

# USAIN Bylaws

1. Article 1: Name, Scope, and Objectives.
  2. Article 2: Membership.
  3. Article 3: Executive Council.
  4. Article 4: Officers.
  5. Article 5: Meetings.
  6. Article 6: Committees.
  7. Article 7: Interest Groups.
  8. Article 8: Network Affiliations and Liaisons..
  9. Article 9: Nominations and Elections.
  10. Article 10: Authority.
  11. Article 11: Amendment of the Bylaws.
  12. Article 12: Dissolution of the Network.
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## Article I. Name, Scope, and Objectives

**Section 1.** The name of this organization shall be the United States Agricultural Information Network, hereinafter referred to as the Network. The scope of the Network shall include information activities relating to agriculture, food, human ecology, natural resources, and rural sociology. In these Bylaws, the terms "agriculture" and "agricultural" will be used in a broad sense to encompass these related fields.

**Section 2.** This Network is organized for educational and scientific purposes, and is dedicated to the support of agricultural research, education, and applied agriculture. The objectives of the Network shall be: to provide a forum for discussion of agricultural issues; to take a leadership role in the formation of a national information policy as related to agriculture; to make recommendations to the National Agricultural Library (NAL) on agricultural information matters; and, to promote cooperation and communication among its members in order to strengthen agricultural libraries and other sources of agricultural information.

## Article II. Membership

**Section 1.** The membership of the Network shall consist of the following classes of members: Individual, Institutional, Student, and Honorary. Any person or institution involved with or interested in agricultural information may become a member of the Network by complying with the provisions of the Bylaws.

**Section 2.** Individual Members are persons involved with or interested in access to agricultural information, such as information and communications technology, provision of electronic agricultural resources, teaching of agricultural sciences, preservation of agricultural information, or other information activities relating to agriculture.

**Section 3.** Institutional Members include libraries, information centers, government agencies, companies and corporations, not-for-profit organizations, and academic institutions (including, but not limited to, Land Grant and 1890 Land Grant Universities) involved with agricultural information. The authorized representatives of an Institutional Member shall be up to two persons designated in writing by the appropriate administrator at any time before the meeting or mailing of ballots in which the representative is to vote.

**Section 4.** Student Members are persons currently enrolled in a graduate library or information science degree program with interests similar to those stated for Individual members (see Article II. Section 2.) Student member status is limited to a maximum of five years.

**Section 5.** An Honorary Member shall be an individual elected to this honor by the Network, either as an outstanding individual in the field of agricultural information or for outstanding service to the Network. At the time of election, a candidate shall not be an Individual, Institutional, or Student Member of the Network. Nominations with supporting documentation shall be presented in writing to the President and may be proposed by one or more Network members; nominations will be presented to the membership with the recommendation of the Executive Council.

**Section 6.** Individual and Institutional Members shall have the right to vote and to hold any elective office or appointive position. Any authorized representative of an Institutional Member who also holds an Individual Membership shall have the right to cast one vote as an Individual Member and one vote as an Institutional Member. Student Members shall have the right to vote and may serve as members of committees or interest groups except where otherwise noted in the By-Laws, but not as chair or convener. Student Members shall not serve on the Executive Council. The rights and benefits of Honorary Members shall be determined by the Executive Council.

**Section 7.** The membership and fiscal year shall be the calendar year.

**Section 8.** Dues shall be determined by majority vote of mail ballots returned after advance notice of Executive Council or Network membership discussion of any proposed change. Any Individual, Institutional, or Student Member who has not paid dues by March 1st shall be terminated as a member; however, a member so terminated may be reinstated upon procedures adopted by the Executive Council.

### **Article III. Executive Council**

**Section 1.** There shall be an Executive Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council, that shall have the power and authority to manage the affairs of the Network between meetings of the membership. The Council shall act on behalf of the Network, be responsible for its fiscal affairs and budgeting, and be responsible for overall planning. The Council shall determine all policies for the Network, within the limits of the Bylaws, shall take such actions as it considers necessary to carry out the objectives of the Network, and shall perform such other functions as the membership may direct.

**Section 2.** The Council shall consist of eleven Councillors, ten elected and one ex officio. The ten elected Councillors shall be the President, the President-Elect, the Secretary/Treasurer, the most recent Past President, and six Directors, nominated and elected as stipulated in these Bylaws. Of the six Directors, at least one shall be employed by a land-grant or 1890 university and at least one shall be the designated representative of an Institutional Member. The ex-officio Councillor shall be a representative of the National Agricultural Library and shall be a non-voting member of the Council.

**Section 3.** The ten elected Councillors shall take office as of June 1st following their election and shall serve until May 31st at the end of their term of office. Notwithstanding, if there is a delay in balloting and elections, all members of the Council shall serve until their successors are elected and assume their duties. The President-Elect will serve for one year, succeeding to the office of President in the second year and remaining on the Council as the most recent Past President in the third year. The Secretary/ Treasurer and the Directors will serve two-year terms, with a maximum of two consecutive terms. Three Directors shall be elected annually.

