

**AMERICAN CONFERENCE OF CANTORS, INC.**

# **CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

**American Conference of Cantors  
1375 Remington Road, Suite M  
Schaumburg, IL 60173-4844**

# **CONSTITUTION**

## **ARTICLE I. NAME**

This organization shall be known as the American Conference of Cantors, hereinafter referred to as the ACC.

## **ARTICLE II. AFFILIATION**

The ACC shall be an affiliate of the Union for Reform Judaism, hereinafter referred to as the URJ.

## **ARTICLE III. PURPOSE**

The ACC supports its members in their sacred calling as emissaries for Judaism and for Jewish music. ACC leadership draws upon the energies and aspirations of its individual members, while responding to the expressed needs of the larger membership and the Reform movement. The Conference inspires its members to embrace a shared dynamic vision of the cantorate. This vision is realized through programs and initiatives that will ensure a strong and successful organization. Each such effort is conceived according to carefully determined goals and criteria. Through our members, we provide our communities with a compelling experience of text, music, learning, relationship to one another and connectedness to God. We establish our organization as a self-assured and securely funded entity, acting in full partnership with other representational bodies of the Reform movement and worldwide Jewry.

## **ARTICLE IV. STATUS**

The ACC is organized exclusively for religious and charitable activities as provided in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from Federal Income Tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

## **ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP**

All applications for membership shall be submitted to the Membership Committee for recommendation, and to the Executive Board for final disposition. There shall be the following categories of membership: Regular Membership, Associate Membership, Student Membership, and Honorary

Membership. All members of the ACC are bound by the governing documents of the Conference.

**Section 1. Regular Membership.** Regular Membership may be secured by the following candidates:

(a) Any ordained or certified Cantor, or a graduate of any cantorial college, seminary or school recognized by the Executive Board of the ACC;

(b) A Cantor who is a regular and full-time professor at the HUC/JIR/DFSSM. When such a member severs connection with the HUC/JIR/DFSSM, membership in the ACC shall be terminated.

A Regular Member in good standing of the American Conference of Cantors shall be entitled to voting privileges, placement privileges, and participation in the ACC Pension and Insurance Plans and in all of the organizational activities of the ACC.

A member of the ACC in good standing for fifty years shall be designated as a Lifetime member of the ACC.

**Section 2. Associate Membership.** Associate Membership in the ACC shall be conferred upon candidates meeting the qualifications and criteria set forth by the Executive Board. Associate Members shall have no vote. Associate Members shall be entitled to participate in all activities of the ACC, including the ACC Pension and Insurance Plans. Rules for participation in the placement process by Associate Members are contained in the placement guidelines of the Joint Cantorial Placement Commission.

**Section 3. Student Membership.** Student Membership is open to matriculated students of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music of the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion. It shall entitle the member to participate in the general activities of the ACC other than voting and placement (with the sole exception of placement privileges for those students who are to be graduated within that current year). Students may not serve on any of the standing committees of the ACC except by special invitation from the President and upon advice and consent of the Executive Board.

**Section 4. Honorary Membership.** Persons who have made outstanding contributions in the field of Jewish music may be elected as Honorary Members of the ACC by the Executive Board. They shall have voice but no vote. Under no circumstances shall this honor be construed to bestow the title of Cantor to an honoree.

#### **ARTICLE VI. GUILD OF TEMPLE MUSICIANS**

The Guild of Temple Musicians is an affiliate of the ACC.

The Guild of Temple Musicians, hereinafter referred to as the GTM, shall agree to adhere to all Constitutional regulations and By-Laws of the ACC.

#### **ARTICLE VII. GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The legislative body of the ACC and its highest authority shall be the General Assembly, which generally convenes at a regular annual convention of the ACC, or at a special convention of the ACC. Only Regular Members in good standing shall have a right to vote at a meeting of the General Assembly.

