items.
155
- 156 B. In odd-numbered years, the annual meeting of the members is also the reporting
157 session of the house of delegates. In even-numbered years, the annual meeting is
158 the reporting session of the Sigma board of directors and committee chairs' meeting.
159
- 160

161 **ARTICLE VI – SIGMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

162 **Section 1. Composition**

163 The Sigma board of directors shall be composed of the officer directors, five non-
164 officer directors, and the regional chapters coordinating committee chair. The chief
165 executive officer shall serve in a nonvoting ex-officio capacity. Four of the five officers
166 and three of the remaining six non-officer directors shall constitute a quorum.
167

168 **Section 2. Authority**

169 The Sigma board of directors shall hold the executive and administrative powers of
170 Sigma and shall manage its property, business, and corporate affairs. The board shall
171 also supervise and manage Sigma, its committees, and publications. In addition, the
172 board shall appoint a chief executive officer and adopt such policies for the conduct of
173 its business as shall be deemed advisable.
174

175 **Section 3. Duties and Responsibilities**

176 The Sigma board of directors shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- 177 • Exercise fiduciary responsibilities including adopting a budget, setting the
178 appropriate bonding level, and selecting the auditor;
- 179 • Adopt rules and regulations to govern its own actions;
- 180 • Review and approve new chapter chartering applications and revoke charters
181 as necessary;
- 182 • Provide criteria for affiliate relationships and grant affiliation to legally organized
183
- 184

- 185 groups;
- 186 • Transact necessary business of this society between meetings of the house of
- 187 delegates;
- 188 • Investigate and recommend to the house of delegates any matter pertaining to
- 189 the welfare of this society; and
- 190 • Submit an annual report to chapters and a biennial report to the house of
- 191 delegates.

192

193 Section 4. Executive Committee

194 There shall be an executive committee composed of the officers of the society. It shall

195 conduct essential business of the organization in the interim between board meetings

196 and as authorized by the board.

197

198 Section 5. Director Terms and Limits

199 A. The five non-officer directors shall be elected by plurality vote of the house of

200 delegates for a four-year term or until their successors are elected and assume

201 office. In the event of a tie, the election shall be determined by lot. Members shall

202 hold no more than one elected office at a time. Terms shall be staggered so that

203 three non-officer directors are elected in one biennium and two non-officer directors

204 in the following biennium.

205

206 B. Non-officer directors shall serve a maximum of one term on the board, except in the

207 case of a non-officer director who is elected president-elect.

208

209 C. The regional chapters coordinating committee chair shall be elected each biennium

210 for a two-year term and may not serve more than two consecutive terms on the

211 board in that position.

212

213 Section 6. Board Meetings

214 The expenses for board members who attend meetings of the house of delegates or of

215 the board shall be paid by the society.

216

217 Section 7. Vacancy and Removal

218 A. In the event of a vacancy in the office of president, the vice president shall fill the

219 vacancy until the president-elect succeeds to the office of president.

220

221 B. A vacancy in any other board position shall be filled by the Sigma board of directors;

222 such appointment shall terminate at the following meeting of the house of delegates.

223

224 C. A member of the Sigma board of directors may be removed by a three-fourths vote

225 of the board for behavior that, as determined by the board, is not consistent with the

226 mission, values, or expectations of the society, provided that notice of the intent to

227 take such action is given to all board members at least thirty days in advance of the

228 regular or special meeting at which the motion to remove is introduced. Such board

229 member shall have the right to be present and to speak on their behalf, but shall not

230 be allowed to be present during deliberation nor to vote. Voting shall be by ballot,

231 which may be delivered electronically if a face-to-face meeting is not possible.

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ARTICLE VII – HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Section 1. Composition

The house of delegates shall be composed of two delegates from each chapter, the members of the Sigma board of directors, chairs of standing committees, the regional chapters coordinators, and the past presidents of the society. The term of the delegates shall be from the opening of the convention for which the delegate is selected to serve until the opening of the next convention.

