

# **CONSTITUTION FOR THE CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH COOPERATIVE (CHERC)**

## **ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of the organization is the Catholic Higher Education Research Cooperative (CHERC).

## **ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

### Section A:

The purpose of CHERC is to bring research to bear on the issues of institutional mission effectiveness, improved student learning, and the value of Catholic heritage and religious affiliation at institutions of Catholic higher education. CHERC is intentionally a cooperative and functions effectively as such to the extent that members assume active responsibility for identification and execution of its goals, projects and processes.

### Section B:

This purpose shall be accomplished in the following ways:

- By conducting and supporting research that promotes better understanding of Catholic higher education
- By engaging in active, collaborative data sharing
- By promoting best practices benchmarking among members
- By establishing an active network through which colleagues working in Catholic institutions of higher education can share ideas, concerns, and challenges
- By encouraging dialogue between high level administrators and researchers within the institutions to identify and respond to strategic information needs
- By maintaining a website with information on Catholic higher education and links to existing works in the field
- By identifying, where possible, other organizations and individuals pursuing similar objectives so as to reduce duplication of efforts
- By tapping into and contributing as appropriate to the discourse on the meaning of Catholic higher education

## **ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP**

### Section A:

The base of membership in CHERC is institutional. Accredited North American Catholic colleges and universities may become members of CHERC as institutions. Institutions which join CHERC must identify a primary CHERC contact person and may identify any number of individuals as member-participants. Individual member-participants must be employees of or students at the member institution. Each institution has the right to cast one vote in elections for the Board of Directors. That vote shall be cast by the primary contact person. Each institution shall decide how to determine its vote.

### Section B:

CHERC is open to affiliate members including organizations and individuals. However, such do not have voting privileges and must be approved by the Board of Directors.

Any individual who is employed by an institution can sign up that institution as long as membership dues are provided by that institution.

### Section C:

All institutional member-participants of CHERC have the same rights and responsibilities within the organization. These rights include: the right to be considered for the Board of Directors, to attend CHERC activities, to participate in the "members only" sections of the CHERC website, to provide input to the institutional primary contact person on voting matters.

Affiliate members have similar rights and responsibilities with the exception that they cannot vote or be considered for the Board of Directors. Additionally, affiliate members may be restricted from accessing certain institutional data.

All member-participants have the corresponding responsibility to abide by the constitution in the conduct of the activities and operations of CHERC and to contribute to the success of the Cooperative.

### Section D

Membership shall be annual, on a calendar year basis, commencing upon CHERC's receipt of annual dues.

## **ARTICLE IV: FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Annual dues shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors has fiduciary responsibility for and will establish financial mechanisms.

An annual financial review shall be conducted by two member-participants who are not members of the Board of Directors. The two member-participants shall be appointed by the Board.

## **ARTICLE V: BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### Section A: Membership

The Board of Directors consists of nine (9) individual member-participants chosen from among the active membership of CHERC.

### Section B: Selection

Individuals are nominated to become Board members through the current Board of Directors. Individuals are allowed to place themselves or other member-participants for nomination by informing the Board at least two weeks before the opening of the election period. To be eligible for nomination, a person (a) must be a member-participant, (b) must expressly indicate commitment to the purposes of the CHERC, and his or her institution supports his or her service on the Board.

A nominating committee appointed by the Board of Directors will determine the slate of nominees. The slate of nominees will be presented to the entire membership. Those nominees receiving the highest number of votes in descending order up to the number of vacancies shall be

elected. Elections will be conducted electronically in a four week period commencing six weeks prior to the annual meeting.

### Section C: Term of Office

A Board member's term of office is three (3) years. Board members are eligible to run for re-election. Board members may not serve more than two (2) consecutive full terms. A board member elected or appointed to fill the remainder of a vacated seat may serve that partial term and two (2) additional full consecutive terms.

Three (3) board members are elected each year to provide for the continuity of the Board.

Terms of office shall begin and end at the business meeting of the annual conference. If no Conference is held, the term of office shall expire on the date of the third anniversary of the election of the Board member, and new terms shall begin on the date of the expiration of the terms of the outgoing Board members.

If a Board Member leaves before her or his term is completed, the Board of Directors will appoint an interim replacement to serve out the term.

### Section D: Structure of the Board

The Board of Directors chooses annually, by simple majority vote, from among themselves a Chair, an Associate Chair and a Treasurer for one-year terms.

The Board of Directors chooses from among themselves two co-chairs for each of the three working groups, which are based on the primary functions of CHERC: (a) research in Catholic higher education, (b) active, collaborative data sharing and best practices benchmarking, and (c) annual conference. The co-chairs serve for one year terms, with no term limits on the position of co-chair, other than the term limits for serving on the Board. The officers may not serve as co-chairs of the working groups.

The Board has the authority to appoint *ex officio* members.

### Section E. Decisions of the Board

Decisions of the Board of Directors shall be made by a simple majority of the members present and those who can be reached in a timely manner for distance voting.

A quorum of six members, including distance voting, of the Board of Directors is necessary for decisions to be ratified.

### Section F: Responsibilities of the Board

The responsibilities of the Board of Directors include the following:

- planning the annual conference and other CHERC activities
- determining annual membership dues
- approving the annual budget and overseeing the expenditure of CHERC monies
- governing and representing the association throughout the year

- planning for its own continuity through nomination of at least three new Board members to stand for election each year
- making decisions not specified in this constitution for the good of the organization
- encouraging active membership and robust participation in collaborative data sharing and cooperative research

The Board of Directors shall meet at least twice per year and shall maintain more regular contact throughout the year. The Board shall determine the time and place of its meetings. Meetings may be conducted electronically or by conference call as determined by the Board. Resources permitting, the Board may underwrite costs related to participating in official Board meetings.

#### **ARTICLE VI: ADOPTION**

This constitution shall be effective immediately upon its ratification by two thirds of the institutional members voting within a four-week period to be determined by the ad hoc Steering Committee. Said Steering Committee will disband when the Board begins its duties.

#### **ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS**

##### Section A:

The Board of Directors will propose amendments to this constitution to the membership of CHERC four (4) weeks before the annual business meeting. Any member-participant of CHERC may propose amendments to the Board for consideration. Only amendments approved by the Board will be put forth to the entire membership and discussed at the annual business meeting.

##### Section B:

Amendments will be adopted by two thirds of the electronic ballots received by a specified date set by the Board. Each institution has one vote on amendments to the constitution as cast by the primary contact.

*Approved on April 15, 2008*