#### **ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**Section 1. Meetings.** Regular meetings of the General Assembly shall be held at the Annual Convention of the ACC, at such time and place as the General Assembly or the Executive Board may determine. Special meetings of the General Assembly may be called: (1) by the President; (2) by a two-thirds majority vote of the Executive Board; or, (3) upon written request to the Executive Board by 20 Regular Members in good standing.

**Section 2. Voting.** Any Regular Member in good standing as of 10 days before a meeting of the General Assembly. Each such member is entitled to one vote.

**Section 3. Quorum.** A quorum of the General Assembly shall consist of 15% of the number of Regular Members in good standing of the ACC. In the absence of a quorum, reports may be presented but no vote may take place. In the absence of a quorum, the President shall have the authority to deem a matter an emergency, and to bring the matter for final disposition before the Executive Board.

**Section 4. Parliamentary Procedure.** Except as otherwise provided herein, meetings of the General Assembly and the Executive Board shall be conducted in accordance with parliamentary usage as set forth in the latest revised edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

**Section 5. Telephonic and Electronic Meetings.** Bona fide meetings of the General Assembly and of the Executive Board may take place telephonically and/or by electronic media, and all business of the Conference may if necessary be conducted therein.

#### **ARTICLE IX. AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution and the By-Laws may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the General Assembly of the ACC by a two-thirds vote. Such amendments may be endorsed by a simple majority vote of the Executive Board, and shall be submitted in writing to the voting membership no later than fifteen days in advance of the date of the call for such an action.

#### **ARTICLE X. GENDER**

Whenever the words, "he," "him," or "his" are used in this Constitution, they shall be considered to include the words "she," "her," and "hers."

# **BY-LAWS**

## **ARTICLE I. EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**Section 1. Composition.** All Executive Board members, being Regular Members in good standing, shall have the power to vote, with those exceptions noted in these By-Laws. The Executive Board shall be constituted as follows:

### **a. Representatives**

**(i) Four Regional Representatives**, each elected for a three-year term by a plurality vote of the Regular Members of the ACC in good standing within that region. The regions are: EAST (CT, DC, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VA, VT, WV), SOUTH(AL, AR, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, OK, PR, SC, TN, TX, VI and Bahamas), CENTRAL (IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, Canada East of Winnipeg, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, Western NY, OH, Western PA, SD and WI), and WEST (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Western Texas, Washington, Wyoming, and the Canadian provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan).

**(ii) Sixteen Representatives At Large**, each elected for a three-year term by a plurality vote of Regular Members of the ACC in good standing.

**(iii) Six Officers** –President, 3 Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, and Secretary, each elected for a three-year term by a plurality vote of Regular Members of the ACC in good standing.

(a) Officer Board Members may not be nominated nor serve simultaneously as Executive Board Representatives.

**(iv) The immediate Past President of the ACC** shall be a member of the Executive Board with voice and vote, during the administration immediately following his or her incumbency.

**(v) The ex-officio members** of the Executive Board shall consist of the following, with voice but not vote:

(a) The President of the URJ;

(b) The Director of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music;

(c) The cantorial chair of the Joint Commission on Worship, Music and Religious Living;

(d) The cantorial chairs of the National Commission on Professional-Congregational Relations;

- (e) The cantorial chairs of the Joint Cantorial Placement Commission;
  - (f) The President of the Student Body of the School of Sacred Music;
  - (g) Designated Honorary Members
  - (h) Designated Honorary Officers of the ACC-- Members of the ACC who have served the Conference with distinction may from time to time be proposed as Honorary Officers. Such a proposal shall come from the Executive Board and must be ratified by the General Assembly
  - (j) All past presidents of the ACC;
  - (k) The President of the Cantorial Alumni Association.
- (vi) The ex-officio members** outlined below shall have the power to vote.
- (a) The president of our affiliate, the Guild of Temple Musicians (GTM), or in her/his absence, or ineligibility, the first vice president or other officer designated by the GTM.

