

# **RHODE ISLAND SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING ASSOCIATION**

## **CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS – December 2010**

Whereas, we are members of the professions of Speech-Language Pathology, Audiology, and related disciplines;

Whereas, we desire to extend and to improve our understanding of the scientific and clinical nature of the field of communication disorders;

We propose to form a non-profit corporation, the intent of which shall be to stimulate interest in the diagnosis and rehabilitation of people with communication disorders. We will adhere to the Code of Ethics of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

### **VISION**

Enhancing the quality of life for individuals with communication and related disorders

### **MISSION**

The Mission of the RISHA is to support the professions of speech-language pathology and audiology through advocacy, public awareness, and professional development on behalf of its members and the individuals they serve.

### **Article I - Name**

This organization shall be known as the Rhode Island Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

### **Article II - Objectives**

The objectives of the Association shall be the following:

1. To disseminate information regarding the nature and causes of communication disorders;
2. To encourage cooperation among specialists in the field of communication disorders;
3. To stimulate public interest in and support of the rehabilitation of persons with communication disorders;
4. To promote communication between the Rhode Island Speech-Language-Hearing Association (RISHA) and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), the Rhode Island Academy of Audiology, the faculty in the departments of Communication Disorders at R.I. colleges and universities, and the local chapters of the National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association and other related professional organizations.
5. To increase RISHA's role in promoting laws and regulations in this state that will enhance or uphold our profession to the national standards.

### **Article III - Membership**

#### **Section 1. Classes of Membership**

1. Active Members must hold: 1) a graduate degree with major emphasis in speech-language pathology, audiology, or speech, language, or hearing science; or 2) a graduate degree and present evidence of active research, interest, and performance in the field of human communication. Persons already holding certification in Rhode Island by the Department of Education through the grandfather clause, which exempted the Masters Degree requirement, will also be eligible to be active members. Each active member shall possess one vote in the Association.
2. Associate Members shall be those persons who have personal or professional interest in the field of communications disorders.
3. Student Members must be actively enrolled in a program of speech-language pathology, audiology, or related fields.
4. Life Members must have twenty-five years of active membership and be 65 years of age.

#### **Section 2. Rights and Privileges of Membership**

All classes of membership shall be entitled to attend the meetings of the Association. Only active members and life members shall hold office and be eligible to vote in the election of officers. All dues-paying members and life members shall receive the publications of the Association.

#### **Section 3. Nondiscrimination**

The Association shall not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, religion, age, gender, gender identification, sex, sexual orientation, or handicapping condition. All programs and activities of RISHA shall be conducted in furtherance of this policy.

## **Article IV – Executive Board**

### **Section 1. Membership**

The Executive Board shall be comprised of the following members:

1. Elected officers: President, President-Elect, Immediate Past President, Treasurer,
2. Appointed positions: Conference Chair, Continuing Education Administrator, Governmental Relations Chair, Medical Facilities Chair, Membership Chair, and Schools Chair.
3. ASHA delegates to the Legislative Council: Audiology and Speech-Language Pathologist
4. Delegates from Rhode Island university and college chapters of the National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association.
5. Other appointees of the President
6. Office Manager (not a member of the Board).

### **Section 2. Privileges and Duties**

The Executive Board shall manage the affairs of the Association.

Each member of the Executive Board, except student representatives, shall be eligible to vote on all motions that come before the board, in accordance with *Roberts Rules of Order*.

### **Section 3. Attendance**

All officers must attend 75% of the Executive Board meetings in order to run for election the following year. Additional absences may be excused at the discretion of the President without jeopardizing the officer's eligibility for election.

A majority of all Executive Board members shall constitute a quorum.

## **Article V – Duties of officers and committees**

### **Section 1. President**

The President shall perform the following duties:

1. Preside over all meetings of the Association and the Executive Board for a term of two years or until his/her successor is elected
2. Adhere to *Robert's Rules of Order*
3. Call the annual meeting and other meetings of the Association
4. Select active members to the Board to represent any of the following interest groups: Governmental Affairs, School-based Practice, Private Practice, Medical/Clinical-based Practice, Audiology, and students.
5. Appoint a Nominating Committee
6. Be an ex-officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee
7. Appoint to the Executive Board any active member of his/her choice to fill other special committees as deemed necessary to carry out the work of RISHA
8. Designate a member to represent RISHA at other organizations' meetings and/or functions, and charge him/her to report to the Executive Board following each such event.
9. Announce the appointed Executive Board members at the first meeting of the calendar year.