Section 2. Authority

The legislative and judicial powers of the society shall be vested in the house of delegates. As such, the house shall have the authority to nominate and elect officers, directors, and other positions as allowed by these bylaws; amend the society's articles of incorporation and bylaws; levy special assessments by a three-fourths vote; receive the budget as approved by the board; and adopt such rules and regulations for the conduct of its proceedings as may be determined by a two-thirds vote of the house of delegates at the biennial convention.

Section 3. Meetings

- A. The house of delegates shall meet at the biennial convention and as determined by the Sigma board of directors. A quorum shall consist of four officers, three non-officer directors, and delegates from three-fourths of the chapters.
- B. The call to the convention shall be sent at least one month prior to the meeting date to all delegates.
- C. Each delegate shall have the right to cast one vote, except that if a chapter has only one delegate attending, that delegate shall have two votes.
- D. Chapter delegates may also vote electronically on the society's articles of incorporation under procedures and time limitations determined by the board.
- E. If election voting cannot occur during the scheduled house of delegates due to emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances, chapter delegates may vote electronically.

ARTICLE VIII – REGIONS AND CHAPTERS

Section 1. Regions

Sigma shall be organized into regions composed of chapters. Each region shall have a regional chapters coordinating committee chaired by the elected regional chapters

277 coordinator and composed of at least three members.

278

279 Section 2. Chapters

280 A. A chapter is an organized division of nurse scholars and leaders that has been
281 granted a charter in accordance with requirements and procedures. A chapter may
282 be established in an educational unit that is an integral part of an institution of higher
283 education and that grants a basic degree, which leads to the first professional
284 nursing degree and/or a graduate nursing degree. The basic or graduate degree
285 nursing program within the institution of higher education shall be accredited by a
286 recognized accrediting body. In the event there is no nursing education accreditation
287 system in place in the potential chapter's country, evidence confirming the program's
288 quality shall be provided by the developing chapter. All chapters shall have regular
289 members.

290

291 B. Chapters shall function as independent, autonomous organizations affiliated with
292 Sigma. Chapters determine the amounts of their fees and assessments. Chapters
293 have control of their income, expenses, contracts, accounting systems, and internal
294 reports. Each chapter shall function under bylaws, policies, and regulations that are
295 not in conflict with Sigma bylaws, policies, and regulations.

296

297 C. A chapter may be chartered from one institution of higher education, or may be
298 chartered as an at-large chapter. At-large chapters shall be composed of nurse
299 leaders and scholars from two or more institutions of higher education, or from
300 institutions of higher education and practice settings.

301

302 D. Chapter charters may be amended to separate or combine chapters or, if an
303 institution of higher education no longer offers an eligible degree, create an alumni
304 chapter. However, active members in an alumni chapter must agree to meet all of
305 the requirements for a chapter with the exception of inducting members a minimum
306 of one time annually. A chapter may also amend its charter to add one or more
307 institutions of higher education or practice settings.

308

309 E. Additional chapter models may also be considered by the Sigma board of directors,
310 who shall be responsible for the establishment of the guidelines and procedures for
311 chapter chartering.

312

313 F. Chapters shall fulfill the following requirements:

314

- 314 • Support the purposes of this society;
- 315 • Select and induct eligible members a minimum of one time annually;
- 316 • Observe the provisions of these bylaws, comply with the society's policies and
317 regulations, and meet all financial obligations;
- 318 • Participate in the biennial convention house of delegates and other business
319 brought forth during the term;
- 320 • File required reports according to established guidelines;
- 321 • Elect at minimum a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and counselor.
322 Duties and terms of office shall be outlined in the chapter bylaws;

- 323 • Establish the following standing committees: governance (appointed or elected)
- 324 and leadership succession (elected);
- 325 • Conduct at least one business meeting each year (may be held by electronic
- 326 means) that includes the presentation of annual reports and a financial report;
- 327 and
- 328 • Sponsor at least two events or programs annually, supporting the purposes and
- 329 goals of the society.

