

“Governing By-Laws”  
LGBTQ+ Scientists and Allies  
11.02.2020

**Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Agronomy Society of America, Crop Science Society of America, and Soil Science Society of America (hereinafter referred to as the Tri-Societies) LGBTQ+ Scientist and Allies Specialty Group (hereinafter referred to as Group) is to create a space for LGBTQ+ scientists and allies within the Tri-Societies. The Group aims to provide visibility and support for allies and queer scientists by providing educational resources and mentorship opportunities, and by building a network of queer students, scientists, and industry professionals. The Group will forefront an intersectional perspective of how queer identities intersect and coexist with other identities such as gender, race, socioeconomic status, and physical ability. This perspective will be the driving force for the Group when advocating for positive change both within and outside of the Tri-Societies. To achieve these goals, the Group will foster connections with groups both internal to and external of the Tri-Societies to build coalitions pursuing positive social change through activism.

**Objectives of the Group:****1. Community:**

- a. The Group will create a visible space for the queer community and its allies within the Tri-Societies and will perform outreach to increase visibility and membership from within the Tri-Societies.
- b. To encourage participation and collaboration, membership in the Group will be open to all members of the Tri-Societies. All Group members have a voice in our democratic and community-centered organization.
- c. For those in the LGBTQ+ community that do not wish to make their Group membership public, the Group will strive to maintain their privacy.
- d. At the Tri-Societies Annual Meetings, the Group will provide queer-inclusive representation by organizing sessions to facilitate this visibility.
- e. The Group will work with other internal Tri-Societies communities by connecting with other leaders and attending their meetings and events.
- f. The Group will support LGBTQ+ scientists globally and will strive to understand their experiences.

**2. Education:**

- a. The Group will be a source of education for our members, similar LGBTQ+ academic groups, and the general public by writing and releasing media for publication in a variety of venues including: social media, newsletters, conferences presentations and the CSA magazine of the Tri-Societies.
  - i. Social Media includes: the official discussion board, Group Slack channel, our newsletter, Group hidden and private Facebook group, and Group website.
- b. The Group will provide information for financial support for our student members, including but not exclusive to scholarships, grants, travel funding, and assistantships.

**3. Mentorship and Networking:**

- a. The Group will support the recruitment, education, and development of LGBTQ+ scientists and professionals by providing the members opportunities for mentorship and networking.
- b. The Group will foster professional connections between students, early-career scientists, and established scientists.
- c. The Group will reach out to external organizations to promote long-term connections, networking, and opportunities for our members that promote retention and diversity of perspective, opinion, and approach within the Tri-Societies.

**4. Advocacy:**

- a. The Group will advocate for positive social change for all marginalized peoples. The intersectional perspective will help the Group to foster and support the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community internal and external to the Tri-Societies.

- b. The Group will work with internal Tri-Societies and external coalitions to address issues of concern for our members including increasing the visibility of LGBTQ+ scientists, and for education and career opportunities.
- c. The Group will advocate for fair and balanced hiring and retention practices that promote diversity in the workplace in academic, public, and private sectors.
- d. The advocacy of the Group will be dependent on the direction from the members.

### **Code of Conduct**

The Tri-Societies LGBTQ+ Scientists and Allies community is dedicated to providing a harassment-free space for everyone, regardless of gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, ability, physical appearance, race, ethnicity, national origin, beliefs, religion, faith, documentation status, or socioeconomic status.

Members of the Tri-Society LGBTQ+ Scientists and Allies agree to:

- Adhere to the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Statement of Ethics (see linked documents below)
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct for the Annual Meeting (see [Code of Conduct here](#))
- Respect member privacy and confidentiality. Never “out” a member of their LGBTQ+ status.

All members of the Tri-Society LGBTQ+ Scientists and Allies will by default be non-public members, with the option to opt in to a public-facing list used for networking and mentorship.

Statement of Ethics from individual societies:

Crops: <https://www.crops.org/files/about-society/crops-statement-of-ethics.pdf>

Soils: <https://www.soils.org/files/about-society/soils-statement-of-ethics.pdf>

Agronomy: <https://www.agronomy.org/files/about-society/agronomy-statement-of-ethics.pdf>

**By-Laws of the Group:****ARTICLE 1 – Name**

1. This group, which currently exists as a specialty group within the American Society of Agronomy Society of America, Crop Science Society of America and Soil Science Society of America (hereinafter referred to as the Tri-Societies) shall be known as: Tri-Societies LGBTQ+ Scientists and Allies (hereinafter referred to as the Group).

