



GUIDE TO GOVERNANCE

STUDENT-LED, STUDENT-GOVERNED

National Conference 2026

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About the Conference

The 2026 National Conference is an in-person conference taking place September 25-27 in Columbus, Ohio. Each chapter in attendance at the National Conference must have an official delegate.

As a student-governed society, YOU (the collegiate members) conduct the business of the Society. Each chapter in good standing will have one voting delegate at the National Conference.

Official delegates shall be responsible for:

- Reviewing the Bylaws and voting on recommendations for changes to the Bylaws.
- Electing two Student Representatives at-Large to serve a one-year term on the National Council. In the election for Student Representatives at-Large, the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be elected. If there is a tie that makes it unable to determine the top two vote recipients, a runoff between the tied candidates will be held.
- Receiving the resolutions and recommendations, and passing such resolutions and recommendations, deemed appropriate to assist the National Council in guiding the future development of the Society.



**Patience Whitworth,
Ph.D.**

National President

How to Prepare

- Read this Guide to Governance completely.
- Review the [National Bylaws](#).
- Watch the presentations of the candidates for election on Saturday.
- Prepare questions you might like to ask or issues to raise.
- Consider volunteering for a Conference Committee.
- Prepare some thoughts about how your chapter will flourish in the upcoming year.
- Prepare to hear national updates about the Society, as well as committee reports.

Timeline

Friday, September 25:

Opening Business Meeting

- Chapter Roll Call to establish delegates present
- Presentation of recommended changes to the Mortar Board National Bylaws
- Casting of votes on recommended Bylaws changes

Saturday, September 26:

- Meetings of the Conference Committees (Conference Nominating and Credentials Committee & Resolutions and Recommendations Committee)
- Presentation of candidates for the position of Student Representative at-Large
- Election of two Student Representatives at-Large

Sunday, September 27:

Closing Business Meeting

- Presentation of received resolutions and recommendations by the Resolutions and Recommendations Committee and subsequent vote
- Installation of 2026 - 2027 National Council

Voting



Casting Your Chapter's Ballot

Each chapter eligible to vote may cast **one vote**. The highest-ranking officer registered and in attendance from your chapter will be considered the official delegate.

If your chapter is present but fails to cast its ballot, the lack of a vote constitutes an abstention. See the Bylaws Article XIII.

Eligibility to Vote

To be eligible to vote on the issues raised at the National Conference, a chapter must be in good standing. The National Office will reach out to you if your chapter's account is not in good standing. Every chapter must attend the National Conference.

Quick Guide to Robert's Rules of Order

Mortar Board's Bylaws provide that our Business Meetings are governed by the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, except when our Bylaws or other rules adopted by the Society provide a different rule. (Article XI, Parliamentary Authorities)

Your Goal

Since its founding in 1918, Mortar Board has been student-led and student-governed. At each conference, every chapter sends a student delegate to represent its voice in the Business Meetings, where delegates discuss and vote on official business. Robert's Rules of Order help ensure the meetings are conducted fairly, efficiently, and with opportunities for all delegates to participate.

General Rules

- Wait to be recognized by the chair* before speaking.
- State your name and chapter before speaking.
- Speak only to the motion currently on the floor.
- Keep comments respectful and directed to the chair—not to other delegates.
- Speak once until everyone who wishes to speak has had an opportunity.
- Keep discussion focused on the issue, not on individuals.

Voting

Common voting methods include:

- Voice vote (delegates respond "Aye" or "No" **and** raise their voting cards when instructed)
- Electronic vote (ballot)

* "Chair" refers to the person presiding over the meeting, whether the National President, or another designated presiding officer.

Helpful Tips

- You do not need to memorize Robert's Rules.
- Listen carefully to the chair—they will guide the process.
- If you are unsure what to do, ask the chair for clarification before making your motion.
- Participation is encouraged—**your voice matters!**

Quick Guide to Robert's Rules of Order

How a Motion Works

- A delegate is recognized by the chair.
- The delegate makes a motion.
- Another delegate seconds the motion (if required).
- The chair states the motion.
- Delegates discuss the motion.
- The chair calls for a vote.
- The chair announces the result.