## **Section 2. Nomination Procedure.**

- (a) Elections for representatives to the Executive Board shall take place annually, such that one-third of the Board is elected each year. In the event of a change in the Constitution or Bylaws that alters the distribution of electable seats or length of term of service, the Executive Board shall empower the Nominating Committee to adjust terms of office accordingly to effectuate an even distribution of electable seats each year.
- (b) A Slate of Nominations for Representatives shall be made by the Nominating Committee from among Regular Members in good standing. The date of circulation to the Membership shall be no later than four months prior to the start of the annual meeting of the General Assembly.
- (c) Additional nominations of eligible candidates may be made by petition of ten regular members to the Nominating Committee no later than two weeks after the date of circulation of the slate to the Membership.
- (d) Ballots shall be distributed no later than four weeks after the date of circulation of the slate.

(e) Ballots shall be returned to the Nominating Committee with a postmark or date of electronic transmission that is no later than 30 days after the date of the distribution of the ballots.

**Section 3. Meetings.** The Executive Board shall meet at least two times a year at such time and place as the President shall designate. Failure by a Board member to attend any two consecutive meetings may be grounds for removal from the Board by majority vote of the Board. Special meetings of the Executive Board shall be held on the written request of six members thereof, or when the President shall so order. Nine members of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum.

**Section 4. Vacancies.** A vacancy occurring in the Executive Board mid-term shall be filled for the remainder of the term by the Presidential appointment with majority approval by the Executive Board.

## **ARTICLE II. OFFICERS**

### **Section 1. Composition.**

**(a) President.** The President shall be the chief executive officer of the ACC. He or she shall preside at meetings of the Executive Board. Except as otherwise directed by the General Assembly, the President shall preside at meetings of the General Assembly and shall have the power to designate others to preside over such meetings from time to time. The President shall appoint the various committees of the Executive Board, appoint the chairs of such committees, and may replace any such chair in consultation with the Executive Board.

**(b) Vice-Presidents.** The Vice-Presidents of the ACC shall perform such duties as may be prescribed from time to time by the President of the ACC.

**(c) Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall be the chief financial officer of the ACC. The Treasurer shall keep books and accounts reflecting all receipts and disbursements of the ACC, and shall report the financial condition of the ACC at each regular meeting of the Board.

**(d) Secretary.** The Secretary shall perform such duties as may be prescribed from time to time by the President.



**Section 2. Terms of Office.** Each Officer shall be elected for a term of three years. The President may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

**Section 3. Nomination Procedure.**

(a) Nominations for Executive Officers shall be made by the Nominating Committee from among incumbent officers or members of the Executive Board. The date of circulation to the membership shall be no later than seven months prior to the start of the annual meeting of the General Assembly. Other nominations of eligible candidates may be made by petition by ten Regular Members to the Nominating Committee within two weeks of the distribution of the slate. There shall be a separate vote for each office.

(b) Ballots shall be distributed no later than four weeks after the date of circulation of the slate.

(c) Ballots shall be returned to the Nominating Committee with a postmark or date of electronic transmission that is no later than 30 days after the date of the distribution of the ballots.

**Section 4. Presidential Vacancy.** In case the Presidency should become vacant, a new President shall be elected from among the ACC officers by a majority vote of such officers. The new President shall serve for the remainder of the term of the former President. The Executive Board shall choose by a majority vote from among the Board's regular membership a successor for the unexpired term of the office vacated by the new President.

**ARTICLE IV. FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year shall begin on the first day of August of each year and end on the thirty-first day of July of the following year. A statement showing budgeted and actual income and expenditures shall be presented at the meeting of the General Assembly during each annual convention.

**ARTICLE V. FINANCIAL EXAMINATION**

The financial records of the ACC shall be audited periodically by an auditor chosen by the Executive Board.

## **ARTICLE VI. BUDGET**

The President shall appoint a Budget Committee consisting of no less than three members of the Executive Board, exclusive of the ex-officio members of such Committee. At each annual convention of the ACC, the Budget Committee shall submit to the General Assembly for its action a comprehensive and detailed budget for the next fiscal year. The budget and any additional monetary appropriations shall require the affirmative vote of the majority of the members of the General Assembly present and voting at the meeting. The budget may be amended from time to time by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the Executive Board present and voting at a duly constituted meeting thereof.