**Section 4.** The Council shall hold at least one meeting annually and may hold additional meetings upon call of the President or upon written request (including electronic mail) of any two members of the Council. Meetings of the Council shall be open to members of the Network and, by invitation of the President, to nonmembers. Six member of the Council shall constitute a quorum.

**Section 5.** Whenever in the judgement of the President, a question arises that should be put to a vote of the entire Council and cannot await a regular or special meeting, the Council may vote by mail ballot, telephone, or electronic means on such questions, provided that all members of the Council have consented to having such a vote conducted by such stated means, and that a two-thirds affirmative vote of all Council members with voting privileges must be received for a measure to pass.

## **Article IV. Officers**

**Section 1.** The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Network and, subject to the Council, shall have general supervision and control over its affairs. The President shall recommend to the Council such measures as are considered desirable to further the objectives and broaden the effectiveness of the Network; shall prepare the annual summary of USAIN activities for the business meetings held at ALA and SLA annual conferences; shall set the agendas for all Council meetings and all business meetings of the membership; and shall appoint the chairs of all Standing Committees except Nominations/Elections Committee and any committees which are designated at establishment as being chaired by the holders of specific Council positions. With the Secretary/Treasurer, the President shall sign all contracts and legal documents, unless otherwise determined by the Council. In the event of disability or withdrawal of the President, the title and all duties and obligations shall be assumed by the President-Elect. Should further succession to the office become necessary, the title, duties, and obligations shall be assumed by the most recent Past President. A Director shall fill a vacancy on the Council created by such succession

**Section 2.** The President-Elect shall assist the President in the performance of the duties of the office and shall perform such other duties as the President or Council may assign.

**Section 3.** The Past-President shall provide pertinent files on past Network activities and plans to the President; shall prepare a report on the past year to assist the President in assuming the responsibilities of the office; shall chair the Nominations/Elections Committee; and shall perform such other duties as the President or Council may assign.

**Section 4.** The Secretary/Treasurer supervises the financial records of the Network and of the Council; shall furnish such financial statements as may be required by the Council; shall submit a statement of account of the Network's funds at each Council and membership meeting; shall supervise all mailings concerned with Network business except for election ballots; shall chair any Network committee or task force concerned with finances; and, shall be the Council's liaison with the Network committee concerned with membership. With the President, the Secretary/Treasurer shall sign all contracts and other legal documents and shall sign all checks drawn upon Network funds, unless otherwise determined by the Council. The Secretary/Treasurer shall also perform such other duties as the President or Council may assign.

**Section 5.** Each Director shall be assigned Committee Liaison responsibilities as determined by the President. Directors shall also perform other duties as the President or the Council may assign.

**Section 6.** A vacancy in the membership of the Council shall be filled by majority vote of the remaining members of the Council, this Council-elected member to serve until the next annual election. A vacancy in the office of President-Elect or most recent Past President shall be filled from among the Directors.

## **Article V. Meetings**

**Section 1.** Business meetings of the Network will be held at program meetings of the Network. They may also be held in conjunction with conferences of the American Library Association, the Special Libraries Association, and/or other appropriate professional organizations. The USAIN President will call and schedule such meetings.

**Section 2.** Special business meetings may be held upon call of the Council or by petition of fifteen members of the Network. Notice of a special meeting shall specify the business to be transacted, and no business other than that stated in the notice shall be considered.

**Section 3.** A quorum for the transaction of business shall be fifteen voting members. If action by the membership is required and a quorum has not been present at a regular or special business meeting, any question may be resolved by a majority vote of returned ballots, provided that (a) the mail ballot procedure has been approved by two-thirds of the Council and that (b) thirty percent of the Network members have voted on the question.

**Section 4.** The Secretary/Treasurer shall provide that written notice of all business meetings is sent to the membership at least 30 days before each regular or special business meeting.

**Section 5.** Program meetings (national or regional conferences) may be held at such times and places as the Council may direct. Program meetings shall be held at least every three years.

## **Article VI. Committees**

**Section 1.** Standing and Special Project Committees shall be established by the Council. All Committees shall be responsible to the Council, which will delegate such powers and functions to them, as the Council finds desirable for the conduct of their business and for carrying out the objectives of the Network. Committees shall report annually to the Council and shall provide additional reports upon request of the Council or the President.

**Section 2.** The President shall appoint the chairs of all Standing Committees except the Nominations/Elections Committee and any committees which are designated at establishment as being chaired by the holders of specific Council positions; members of all Standing Committees except the Nominations/Elections Committee may be appointed either by the President or by the Committee Chair. Appointments to Standing Committees shall be made to provide continuity of membership. No member may serve on any one Committee in excess of four consecutive years.

