

Princeton Philosophical Society

Official Club Charter

“Philosophy, n. A route of many roads leading from nowhere to nothing.” -- Ambrose Bierce

Preamble

Philosophy is the oldest and most basic human intellectual endeavor. It is the mother of science and the foundation of politics. It is the study of the irreducible questions and problems of our existence. It is, indeed, the guiding light for all other forms of higher thought. The study of philosophy, beyond offering the simple joy of puzzling with the mysteries of our existence, provides us with the tools and knowledge necessarily to fully comprehend the practical aspects of cognition and decision-making. It tells us how to gain knowledge, how to act and make decisions, how society should work, and, most critically, how to think. It allows us to expose the underlying premises, reasoning, and flaws of the arguments we face every day. The study of philosophy gives us a rigorous and sound foundation upon which we can construct our understanding of life. In the interests of personal growth, epistemic investigation, intellectual stimulation, and, of course, happiness, this club draws its purpose.

Article I: Executive Leadership

There are four permanent and primary offices in the club: the presidency, the treasury, and two vice-presidencies. An individual may not hold more than one position at the same time. All executive terms last one year, with the officer assuming power on May 3rd. There are no term limits. The four individuals who hold these positions, along with all presidents emeritus and treasurers emeritus enrolled at Princeton, constitute the executive board of the club.

Section I: The Presidency

The president is the leader of the club and has full discretion over all aspects of club affairs, organization, and management except those explicitly delegated elsewhere by this charter. He is permitted to create and eliminate staff positions at his discretion. Other officers are expected to obey any decision made by the president that falls within the purview of the club and his powers. If the president so desires, he may create further binding (but not irreversible) rules and regulations, so long as they are within his powers to make, and post these in a publicly accessible manner. He is responsible for running the club in a professional and orderly manner. He is expected to vigorously pursue the interests of the club and fulfill his duties.

Section II: The Treasury

The treasurer is the secondary leader of the club and is trustee of the club's finances. If for any reason the president is unable to fulfill his duties or resigns, the treasurer assumes the role of acting president until a suitable replacement is appointed or the president can resume his position. The treasurer is expected to act as counsel to the president in his operation of the club, and is likewise expected to devote a reasonable amount of time to club affairs. Formally, the treasurer is responsible for managing fund-raising, keeping track of the club's accounts, appropriating money, and other such duties as finances require. He is also permitted to create and eliminate

staff positions as he desires. The president, however, has final authority over the activity of the treasurer: he can, at his discretion, assume control of financial matters or retask the treasurer. He can, likewise, eliminate any staff position created in the treasury as he desires.

Section III: The Vice-Presidency

The vice-presidency is divided into two coequal offices; each vice president enjoys the same responsibilities and powers as the other. The vice president acts as an advisor to the president and as a general officer. His duties are twofold: to counsel the president on club affairs and to engage in club operations such as the president orders him to. He is also counsel to the treasurer and likewise must carry out the wishes of that officer, but not if such orders contradict those of the president (i.e. presidential authority cannot be overruled by the treasury). He is expected to fulfill his role in good faith and execute all reasonable and valid requests from his two superiors concerning the club. He does not have any independent authority to make decisions or reorganize the club except in cases stemming from the responsibilities he is issued by the president or the treasurer.

Section IV: The Executive Board

The executive board, as noted above, shall consist of all current officers along with all emeritus presidents and treasurers still enrolled at Princeton. It shall be chaired by the current club president, except for cases of impeachment (discussed below), and shall meet at his discretion.

Article II: Selection and Impeachment of Officers

Section I: Election of Officers

A club member is in 'good standing' if and only if he has come to no fewer than one third of the club's annual regular meetings (that is: meetings without attendance limits) during the preceding academic year. Only members in good standing may vote in club elections.

A club member is eligible to run for the position of president or treasurer, but not both simultaneously, if and only if he has come to at least one half of the club's annual regular meetings during the preceding academic year.

Eligible members wishing to run for one of these positions must have their nomination seconded by a member in good standing before they are placed on the ballot.

Voting shall occur once each academic year, no later than May 3rd and no earlier than April 20th. The election shall be held during a private meeting open only to members in good standing, with sufficient notification beforehand and the opportunity to cast an absentee ballot if the member in good standing cannot come to the meeting. The voting process shall follow rules decided upon by the presiding officer (the club president), but (a) it must be conducted using secret ballots and (b) each candidate for office must be given equal time to present his case before the voters. The winner of the election for each position shall be that candidate who receives a plurality of votes. In the event of a tie, all non-leading candidates will be dismissed from the ballot and a second vote will be held according to the prior rule. If this vote also ties, then one specially designated current officer will cast a deciding vote. The treasurer will cast the deciding vote for the presidential election, and the president will cast the deciding vote for the election of the treasurer.

The two vice-presidencies are appointed positions subject to the discretion of the president.

If at any point there is a vacancy in either the office of president or treasurer (due to resignation, impeachment, or any other reason), the president or treasurer will convene a special election to decide on a replacement, pursuant to the rules stated earlier.

Section II: Impeachment of Officers

If at any point in time a club officer, emeritus treasurer, or emeritus president believes that an officer is acting in bad faith or failing to reasonably fulfill the duties of his office, he may impeach the officer in question. Once an impeachment proceeding is launched, the executive board is required to convene within no less than two weeks to consider the motion. This meeting is to be chaired by a non-voting moderator mutually acceptable to both the officer being impeached and the complainant. If no such moderator can be found, an active club member will be randomly selected for duty as chair. Conviction requires a unanimous vote of the executive board; the officer being tried and the complainant are both barred from voting. If the board comprises an even number of members, the president (or the treasurer, if the president is barred from voting, or a randomly selected vice-president if both are barred) is given two votes. If the board has an odd number of members, the president is only granted one. If the impeachment motion fails, the officer may not be impeached again for a period of no less than two months.

Article III: Purpose and Activities of Club

The purpose of the Princeton Philosophical Society is to provide members with the opportunity to learn, discuss, debate, and otherwise wrestle with the problems of philosophy. Philosophy, as suits the nature of the matter, is defined loosely: topics are by no means restricted to what academic philosophers consider the 'pure' aspects of the discipline. As with everything else, it is up to the president and his advisors to determine what parts of philosophy they wish to focus attention on.

The various activities of the club can include, but by no means are limited to:

- I. Meetings of club members and interested others to discuss philosophy, whether in an open forum, a
- II. structured debate, or a topical discussion
- III. Guest lectures and dinners with professors where students and the professor can discuss a particular area of philosophy
- IV. Publication of student-written articles and essays on philosophy
- V. Special club organized events and trips
- VI. An annual undergraduate conference in philosophy

Article IV: Amendment

Amendments to this document may be proposed only by club officers. Once an amendment is proposed, the executive board must meet within two weeks to consider it. Adoption requires a unanimous vote of the board. Unsuccessful amendments cannot be reintroduced for consideration during a period of no less than six months from their failure to pass. Article IV may in no circumstance be amended.