## **ARTICLE VII. DUES**

**Section 1. Authority to Set Dues.** Annual Dues for all members of the ACC shall be set by the Executive Board from time to time and approved at a meeting of the General Assembly. Lifetime and Honorary Members shall not be required to pay annual membership dues.

**Section 2. Dues Payable Date.** Annual Dues shall be paid to the ACC no later than October 31 of the current year.

## **ARTICLE VIII. SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

**Section 1. Authority to Suspend for Nonpayment.** The Executive Board may, upon notification by certified mail to the member's last known address, suspend any member who has not paid dues by December 31 of the current fiscal year. Any member so suspended may be reinstated after payment of all dues plus a reinstatement fee.

**Section 2. Procedure for Suspension for Ethics and Other Violations.** When a member of the ACC is charged with a violation of the ACC Code of Ethics or JCPC Placement Procedures or of other regulatory guidelines adopted by the ACC, or misconduct which would render him or her unworthy of membership, the Committee on Ethics and Appeals shall make a thorough investigation of these charges in accordance with the Code of Ethics (Part II, Article IV, Sections A, B and C), and shall have disciplinary powers short of suspension or expulsion. In those instances where, in the view of the Committee on Ethics and Appeals, suspension or expulsion is called for, the matter will be referred to the Executive Board for a hearing of these charges. The member thus charged shall

have full opportunity to defend himself or herself before the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall have discretion to dismiss the charge or levy appropriate penalties, including suspension or expulsion, of the member charged.

**Section 3. Procedure for Expulsion.** In the instances where, in the view of the Executive Board, expulsion is called for, the matter shall be referred to the ACC at its next meeting of the General Assembly after due notice to the membership, in accordance with the Code of Ethics (Part II, Article IV, Section E2C). Appropriate steps for *t'shuvah* shall be determined at the time of expulsion and presented to the membership of the ACC at the aforementioned meeting of the General Assembly. The charged member shall have full opportunity to defend him or herself before the ACC membership, in accordance with the parliamentary authority adopted by the ACC. The session at which such a trial shall be heard shall be an executive session.

**Section 4. Two-thirds Vote Required for Expulsion.** No expulsion shall be valid except by at least a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of the ACC duly registered to vote and present at the session and with a quorum present.

**Section 5. Notice of Expulsion.** Notice of the expulsion of a member shall be sent to every member of the ACC by the Secretary.

**Section 6. Readmittance.** A Cantor previously expelled from the ACC may be readmitted to the membership upon application and approval of two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Board.

## **ARTICLE IX. BANK DEPOSITS**

All banks of deposit for ACC funds shall be named by the Executive Board. Checks, drafts, and other instruments for the withdrawal of funds shall bear such signature or signatures as may be determined from time to time by the Executive Board.

## **ARTICLE X. PLACEMENT**

All cantorial placement shall be conducted only through the Joint Cantorial Placement Commission according to the policies and procedures as outlined and published by the Committee.

## **ARTICLE XI. CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS**

Guidelines for contractual agreements, negotiations, and conciliation are contained in the ACC/URJ document entitled *Guidelines for Cantorial-Congregational Relations*. Contractual disputes shall be resolved through the National Commission on Professional-Congregational Relations (NCPCR).

## **ARTICLE XII. DISSOLUTION**

In the event of dissolution, the dissolution shall be accomplished in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, but in no event shall the remaining assets and property of the Corporation be distributed to any member, officer, director, or private individual. They shall be distributed only to such organizations as shall qualify under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended.

*Amended: New York, July 2003*

*Amended: New Orleans, March 2005*

*Amended: San Francisco, July 2008*

*Amended: Chicago, June 2009*

*Edited (for Ordination) July 2013*

*Amended: Jerusalem, July 2014*

*Name updated for the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music, January 2017*