**ARTICLE 2 - Objectives**

1. The objectives of the Group shall be to create a community, educate, provide mentorship and networking opportunities, and advocate on the behalf of our members and the Tri-Societies with respect to an intersectional perspective of LGTBQ+ issues.
  - a. Community:
    - i. Foremost, the Group strives to create a sense of belonging to members of the LGBTQ+ community present within the Tri-Societies.
    - ii. The Group aims to be visible to indicate to individuals that they have a place within the Group, while maintaining privacy for those members of the LGBTQ+ community that do not wish to make their Group membership public.
  - b. Educate:
    - i. The Group's visibility and activities aim to educate, create social capital, build bridges among groups, and increase social awareness of LGBTQ+ issues.
  - c. Mentorship and Networking:
    - i. The Group aims to provide a sense of belonging through mentorship and networking so that students, scientists, and professionals remain involved and make valuable contributions to our relative disciplines.
  - d. Advocacy:
    - i. The Group forefronts an intersectional perspective to foster and support the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community.
    - ii. The Group aims to organize and advocate on behalf of the Group both internal and external to the Tri-Societies.

**ARTICLE 3 – Membership**

1. There shall be four classes of membership for the Group: active, inactive, associated and private.
  - a. The purpose of these membership classes shall be to organize membership based on their:
    - i. Status with the Tri-Societies as active members.
    - ii. Self-described desire to be a part of the Group.
    - iii. Desire to be publicly identified as members of the Group.
2. Active Members:
  - a. Active members are those that:

- i. Are fully active members of at least one of the member societies of the Tri-Societies.
    - ii. Identify themselves as having the desire to be part of the Group.
    - iii. Desire to be publicly identified as members of the Group.
  - b. Active members can vote, hold elected office, and participate in all meetings and activities of the Group.
3. Inactive Members:
  - a. Inactive members are those that:
    - i. Have recently been but are not currently active members of at least one of the member societies of the Tri-Societies.
    - ii. Identify themselves as having the desire to be part of the Group.
    - iii. Desire to be publicly identified as members of the Group.
  - b. Inactive members cannot vote or hold elected office. Inactive members may participate in all meetings and activities of the Group.
4. Associated Members:
  - a. Associated Members are those that:
    - i. Are not currently active members of at least one of the member societies of the Tri-Societies.
    - ii. Identify themselves as having the desire to be part of the Group.
    - iii. Desire to be publicly identified as members of the Group.
  - b. Associated members cannot vote or hold office. Associated members may participate in certain meetings and activities of the Group at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
5. Private Members:
  - a. Private members are those that:
    - i. Are fully active members of at least one of the member societies of the Tri-Societies.
    - ii. Identify themselves as having the desire to be part of the Group.
    - iii. Do not desire to be publicly identified as members of the Group, these members should declare upon joining the group to the Membership Chair they wish to be a private member.
  - b. Private members can vote but cannot hold elected office. Private members may participate in all meetings and activities of the group if desired.
  - c. The Group will make every effort to maintain the privacy of private members by not listing their identifying information in any public place, but the group cannot make any full guarantee of privacy.

#### **ARTICLE 4 – Organization**

1. The Group exists within the Tri-Societies as a specialty group and therefore is subject to the structures and authorities each of the societies have set forth.
2. As an organization the Group shall have elected officers as well as standing committees that will facilitate the objectives as described in Article 2.

- a. The elected officers of the Group will be called the “Executive Committee” whose functions are defined in Article 5.
  - b. The functions of the standing committees are defined in Article 6.
3. Voting for the Executive Committee will be described in Article 7.
4. The Group’s year runs from January 1 to December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- a. Those elected to offices and those volunteering on committees will serve for the full year unless noted otherwise.
5. Business meetings for the Group will take place two times per year, including the business meeting at the Annual Meetings.
- a. The Group will follow parliamentary procedure as outlined in the Robert’s Rules of Order (<http://www.rulesonline.com/rror--00.htm>).
  - b. General Meeting Agenda:
    - i. Call to Order
    - ii. Approve of the Minutes
    - iii. Open Forum
    - iv. Executive Reports
    - v. Committee Reports
    - vi. Old Business
    - vii. New Business
    - viii. Announcements
    - ix. Adjournment
6. All members (active, inactive, associated, and private) will adhere to the Code of Conduct.
- a. Procedures for disciplinary action of a group member or executive censure of a Executive Committee member are defined in Article 10.