Quick Cheat Sheet

If you want to...	Say...
Make a motion	"I move that..."
Second a motion	"Second."
Speak in support	"Chair, I rise in support of the motion..."
Speak in opposition	"Chair, I rise in opposition of the motion..."
Ask a question	"Chair, request for information."
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by..."
Withdraw your motion	"I request permission to withdraw my motion."
Identify a rule that has been broken	"Chair, point of order..."
End debate and vote	"Chair, call the question."

Does My Motion Need a Second?

YES – A second is generally required for motions made by an individual delegate. Examples include: main motions, amendments, referring something to a committee, and postponing consideration.

NO – A second is not required when the motion comes from a committee. Committee recommendations represent the agreement of multiple people, so they are automatically before the assembly for consideration.

Election Guide

Electing the National Council

The Society's board of directors is called the National Council. It is composed of 10 elected officers whose terms run for two years, excluding the Student Representatives at-Large. In the case of the Student Representative at-Large, two students are elected annually at the National Conference for a one-year term. Each year, Mortar Board's voting delegates are charged with the task of electing members to fill offices that will be vacated due to term expiration.

Responsibilities of National Officers

Generally, a member of the National Council should:

- Affirm the mission and purpose of Mortar Board
- Establish and maintain a comprehensive set of policies and procedures that reflect the Society's governance
- Select the Mortar Board chief executive and review annually
- Accept fiduciary responsibility, and approve and monitor the budget
- Promote the organization nationally, regionally, and locally
- Contribute to the development of programs

Characteristics of Qualified Candidates

- Commitment to higher education and to the values of Mortar Board
- Computer literacy and skills to receive electronic communication
- Good communication skills, both verbal and written, and the ability to listen carefully
- Ability to evaluate, research, propose solutions, and make decisions with a group
- Demonstrates leadership skills and the ability to work with and attract others to the cause
- Past or current service to Mortar Board
- Experience with fundraising, donors, or volunteer service programs
- Service on other community or national boards

Who is the Official Delegate?

Each chapter has **one vote** during Business Meetings, cast by the chapter's **Official Delegate**.

The Official Delegate must be a **student member attending the Business Meeting**. If multiple students from the same chapter are in attendance, the **highest-ranking chapter officer** will serve as the Official Delegate—typically the chapter president.

In short: One chapter. One vote. One Official Delegate.

Candidates for National Council

Duties of offices up for election this year (from the Bylaws)

ELECTION OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE AT-LARGE

Student Representative at-Large candidates will be introduced to the delegation on Saturday morning. The election will take place immediately after.

Qualities Desired in a Student Representative

- Be completely committed to fulfilling all the obligations of a one-year term, beginning at the National Conference and continuing through the conclusion of the next National Conference.
- Have strong communication skills
- Exhibit excellent time management
- Possess the ability to work successfully with students, alumni, and administrators
- Be a current collegiate member of Mortar Board

Responsibilities Include

- Attend the annual National Conference at both the beginning and conclusion of the term
- Participate in every monthly meeting (by Zoom) for the entire one-year term
- Provide input in regular email discussions
- Serve on standing committees
- Co-chair the Student Advisory Board
- Advocate for collegiate members in all matters

Interested in Other Mortar Board Leadership Positions?

Your voice can shape Mortar Board: Join the Student Advisory Board.

Want to make an impact beyond your chapter? The Student Advisory Board gives you the opportunity to bring your region's student perspective to the national level. Members meet monthly to share ideas, provide input on programming and governance, and help ensure that student voices are part of the decisions shaping Mortar Board's future. It's a great opportunity to build your leadership experience, connect with students from across the country, and make a difference in your national organization.

Interested in serving? Talk with your Region Coordinator at conference to learn more. Elections will take place during Region Time on Sunday morning.

Proposed Amendments to the Bylaws of Mortar Board

Proposed amendments to the *Bylaws of Mortar Board, Inc.* for consideration by chapters in September 2026:

AMENDMENT 1

Action Proposed: Clarify expectations for member participation and establish standards and procedures for removal from national membership.