330
331 G. Each chapter shall pay an annual fee based on the number of regular active
332 members in the chapter for the prior membership year ending 30 June. For new
333 chapters, fees shall be collected during the year following the granting of a charter.
334

335 H. Sigma shall pay for the charter, coat-of-arms, book in which the membership roster
336 is recorded, and installing officer's expenses at the time of the chartering of the new
337 chapter. The chapter shall pay a chartering fee plus the cost of inscribing the names
338 on the charter.
339

340 Section 3. Chapter Probation, Revocation, and Dissolution

341 A. A chapter may be placed on probation by the Sigma board of directors for failure to
342 comply with these bylaws or policies and regulations. The board shall also remove
343 from probation or revoke the charter of a chapter in accordance with procedures
344 adopted by the board.
345

346 B. Upon revocation of a charter or dissolution of a chapter, all cash and other assets
347 remaining after the chapter's outstanding debts are paid may be returned to the
348 Sigma Foundation for Nursing or any other appropriate non-profit organization
349 approved by the chapter board of directors and as allowed by law. Should a majority
350 of the dissolved chapter's members transfer to the same chapter, remaining funds
351 may be contributed to that chapter. The chapter's charter and coat-of-arms shall be
352 returned to headquarters. All members of the chapter have the opportunity to
353 transfer their membership to a chapter of their choice.
354

355 C. A chapter may be reinstated following revocation of its charter by meeting all the
356 requirements of a newly organizing chapter. If approved, the chapter shall receive a
357 new charter but retain its original name.
358

359 D. Any chapter may vote to dissolve itself.
360
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362 **ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES**

363
364 Section 1. Standing and Special Committees

365 A. The standing committees shall be the governance committee, leadership succession
366 committee, and regional chapters coordinating committee. The president and chief
367 executive officer shall be non-voting, ex-officio members of all committees except
368 the leadership succession committee. Committee members shall be elected by

369 plurality vote by the house of delegates. In the event of a tie, the election shall be
370 determined by lot. Members shall hold no more than one elected office at a time. An
371 elected committee member may not serve longer than six consecutive years on that
372 committee, unless otherwise provided in these bylaws.

373
374 B. A majority of the members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

375
376 C. Standing committee chairs shall report to the Sigma board of directors as requested
377 by the board. Committees shall provide consultation to chapters in congruence with
378 the mission of the committee.

379
380 D. Authorized expenses of standing and special committees, board advisory councils,
381 and task forces shall be reimbursed by the society.

382
383 E. Vacancies occurring on a committee between biennial meetings of the house shall be
384 filled by the Sigma board of directors, terminating at the next meeting of the house.

385 386 Section 2. Governance Committee

387 The governance committee shall be composed of a minimum of seven elected
388 members including a chair appointed by the president. Two members of the governance
389 committee shall be elected each biennium for a four-year term, and three members of
390 the governance committee shall be elected each biennium for a two-year term. The
391 governance committee shall oversee bylaws compliance, make recommendations for
392 bylaws changes, and oversee member and chapter eligibility issues.

393 394 Section 3. Leadership Succession Committee

395 The leadership succession committee shall be composed of ten elected members,
396 including a chair appointed by the president. Three members of the leadership
397 succession committee shall be elected each biennium for a four-year term, and four
398 members of the leadership succession committee shall be elected each biennium for a
399 two-year term. The leadership succession committee shall develop members in
400 organizational leadership roles across the span of their careers, and mentor members
401 to assume organizational board and officer positions at all levels of organizations. The
402 leadership succession committee shall select nominees for elected positions and
403 prepare the ballot, which shall be sent to the board at least two months prior to the
404 biennial meeting, and to the chapters at least one month prior to the biennial meeting.
405 Leadership succession committee members shall be ineligible for any elected office on
406 the ballot.