## **ARTICLE 5 – Executive Committee**

1. The Executive Committee shall consist of active members elected to the positions of:
  - a. Chair, Vice Chair, Communications Chair, Membership Chair, and Finance Chair, and Past-Chair.
2. Responsibilities:
  - a. The Executive Committee is responsible for representing the Group and achieving the objectives as defined in Article 2.
  - b. The Executive Committee has the authority to make major decisions with respect to finances, advocacy, and planned activities.
  - c. Each member of the Executive Committee shall represent the Group with honor and integrity.
  - d. The Executive Committee deals with any issues relating to disciplinary action and executive censure as detailed in Article 10.
3. Authorities:
  - a. The authority to elect new members of the Executive Committee lies with the general membership for annual or special elections.

- b. The Executive Committee does have the authority to remove a member from the classification of active membership within the Group or from a leadership role if they see fit with a unanimous (aside from the member in question) vote.
  - c. Each elected member can only serve in one position of the Executive Committee during each term.
4. Term Lengths:
- a. Each position on the Executive Committee is held by an active member for one calendar year as defined in Article 4, Section 4a.
  - b. Active members who are elected as Vice Chair will need a three-calendar year commitment as they will serve one year as Vice Chair, one year as Chair, and one year as the Past-Chair.
  - b. The previous term's Chair of the Executive Committee will serve in an advisory role as Past-Chair
    - i. After the term of the Communications, Membership and Finance Chairs are over, they may be available for consultation, but no longer have voting power or responsibility to attend official duties.
5. Executive Committee Member Functions:
- a. Chair
    - i. This position is filled by the Vice-Chair of the previous term.
      - 1. After term as Chair, the member serves as Past Chair for one term.
    - ii. Runs all business meetings.
    - iii. Oversees Executive Committee.
    - iv. Actively serves as a point person for the Group.
    - v. Sets goals and objectives for their term with the Executive Committee.
    - vi. Works with the Group to determine the best avenue for the Group's advocacy.
    - vii. At the end of their term the Chair shall write a summary of the Executive Committee and Groups' activities for the record to help build and maintain institutional knowledge.
  - b. Vice Chair
    - i. Serves one calendar year as Vice Chair, which then rolls into the Chair position the following calendar year, and then serves one year as Past-Chair.
      - 1. Active members nominated to this position need to be able to commit three years to the Executive Committee.
    - ii. Serves as Chair of the Annual Meetings Committee.
    - iii. Facilitates the elections for the other Executive Committee members as defined in Article 7.
    - iv. Facilitates the process for any amendments to the By-laws as defined in Article 8.
  - c. Communications Chair
    - i. Chairs the Communications Committee.
    - ii. Maintains the Group's Discussion Boards.



- iii. Works to increase the presence of the Group's communication internal to the Tri-Societies.
- iv. Serves as a point person for the Group's work on internal Tri-Societies diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and committees.
- v. Maintain the Group's documents.
- vi. Responsible for moderating and growing the group's social media accounts.
- vii. Record Executive Committee and business meeting notes and post to the Group's archive.
- d. Membership Chair
  - i. Chairs the Membership Committee.
  - ii. Maintains membership roster, including reaching out to new members about their desire to be publicly known as a member of the group.
  - iii. Establishes best practices for the Group to try and maintain the privacy of Private members.
  - iv. Leads the Group in trying to grow the membership of the Group.
  - v. Maintain files and a list of those of the Group who have had complaints lodged against them, as well as any decision regarding executive censure or disciplinary actions.
- e. Finance Chair
  - i. Chairs the Finance Committee.
  - ii. Coordinates with the Chair, Executive Committee and standing committees on the finances for the Group.
  - iii. Actively works on fundraising for the Group.
  - iv. Assists Annual Meetings Committee with application for monetary assistance for special sessions.
  - v. Works with External Communications Committee to establish and maintain relationships with potential and current donors for the Group.
- f. Past-Chair
  - i. Previous Chair of the Executive Committee.
  - ii. Serves as a non-voting ex-officio member of the Executive Committee.
  - iii. Required to attend Executive Committee meetings to provide institutional knowledge of the Group.
- g. Communications, Membership and Finance Past-Chairs
  - i. These are not active members of the Executive Committee.
  - ii. These past-chairs are not required to attend executive committee meetings but may be called upon to attend to provide institutional knowledge from their prior positions and standing committees their chaired over the previous calendar year.
- 6. Meetings
  - a. The Executive Committee shall meet at a minimum of 2 times per year.