**Section 3.** Special Project Committees shall be established to meet specific needs of the Network not met by a Standing Committee. They may be of short or long-term duration, according to the parameters of the project. The President shall appoint either a chair or two co-chairs to head each Special Project Committee and shall appoint the members of each Committee in consultation with the chair/co-chair. The President shall either serve, ex officio, on all Special Project Committees or designate another member of the Executive Council to serve. The President may solicit recommendation from current or past members of a Special Project Committee when making appointments. Consideration should be given to staggering appointments to long-term Special Project Committees to provide both continuity and fresh ideas/ approaches.

## **Article VII. Interest Groups**

**Section 1.** Interest Groups relating to areas of interest actively represented among the membership of the Network may be established by petition of fifteen members and with the approval of the Council. The activities of each Interest Group shall include, but not be limited to: advising the Council on matters pertaining to the Group's area of interest; collecting and disseminating information concerning its special interest; and, organizing USAIN Conference programs related to such interest.

**Section 2.** All members may participate in the activities of all Interest Groups whose concerns they share.

**Section 3.** Interest Groups may meet at their discretion, or they may engage in ongoing Council-approved activities, which do not require face-to-face meetings. Interest Group Conveners may be appointed by the President or elected by the Group from among their number, with the approval of Council. Further organizational structure is not required but may be developed, with the approval of Council, if necessitated by a Group's activities. Interest

Groups shall report annually to the Council and shall provide such other reports as requested by the Council or President. Inactive Interest Groups may be dissolved by the Council.

## **Article VIII. Network Affiliations and Liaisons**

**Section 1.** The Executive Council may vote to affiliate the Network with any national, regional or international organization, whose objectives are consistent with those of the Network, provided that any associated costs are covered within the Network's budget. Network Representatives to such organizations shall be authorized by the Council and appointed by the President; they shall report annually to the Council and shall provide such other reports as requested by the Council or the President.

**Section 2.** The President, subject to approval of the Council may appoint liaisons to other organizations, agencies, and meetings of other associations. Liaisons shall report annually to the Council and shall provide other reports as requested by the Council or President.

## **Article IX. Nominations and Elections**

**Section 1.** There shall be a Nominations/Elections Committee consisting of three-five voting members, one of whom shall be the most recent Past President, and no one of whom should be a candidate at the succeeding election. This Committee shall be appointed by the Council no later than September 1st of each year and shall be representative of the geographic distribution of the Individual and Institutional categories of membership. Members of the Committee shall serve one-year terms, and no more than three consecutive terms.

**Section 2.** Each year the Nominations/Elections Committee shall present two candidates for President-elect and two candidates for each open Director position, in accordance with the provisions of Article III, Section 2. In alternate years, the Committee shall also present two candidates for Secretary/Treasurer. The Committee shall aggressively solicit the names of suggested candidates from the membership, so as to present a slate of nominees that is representative of the composition of the membership, and shall obtain the written acceptance of each nominee prior to submission of its report. The report of the Committee shall be made to the Council on or before February 1st.

**Section 3.** Election shall be by secret ballot mailed to each member no later than March 15th. The chair of the Committee shall be responsible for the official ballot. The qualifications of each nominee shall accompany the ballot. The ballot will include a space for write-in candidates. Every effort shall be made to ensure a fair election and confidentiality of the election. The candidates receiving the largest number of votes for each office shall be declared elected. In case of a tie vote, lot conducted by the Chair of the Nominations/Elections Committee shall determine the successful candidate.

## **Article X. Authority**

**Section 1.** These bylaws and the standing rules of the Network shall govern this organization.

**Section 2.** The current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall be the parliamentary authority for the Network on matters not governed by the bylaws and the standing rules.

## **Article XI. Amendment of the Bylaws**

**Section 1.** Amendments may be proposed by The Council, the Network committee concerned with the Bylaws, or by petition of at least fifteen voting members of the Network. Proposals originating in the Council or in the Committee shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Council before submission to the membership. Proposals originating by petition shall be submitted in writing to the Council and shall be presented to the membership with the recommendation of the Council.

**Section 2.** Notice containing the text of any proposal shall be sent to each voting member at least thirty days before the business meeting at which it is to be discussed. If approved by a majority vote at the meeting, the proposal shall be submitted to the entire voting membership for final decision by mail ballot. A two-thirds vote of the returned mail ballots shall be required for approval.

## **Article XII. Dissolution of the Network**

**Section 1.** In the event that at some future time it should be determined that the Network is no longer serving the purposes for which it was organized, dissolution may be accomplished by the adoption of a resolution that the Network be dissolved. This resolution, which shall be preceded by a preamble setting forth the reasons for the dissolution, requires for its adoption the same notice and vote as to amend these Bylaws (see Article XI above).

**Section 2.** The resolution of dissolution shall be coupled with other resolutions relating to administrative details and directing the disposition of the Network's assets, in accordance with any federal and state tax law which apply.

**Approved at the USAIN General Meeting, October 10, 2006**

**Approved by Entire Voting Membership, December 1, 2006**