407 408 Section 4. Regional Chapters Coordinating Committee

409 The regional chapters coordinating committee shall be composed of an elected chair
410 and a regional chapter coordinator from each region, elected by each region's delegates
411 for a two-year term. Such coordinators shall also serve as the chair of the regional
412 committee for that region. The regional chapters coordinating committee shall facilitate
413 the work of the chapter leaders by advancing initiatives that meet the needs of the
414 chapters and fulfill the mission of the society. A member of the regional chapters

415 coordinating committee may serve up to six consecutive years as a member of the
416 committee or up to four consecutive years and an additional four consecutive years as
417 regional chapters coordinating committee chair.
418

419 Section 5. Removing an Elected Standing Committee Member

420 An elected standing committee member who demonstrates behavior, as determined by
421 the Sigma board of directors, that is not consistent with the mission, values, or
422 expectations of the honor society may be removed by a three-fourths vote of the
423 members of the board, provided that notice of the intent to take such action is given to
424 the elected standing committee member and all board members at least thirty days in
425 advance of the regular or special meeting at which the motion to remove is introduced.
426 Such elected standing committee member shall have the right to be present and to
427 speak on their behalf, but shall not be allowed to be present during deliberation. Voting
428 shall be by ballot, which may be delivered electronically if a face-to-face meeting is not
429 possible.
430

431 Section 6. Advisory Councils and Task Forces

- 432 A. Board advisory councils shall be appointed by the Sigma board for a term through
433 the close of the biennial convention to inform the board of current and future issues,
434 direction, and priorities of the society. Such advisory councils may be reappointed.
435
- 436 B. Task forces shall be appointed by the Sigma board, standing committees, board
437 advisory councils, or staff to complete an assigned task within a specified time frame.
438 Members of task forces shall be appointed to bring expertise, interest, and
439 commitment to the assigned task.
440

441 **ARTICLE X – ADMINISTRATIVE**

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443 Section 1. Fiscal Year

444 The fiscal year shall be 1 July through 30 June.
445

446 Section 2. Indemnification

447 Officers, directors, and employees shall be indemnified by the society for any and all
448 civil liabilities for conducting their official duties, except in circumstances and cases of
449 conducting their duties in bad faith.
450

451 Section 3. Dissolution

452 A resolution for the dissolution of the society shall be signed by a majority of active
453 chapters entitled to vote and shall be presented at a regular meeting of the Sigma board
454 of directors. The Sigma board shall then call a special meeting of the house of
455 delegates for the purposes of considering and acting upon such resolution. If dissolution
456 is approved by three-fourths of those delegates present and voting, the board shall take
457 the necessary steps to conclude the affairs of the society as required by law. After
458 payment or making provision for payment of all debts and liabilities incurred by the
459 society, any remaining assets shall be disbursed to the American Nurses Foundation or
460 another appropriate organization operated for educational or scientific purposes. The

461 recipient organization or organizations shall at the time qualify as an exempt
462 organization as required by law.

463
464 Section 4. Official Publications

465 The Sigma board of directors shall authorize publication of an official journal and other
466 publications as it deems appropriate according to policies and procedures established
467 by the board.

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469

470 **ARTICLE XI – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

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472 The rules contained in the most recently published edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*
473 *Newly Revised* shall govern the society in all cases to which they are applicable and in
474 which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws or special rules of order the society
475 may adopt.

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478 **ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS**

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Section 1. Amendments to the Bylaws

481 A. These bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the house of delegates by a
482 three-fourths vote, provided that all proposed amendments have been received by
483 the secretary two months preceding the meeting, and that the proposed
484 amendments shall be appended to the call to the meeting of the house of delegates.
485 If such notice is not provided, these bylaws may be amended only by unanimous
486 vote of the house of delegates.

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488

B. Amendments approved by the house of delegates shall be subject to ratification by
489 the Sigma board of directors.

490
491

C. Amendments to these bylaws approved by the house of delegates or editorial
492 changes approved by the Sigma board of directors that are also applicable to the
493 chapters shall be incorporated into the chapter bylaws.