## **ARTICLE 6 – Standing Committees:**

1. There shall be four standing committees:
  - a. Annual Meeting
  - b. Communications
  - c. Membership
  - d. Finance
2. Any active or private member, as defined in Article 3 Section 2, can volunteer on any of the defined standing committees.
  - a. Active and private members are actively encouraged to volunteer and be involved in the standing committees.
3. Objectives and Functions of the standing committees:
  - a. Annual Meeting Committee:
    - i. The Vice Chair from the Executive Committee will serve as the chair for this standing committee.
    - ii. The Annual Meeting Committee will plan events at the Annual Meetings, work with Tri-Societies diversity, inclusion and equity groups for topic and speaker selection, and maintain a visible presence for our members, as well as for growing the Group.
    - iii. This committee will schedule the business meeting at each Annual Meeting and will plan the agenda.
    - iv. This committee will plan and execute a special speaker's session and social event for group members.
      1. The committee will work with the other standing committees and the Finance Chair for help with fundraising, as well as building a session that is applicable and interesting for members of all three societies.
    - v. This committee will work with the Internal Affairs Committee to increase engagement and presence of our specialty group at diversity, inclusion and equity events at the Annual Meetings.
    - vi. This committee will actively work with group members to maintain a visible presence at a table in the main hall, a specialty group poster and other visible efforts for Tri-Societies members to meet and work with the Group at the Annual Meetings.
4. Communications Committee
  - i. The Communications Chair from the Executive Committee will serve as chair for this standing committee.
  - ii. This standing committee is focused on working within the Tri-Societies to foster diversity, inclusion and equity initiatives throughout the Tri-Societies as well as increasing the visibility and representation of the Group.
  - iii. Establish a regular column in the CSA magazine, the Tri-Societies periodical mailed monthly to members, to highlight the work of the Group and queer issues within the realms of agronomy, crops, and soils.

- iv. Establish and advocate for policy positions that will actively help and benefit LGBTQ+ members of the societies and agriculture with the Tri-Societies Science Policy Office.
- 5. Membership Committee
  - i. The Membership Chair, from the Executive Committee, services as the chair for this standing committee.
  - ii. This standing committee will work with the Executive Committee to develop and execute plans for networking with academic society LGBTQ+ groups external to the Tri-Societies.
    - 1. As well as working with these groups on initiatives that the Group can actively participate in.
  - iii. This standing committee will work with established mentoring opportunities external to the Tri-Societies as well as working with the Internal Affairs Committee on internal Tri-Societies mentoring opportunities.
    - 1. External mentoring opportunities: opportunities from networking with external academic society LGBTQ+ groups.
- 6. Finance Committee
  - i. The Finance Chair, from the Executive Committee, serves as the chair for this standing committee.
  - ii. This standing committee will seek out and work on partnerships with companies, and non-profit organizations that the Group can partner with for initiatives as set by this and the Executive Committees.
  - iii. Develop and submit an annual budget to the Executive Committee.
  - iv. Fundraising for the Annual Meetings, socials, or other budget items for the group.
  - v. Fundraise, manage, and award scholarship funds.
- 7. Each standing committee will be required to present a report of previous years activities at the Annual Meeting's business meeting, as well as submitting a digital copy with more extensive notes to the Group's archive.
- 8. The functions, composition and number of standing committees can be changed through the established method to change the Group's By-Laws (see Article 9).

#### **ARTICLE 7 – Voting:**

- 1. All active and private members of the Group, as described in Article 3, Sections 2 and 5, may vote in elections.
- 2. Executive Committee Elections:
  - a. Nominations will be opened in September each year for the Vice Chair, Communications Chair, Membership Chair, and Finance Chair for the upcoming calendar year.
    - i. As stated in Article 5, Section 5.b, the Vice Chair serves for three calendar years: year one as Vice Chair, year two as Chair, and year three as Past-Chair.

- b. All members of the Executive Committee will serve one-year terms in each position beginning January 1<sup>st</sup> and finishing December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year following their election.
  - c. There shall be no term limits for the Communications, Membership and Finance Chairs, whereas members can only serve in one position at a time.
  - d. Only active members are eligible for nominations and to serve on the Executive Committee.
  - e. All active and private members of the Group may self-nominate or nominate other active members for a leadership role.
  - f. All active members will be notified both of nomination deadlines and dates of voting at least 30 days before they take place.
  - g. The Vice Chair will facilitate the election process from the call for nominations to publishing the results for the Group.
  - h. The Vice Chair will certify that all who are nominated for elections are active members of the Group with the Membership Chair.
  - i. All voting will take place online using an online form or voting mechanism to be chosen by the Vice Chair each year.
  - j. Elections will take place in October and results will be made available to all classes of membership in the Group as soon as votes are tallied.
  - k. Rank choice voting will be used to determine the winner for each position.
    - i. Therefore, each ballot form will allow voters to rank their choice of candidate in order of their preference.
    - ii. If there are two nominees, a simple majority 50%+1 vote are needed to win.
    - iii. If there is only one nominee for the position, the election committee may nominate additional candidates or declare the nominee the winner unopposed.
3. Special Elections:
- a. Special elections will occur when a position is vacated unexpectedly (i.e. lapsed membership for more than 3 months, impeachment, etc.) during the term of an elected leader.
  - b. Special elections will follow all the election guidelines as the Executive Committee Elections (Article 7, Section 2), except they may occur anytime during the term for the vacated position.

