

The Lessing Society

Preamble to the Constitution and By-Laws of The Lessing Society

The idea of establishing a Lessing Society, first discussed and considered by Gottfried F. Merkel and Guy Stern, both of them professors of German at the University of Cincinnati, was realized with the encouragement and financial backing of the University of Cincinnati. The Society was legally incorporated by Professor Stern and Professor Merkel under the name "American Lessing Society" on September 18, 1966 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

It is the goal of the Society to stimulate a reappraisal of the pertinence of Lessing's thought in modern times and to reemphasize Lessing's cosmopolitan humanism and his continuing importance throughout the world. The fact that more than two centuries after Lessing's birth no "Lessing Gesellschaft" existed in Germany or any other country was a major contributing factor leading to the foundation of the American Lessing Society.

The Lessing Society Constitution and By-Laws

Article I: Name

The Association shall be named The Lessing Society.

Article II: Purpose

1. The aim of the Society is to promote the international study of all aspects of the life, work, and reception of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, and of the long 18th century. The Society shall encourage scholars and scholarship without regard to national boundaries.
2. The Society shall specifically support the following objectives:
 - a) To publish annually a Lessing Yearbook to be distributed without charge to dues-paying members of the Lessing Society.
 - b) To develop extensive research facilities for the study of Lessing and to compile information on available facilities and archives.
 - c) To compile bibliographies of studies on Lessing which have been completed and which are in progress. These bibliographies are to be published periodically in the Lessing Yearbook.
 - d) To cooperate with other institutions and organizations which share its interests and goals.

- e) To the extent that the Society's finances permit, to encourage the following projects:
- f) To hold international symposia devoted to some aspect of Lessing studies.
- g) To support financially an award, based on the merit of the application and the need of the applicant, to an advanced graduate student for the study of some aspect of Lessing's work.

Article III: Membership

Membership shall be open to anyone upon annual payment of dues.

Article IV: Officers

The officers of the Association shall be: a President, a Vice-President, the immediate past president as Senior Editor, a Managing Editor, and a Secretary-Treasurer. The President and Vice-President shall be elected by electronic mail ballot of the membership-at-large and shall hold office for a renewable two-year term. The Nominating Committee may, at its discretion, nominate the Vice-President as Candidate for President. The Senior Editor serves a two-year term. The Secretary-Treasurer shall be nominated by the President of the Society and elected by electronic mail ballot by the members of the Society for a two year term which may be renewed.

Article V: Amendments to the Constitution

Voting on amendments to the constitution of the Society shall be by electronic mail ballot and will require a two-thirds majority of those responding to the electronic mail ballot. Upon official written request submitted by at least ten members or a majority of the officers to the Managing Editor, the proposed amendment shall be submitted to a ballot by electronic mail.

Article VI: Meetings

1. Meetings of the Society shall be held as provided in the by-laws.
2. When business of the Society is conducted in conjunction with an official meeting of the Society it shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order. The members present at the meeting shall constitute a quorum.
3. Upon written petition submitted by ten members, any motion passed at a meeting shall be resubmitted to the entire membership by electronic mail ballot for approval, with a simple majority of those responding required for passage.

Article VII: Committees

The President, with the approval of the other officers of the Society, is empowered to appoint such committees as will further the declared purposes of the Society.

Article VIII: By-Laws

1. By-Laws

By-Laws may be adopted or changed at any annual meeting of the Society by a majority vote of the members present or by electronic mail ballot requiring a simple majority of those responding to the ballot. Proposed changes to be discussed and voted on at a meeting must be submitted to the Secretary-Treasurer at least two months prior to the meeting, in order that members can be notified of the proposed changes. Proposed changes to be voted on by electronic mail ballot must be submitted by at least ten members or a majority of the officers in form of an official written request to the Secretary-Treasurer who shall in turn submit the proposed changes to a ballot by electronic mail.

2. Elections

- a) A committee consisting of the President and the two Senior Editors of the Yearbook shall nominate candidates for the offices of President and Vice-President three months before the inauguration of new officers.
- b) Elections shall be by secret ballot, sent by electronic mail to all members of the Society in October. Ballots must be received by the Secretary not later than the first of December.
- c) If the office of President becomes vacant, the Vice-President automatically succeeds. If the office of Vice-President becomes vacant, the President shall appoint a member to fill the vacancy until the next election.

3. Dues

- a) The annual dues of the Society shall be:
 - Student membership (renewable for 4 years) \$ 25
 - Active membership, including libraries \$ 35
 - Sustaining membership \$ 75

The annual dues are to be paid to the Secretary-Treasurer by October 15, each year.

- b) The sight to vote and to hold office in the Society shall be contingent upon the payment of dues.
- c) The officers may appoint honorary members. Honorary members are exempted from paying dues.
- d) Payment of annual dues will entitle members to receive all publications and bulletins of the Society without further charge.
- e) The funds of the Association shall be deposited in an American bank account.
- f) The Secretary-Treasurer shall submit his accounts once a year to the officers of the Society for their approval and acceptance.

4. Meetings

- a) A special Lessing Seminar shall be arranged annually to be conducted in conjunction with the meeting of the Modern Language Association of America and at the German Studies Association. The topics for and chairperson of such meetings are to be chosen by those attending the previous seminar meeting.
- b) The annual meeting of the Society shall be conducted in conjunction with the meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies. The President or Vice-President of the Lessing Society shall be in charge of organizing the meeting and appointing chairpersons for business and scholarly sessions, when appropriate.

5. Lessing Yearbook

The primary responsibility for the Yearbook shall be vested in the Managing Editor who shall be assisted by two Senior Editors, an Editorial Board comprising approximately 15 members, and an Assistant Editor or Editors. The two immediately preceding ex-presidents of the Society shall be asked to serve as Senior Editors. Should either be unwilling or unable to serve, the President shall appoint a replacement. The Managing Editor shall be appointed by the President for a term of 5 years. The members of the Editorial Board shall be appointed by the Managing Editor in consultation with the two Senior Editors for a term of five years.