- Clarify that chapters may establish participation expectations for collegiate members and may remove a member from the active chapter roster for failure to meet those expectations, in accordance with chapter policies.
- Provide greater flexibility for chapters to establish participation expectations that promote meaningful engagement and recognize members' contributions, while maintaining appropriate standards for active collegiate membership.
- Clarify that removal from a chapter's active roster does not affect the individual's status as a national member of Mortar Board.
- Establish standards for serious misconduct that may result in removal from national membership, including harassment or discrimination, violence or abusive behavior, fraud or theft, serious violations of institutional policies or applicable law, and conduct that materially harms the Society, its chapters, or its members.
- Ensure that any removal from national membership follows the procedures established in the Bylaws, including appropriate notice and an opportunity for the member to appeal.

Proposed Bylaws Changes (new language in **purple**, language to strike in **red**):

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 – Collegiate Membership (Participation)

Section 4 – Resignation and Dismissal from Membership

Section 1.10, B

Strike: Membership in the Society requires active involvement; therefore, for a collegiate member to remain in good standing in the chapter, they must meet the requirements for participation established by the chapter and be in good standing with the institution with which the chapter is affiliated. If a penalty of the participation policy includes dismissal, the chapter must follow the dismissal procedures outlined in these Bylaws.

Add: Membership in the Society is enriched through active participation in chapter activities and initiatives. Collegiate members are expected to engage in the chapter in ways that support its mission and meet the participation expectations established by the chapter, while remaining in good standing with the institution with which the chapter is affiliated. Chapters are encouraged to establish participation expectations that promote meaningful engagement and recognize members' contributions. A chapter may remove a member from its active chapter roster for failure to meet its established participation expectations in accordance with chapter policies. Such action does not affect the individual's status as a national member of the Society.

Proposed Amendments to the Bylaws of Mortar Board

Proposed Language

B. Participation. ~~Membership in the Society requires active involvement; therefore, for a collegiate member to remain in good standing in the chapter, they must meet the requirements for participation established by the chapter and be in good standing with the institution with which the chapter is affiliated. If a penalty of the participation policy includes dismissal, the chapter must follow the dismissal procedures outlined in these Bylaws.~~ Membership in the Society is enriched through active participation in chapter activities and initiatives. Collegiate members are expected to engage in the chapter in ways that support its mission and meet the participation expectations established by the chapter, while remaining in good standing with the institution with which the chapter is affiliated. Chapters are encouraged to establish participation expectations that promote meaningful engagement and recognize members' contributions. A chapter may remove a member from its active chapter roster for failure to meet its established participation expectations in accordance with chapter policies. Such action does not affect the individual's status as a national member of the Society.

Section 4

Resignation and Dismissal from Membership

Create a new Section

Article III, Section 4.3, A. and Section 4.3, B.

Conduct and Removal from Membership

Add:

4.3 Conduct and Removal from Membership.

A. Membership in the Society carries the responsibility to uphold its values and maintain conduct consistent with its purposes. A member may be subject to removal from membership in the Society for serious misconduct that is incompatible with continued membership. Grounds for removal may include, but are not limited to:

- Harassment or discrimination.
- Violence, threats of violence, or abusive behavior.
- Fraud, theft, or other acts of dishonesty involving the Society or its members.
- Serious violations of institutional policies or applicable law.
- Conduct that materially harms the Society, its chapters, or its members.

B. Removal from national membership may occur through the procedures established in these Bylaws and shall include appropriate notice and an opportunity for the member to appeal.

Proposed Amendments to the Bylaws of Mortar Board

AMENDMENT 2

Action Proposed: Clarify the appointment and structure of national committees by distinguishing between standing and ad hoc committees.

- Remove the National President's specific appointment authority for committees from the list of individual National Council duties and establish committee appointment procedures in the Committee section of the Bylaws.
- Clarify that standing committees are appointed by the National President with the approval of the National Council, while ad hoc committees may be appointed by the National President as needed.
- Establish clear distinctions between standing and ad hoc committees to provide greater clarity regarding their purpose, appointment, and role in the governance of the Society.

Proposed Bylaws Changes (new language in **purple**, language to strike in **red**):

ARTICLE IV

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Section 1 – National Council

Section 3 – Committees

Section 1.12, A

Strike: committees

The National President shall preside at all conferences and National Council meetings, sign all charters granted, and appoint all region coordinators, ~~committees~~, and committee chairpersons. The National President shall sit as an ex-officio member on the Mortar Board National Foundation Board of Trustees with voice and vote.