### **Section 2. President-Elect**

The President-Elect shall serve on the Executive Board during the year preceding his/her term as President. The term of the President-Elect will occur in the even years (2000, 2002, etc.) so that the one-year term of office will occur in the second year

of the President's tenure. The President-Elect shall serve in such a manner as the President shall direct in order to become familiar with the policies and procedures of the Association.

### **Section 3. Immediate Past President**

The Immediate Past-President shall serve on the Executive Board for one year in such a manner as the President shall direct.

### **Section 4. Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall collect and bank all dues, fees, and other income. The Treasurer shall disperse funds on order of the Association. The Treasurer shall make regular reports as well as an annual report on the financial status of RISHA. It shall be the Treasurer's responsibility to have prepared the necessary tax returns for Federal and State governments. The Treasurer shall propose a yearly budget for approval by the Executive Board.

### **Section 5. Membership Coordinator**

The Membership Coordinator shall maintain a current list of all members, solicit new members, and inform members of non-payment of dues.

### **Section 6. Program Committee**

The Program Committee shall consist of the Chair and at least two other active members, including the C.E. Administrator. It shall be the responsibility of the Program Committee Chair to establish a calendar of at least two educational activities in accordance with the direction of the Association and The Executive Board. The Program Committee Chair shall be responsible for the agenda of the Annual Meeting.

### **Section 7. C.E. Administrator**

The C.E. Administrator shall coordinate continuing education credit with ASHA for seminars and programs provided by RISHA and other professional organizations.

### **Section 8. Office Manager**

Assist the President with office work; act as liaison for website; assist with any RISHA mailings, assist Conference Chair(s), pick up mail at the post office; answer RISHA phone; assist Membership Chair with membership drive; assist CE administrator, documentation of service hours submitted to the President on a monthly basis, other duties agreed upon by both parties.

## **Article VI – Parliamentary Authority**

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Association in all cases where they are consistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the Association may adopt.

## **Article VII – Dissolution of the Association**

Any proposal for dissolving this Association must be submitted in writing and signed by five members in good standing, with specific reasons for the dissolution to the Executive Board. The Board will vote upon the proposal at the next duly convened meeting. If the majority of the quorum present votes in the affirmative, the proposal will be given to the Corresponding Secretary. Within thirty days of this meeting, the Corresponding Secretary will mail a ballot and a copy of the proposed dissolution with comments and recommendation (s) of the Executive Board to all voting members in good standing. Dissolution shall be ratified by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the ballots returned within six weeks from the date of original mailing. Any property owned by the Association at the time of the dissolution shall be sold by the President with the approval of the Executive Board. After the satisfaction of all liabilities, any monies shall be donated to an organization which was selected by that Executive Board and which qualifies under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

## **Article VIII – Association Year**

The Association year shall be from January 1 through December 31.

## **Article IX – Meetings**

### **Section 1. Number of Meetings**

The Association shall hold as many program and business meetings as may be determined by the Executive Board to be in the best interest of the Association. At least one formal business meeting, that is the Annual Meeting, must be held each year.

### **Section 2. Annual Meeting**

The Annual Meeting of the Association shall be held each year at a time and place to be determined by the Executive Board. Twenty members in good standing shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of Association business, which includes the election of officers.

## **Article X – Fees and Dues**

### **Section 1. Annual Dues**

The annual dues for all classes of members shall be proposed by the Treasurer and approved annually by the Executive Board.

### **Section 2. Payment of Dues**

All dues are payable upon notification from the Association and will be sent out prior to the beginning of the new Association Year.