### **ARTICLE 8 – Amending the By-Laws**

- 1. Any active or private member can submit a proposed change to the By-Laws to the Vice Chair at least 30 days before the business meeting at which the proposed change is to be voted on by the Group.
- 2. Amendment proposals shall include:
  - a. Original article (if applicable)
  - b. Proposed amendment
  - c. Reason for proposed amendment

3. The Vice Chair must communicate any notice of a proposed change to the Group at least 14 days prior to the business meeting at which the proposed change is to be voted on by the Group.
4. Recommended changes to the Group's By-Laws will require an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of all active and private members of the Group at a business meeting.

## **ARTICLE 9 - Disciplinary Action or Executive Censure**

1. All members are encouraged to maintain a collegial relationship with each other and to avoid unprofessional behavior or conduct. Please refer to the Code of Conduct for guiding principles.
2. Members, the Executive Committee, as well as non-members who associate with the Group shall be subject to disciplinary action or executive censure if it is determined that it is warranted.
3. Disciplinary action or executive censure may include removal from the group, referral to the Tri-Societies, or referral to law enforcement, if necessary.
4. Process for disciplinary action or executive censure:
  - a. Submitting a Complaint:
    - i. Group members who experience or witness a violation of the Code of Conduct can submit a complaint to any Executive Committee member to launch the formal executive censure or disciplinary action process.
    - ii. The individual submitting the complaint (plaintiff) may choose more than one Executive Committee member to receive their complaint.
    - iii. The members of the Executive Committee who receive the complaint are required to call a special meeting of the Executive Committee within 30 days of receiving said complaint.
      1. The special meeting will include the plaintiff, and the whole Executive Committee.
        - a. If the complaint is filed against an Executive Committee member, they will be not be invited to or be privy to this special meeting.
  - b. Reaching a Decision
    - i. In the special meeting, the Executive Committee will hear the complaint from the plaintiff and if necessary, examine any evidence.
    - ii. The Executive Committee has the authority to:
      1. Ask for the defendant to speak on their own behalf
      2. Refer the issue to the appropriate Tri-Society leadership or law enforcement
      3. Make a final decision immediately (50% +1 majority).
    - iii. If additional meetings are needed to decide the issue, the board may meet a maximum of three times before they are required to either refer the issue to another authority or make a decision.
    - iv. All minutes from these special meetings shall be preserved indefinitely upon the announcement of a decision of the Executive Committee.
      1. The Membership Chair shall maintain these records.

2. These records shall not be made available to the whole membership for privacy considerations.
- c. Resolution
- i. Once the Executive Committee reaches a decision on the plaintiff's complaint it is considered final.
  - ii. Any documented case of retaliation from the decision will be met with immediate dismissal of any members a part of the retaliation from the Group.
  - iii. Any member who has been dismissed from the Group must attain written permission from the whole Executive Committee to rejoin the Group as a member.
  - iv. Any complaints against a member which are referred to law enforcement will be dismissed from the group and not allowed to rejoin the Group for a period of 10 years.
    1. After the period of 10 years is complete and if this member is interested in rejoining the Group, must attain written permission from the Executive Committee.
  - v. Members who receive censure shall receive it in writing.
    1. These members are eligible to receive an explanation of the censure by a member of the Executive Committee.
    2. They are not permitted to make public the censure.
    3. If the action that led to censure is repeated the member will be considered for dismissal from the Group.
- d. Executive Committee Member Censure or Disciplinary Actions:
- i. If a member of the Executive committee has a complaint filed against them and being considered for impeachment or censure it is appropriate for the Executive Committee to ask a past Executive Committee member to sit in on the special meetings and help generate a decision.
  - ii. If an Executive Committee member is removed from their position and/or dismissed from the Group with more than 90 days to the annual elections, a special election may be held to fill their position.