Section 3.1

The National President, with the approval of National Council, shall appoint **standing** committees as needed to conduct the business of the Society ~~on an ad hoc basis~~. **The National President shall appoint ad hoc committees as needed.** Members of **standing and ad hoc** committees must be members of, **or advisors to**, the Society.

AMENDMENT 3

Action Proposed: Establish clear and consistent quorum and voting standards for conducting business and making decisions within the Society.

- Define quorum and establish the default requirement for conducting official business.
- Clarify the standards for majority votes, two-thirds votes, and plurality votes, including how abstentions are counted.
- Establish consistent voting requirements for elections, including the use of plurality voting for student representatives at-large.
- Clarify that when the Bylaws specify a different voting standard or a specific group of voters, that requirement takes precedence over the default voting standard.

Proposed Amendments to the Bylaws of Mortar Board

AMENDMENT 3 (CONTINUED)

Proposed Bylaws Changes (new language in **purple**, language to strike in **red**):

ARTICLE XI

PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITIES

Create a new Section

Article XI, Section 1

Quorum and Voting Requirements, Sections 1.1 – 1.6

Add:

Article XI, Section 1 – Quorum and Voting Requirements
Section 1 – Quorum and Voting Requirements.

1.1 – Quorum. A quorum is the minimum number of voting members or accredited voting delegates who must be present for a body to conduct official business. Unless otherwise stated in these Bylaws, a quorum shall consist of a majority of the voting members of the body. A quorum must be present before the body may conduct official business or take action.

1.2 – Majority Vote. Unless a different voting requirement is specifically stated in these Bylaws, an action shall be approved by a majority of the valid affirmative and negative votes cast by members present and voting. Abstentions are not counted as votes cast.

1.3 – Two-Thirds Vote. When these Bylaws require a two-thirds vote, the action shall be approved by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the valid votes cast by members present and voting. Abstentions are not counted as votes cast.

1.4 – Plurality. When these Bylaws provide for election by plurality, the candidate or candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected, even if no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast. Abstentions are not counted as votes cast.

1.5 – Elections. Unless otherwise stated in these Bylaws, elections shall require a majority of the valid votes cast by members present and voting. The election of student representatives at-large shall be by plurality, with the candidates receiving the highest number of votes elected.

1.6 – Other Voting Requirements. When these Bylaws specify that a vote is based on the entire membership, members present, accredited delegates, or another specifically identified group, that standard shall govern rather than the default majority vote described above.

Proposed Amendments to the Bylaws of Mortar Board

AMENDMENT 4

Action Proposed: Clarify the process for making administrative updates to the Bylaws between National Conferences while preserving the student delegation's authority over governance changes.

Allow the National Council and National Office to make administrative changes to the Bylaws ahead of the National Conference or Special National Conference. Examples include updating terminology referring to administrative processes and correcting typographical errors, misspellings, punctuation, or grammatical errors.

Require proposed administrative changes to be referred first to the Governance Committee for consideration.

Clarify that substantive governance changes to the Bylaws will continue to be presented to the student delegation for voice and vote.

Proposed Bylaws Changes (new language in **purple**, language to strike in **red**):

ARTICLE XIII

AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

Add: The National Council and National Office may make administrative changes to these Bylaws ahead of the National Conference or the Special National Conference. Proposed administrative changes shall first be referred to the Governance Committee for consideration.

More About the Bylaws of Mortar Board, Inc.

Twice a year, a student delegate from every active chapter participates in voting on national governance during the National Conference and Special National Conference. Participating in governance isn't just about policy—it's about having a seat at the table where decisions are made that impact chapters nationwide. It ensures Mortar Board continues to reflect the values, priorities, and perspectives of its members.

Bylaws

Our Bylaws outline how Mortar Board operates and guide the decisions that keep our organization strong, fair, and member-driven.