### **Section 3. Delinquency of Payment of Dues**

Those who have not forwarded their dues to the Membership Committee within 60 days of the first notification of payment will be notified of their delinquency. This will occur no later than February 28. Those who have not paid their dues within 30 days of this delinquency notification shall be automatically dropped from the membership roster. An individual who has been dropped because of delinquency of payment may be reinstated with payment of dues for that membership year.

## **Article XI – Nomination and Election of Officers**

### **Section 1. Nominating Committee**

Prior to the Annual Meeting, the President shall appoint four active members in good standing to the Nominating Committee. Members of the Nominating Committee shall not be eligible for elected office. The Nominating Committee shall nominate candidates for the positions of President, President-Elect, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, and Treasurer as the election cycle requires. A slate of nominations shall be sent to the membership prior to the Annual Meeting. Such a slate shall include information about each candidate and the assurance from the Nominating Committee that each candidate has accepted the nomination and is a member in good standing. Members can vote by mail or at the annual meeting. In the event a simple majority is not achieved, a run-off election shall be conducted. One Executive Board Member and one non-Board/non-candidate member in good standing shall tabulate all ballots.

### **Section 2. Tenure**

All elected officials shall hold office for one year except for the President who shall serve for two years. The President-Elect's position will be on the ballot every other year, starting in 1996. All officers shall begin their tenure on the first of January following their election.

### **Section 3. Removal of Members of Executive Board**

A member, or members, of the Executive Board may be removed with cause by having a petition specifying the reason for removal signed by ten active Association members and submitted to the Secretary or President. This must be followed by a majority vote of all members of the Executive Board, with those members in question being excluded from the vote.

**Section 4. Vacancies on the Executive Board**

Any vacancy on the Executive Board, exclusive of the ASHA Legislative Councilor, may be filled by a simple majority vote of the Executive Board. The appointed successor shall hold office for the remainder of the term.

**Article XII – Reimbursement of Expenses**

**Section 1. General Reimbursement**

Reimbursement of unbudgeted expenses or expenses exceeding \$200 must be approved by the Executive Board or the President.

**Section 2. Conference and Travel Reimbursement**

The travel budget shall reflect the priorities, values, and philosophy of RISHA.

Total payments for conferences and travel shall not exceed 20% of the Association's assets for that calendar year, except by special vote of the Executive Board.

To receive conference and/or travel monies, the member must be performing business on behalf of the RISHA during the majority of the conference. Monies will be provided for the following costs: registration fees, travel at the lowest air, train, or bus fare, or at the current IRS standard for mileage, meals within a designated budget, and lodging.

The following specific activities will be reimbursed:

1. Attendance at the Council of State Association Presidents (CSAP) bi-annual meetings by the current President and either (a) President-Elect, (b) Vice President, or other RISHA member designated by the President.
2. Attendance at ASHA’s annual convention by the President.
3. Attendance at the meetings of the ASHA Legislative Council by the RISHA Legislative Councilor, to include costs which are not reimbursed by ASHA.

**Article XIII - Amendment of Constitution and By-Laws**

The Constitution and By-Laws may be altered, amended in part or in whole, or repealed by a two-thirds vote of members present at an Annual Meeting or any duly convened Executive Board meeting. Amendments may be offered by the majority of the Executive Board or by a petition signed by the same number of active Association members in good standing.

**Article XIV – Establishment of Scholarship Fund**

RISHA has been awarding scholarships to deserving students in the field of communicative disorders since 1996. In 2003 the RISHA Scholarship was renamed in memory of Patricia Stephens, a speech-language pathologist who served on the RISHA Executive Board for 13 years and lost her long battle with cancer at the age of 52. A graduate of University of Rhode Island and Worcester State College, Pat worked in the Woonsocket School System, where she was the department head for 15 other SLPs. She served RISHA as recording secretary, newsletter co-editor, treasurer and continuing education administrator. Pat was an inspiration to all her colleagues and students and was exemplary as a volunteer. In honor of Pat, the scholarships are awarded each year to graduate students who show evidence of high academic standing, volunteerism in their community, and qualities that would lead to success in the field of speech-language pathology or audiology.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Revised:        August, 2002  
                      November, 2006  
                      December, 2009  
                      March, 2010**