Submit a Bylaws Recommendation

We encourage active involvement in shaping Mortar Board's governance and bylaws. Contributing recommendations helps strengthen our shared mission and keeps our structure responsive to the evolving needs of students and chapters. There are two annual submission deadlines:

- **December 1** – for consideration at the Special National Conference
- **June 1** – for consideration at the National Conference

Learn more and view the Bylaws at: mortarboard.org/governance

National Leadership

NATIONAL COUNCIL

National President: Dr. Patience Whitworth (The Ohio State University, 2003)
Vice President: Dr. Brendan Wall (Illinois State University, 2018)
Secretary: Katie Verschelden (Kansas State University, 2002)
Treasurer: Kailee Weiker (Ohio Northern University, 2010)
Alumni Representative at-Large: Wilson Chan (University of Louisville, 1989)
Alumni Representative at-Large: Leslie Ellis (Lenoir-Rhyne University, 2015)
Student Representative at-Large: Eli Ade (Purdue University, 2025)
Student Representative at-Large: Molly McBratney (William Jewell College, 2025)
Immediate Past President: Nathan Cordle (The University of Alabama, 2011)
Past President: Dr. Cassandra Lucas (Purdue University, 1994)
Foundation Representative: Craig Evers (The Ohio State University, 2001)
Executive Director: Dr. Kirsten F. Fox (The Ohio State University, 1996)

NATIONAL FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President: Craig Evers (The Ohio State University, 2001)
Vice President: Karen S. Stiner (San Diego State University, 1987)
Secretary: Dr. W. David Lasater (Ball State University, 1992)
Treasurer: Matthew Ross (The Ohio State University, 2001)
Trustee: Dr. Joni Comstock (Eastern Illinois University, 2016)
Trustee: Susan Doss (The University of Alabama, 1985)
Trustee: Laura C. Simic (University of Oregon, 1985)
Trustee: Jenna Vitosh (The University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2006)
Trustee: Bruce Ware (University of Mississippi, 1998)
Trustee ex officio: Dr. Patience Whitworth (The Ohio State University, 2003)
Trustee ex officio: Kailee Weiker (Ohio Northern University, 2010)
Executive Director and Trustee ex officio: Dr. Kirsten F. Fox (The Ohio State University, 1996)

REGION COORDINATORS

Region 1

Dillon Cook (The University of Alabama, 2024)
Kadyn Houchins (Longwood University, 2025)
Grace Tang (Carnegie Mellon University, 2024)

Region 2

Emily Deskus (Endicott College, 2023)
Carina Huot (University of North Dakota, 2022)
Vedant Kulkarni (Kansas State University, 2021)
Annie Mascia (University of South Alabama, 2021)

Region 3

Olivia Beckett (The Ohio State University, 2024)
Chloe Jones (College of William & Mary, 2024)
Rachel Wong (Purdue University, 2023)

Region 4

Gabby Going (Eastern Illinois University, 2016)
Kailey Jerome (University of North Dakota, 2019)
Elizabeth Payton (Texas Tech University, 2023)

Region 5

Cadence Ciesielski (Kansas State University, 2021)
Shelby Morlock (Texas Tech University, 2023)
Nick Morris (Texas Tech University, 2025)

Region 6

Andrew Gray (The University of Tulsa, 2021)
Ava Heintzelman (University of Montana, 2024)
Mike Liu (Wake Forest University, 2025)

More Information

IMPORTANT GOVERNANCE & REPORTING DATES: 2026-2027

National Conference: September 25-27 (Columbus, Ohio)
Chapter Action Plan Deadline: September 30 (*October 15 quarter schools*)
Governance Recommendations Due: December 1
Special National Conference: January 24
Chapter Annual Reports Deadline: May 15 (*June 1 quarter schools*)
Collegiate Award Deadline: May 15
Governance Recommendations Due: June 1

NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF

Executive Director: Dr. Kirsten Fox (The Ohio State University, 1996)
Director of Collegiate Success: Trish Maxwell (The Ohio State University, 2024)
Director of Strategic Advancement: Liz Cook (Bucknell University, 2025)
Membership and Operations Manager: Ben Flox (Denison University, 2025)
Communications and Engagement Manager: Jaquilynn Huff (UW Milwaukee, 2019)
Administrative Assistant: Morgan Feeney

MORTAR BOARD STRATEGIC PLAN

Vision: To be scholars ... chosen for leadership ... committed to service ... united for equity

