

**CONSTITUTION**  
**of the**  
**SOONER ATHLETIC CONFERENCE**

Article I

Name

Section 1.

The name of this organization shall be the Sooner Athletic Conference (the “conference”). It is a voluntary non-profit association incorporated in the State of Arkansas.

Section 2.

The members of this conference are: University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City University, Wayland Baptist University, John Brown University, Mid-America Christian University, Southwestern Assemblies of God University, Southwestern Christian University, Texas Wesleyan University, Oklahoma Panhandle State University, Central Christian College of Kansas, Langston University, and College of the Ozarks.

Article II

Purpose

Section 1.

The purpose of the Sooner Athletic Conference shall be to promote and enhance the intercollegiate athletic programs of each member institution. The goal is to provide both challenging and quality athletic opportunities and competition for each student athlete at each member institution.

Article III

Nature of the Conference

Section 1.

The Sooner Athletic Conference is an independent organization affiliated with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), and in voluntary compliance with

the NAIA constitution, bylaws, rules and regulations. The conference is governed by the constitution and bylaws of the Sooner Athletic Conference.

## Section 2.

All member institutions of the Sooner Athletic Conference shall be bound by the conference constitution and bylaws as well as such rules and regulations as the conference shall enact.

## Article IV

### Conference Membership

## Section 1.

Institutions recognized by their regional academic accrediting association or by such other academic accrediting association as the NAIA shall determine, shall be eligible for membership in the conference. All institutions in the conference shall maintain a not-for-profit designation, must have academic classification above the junior college level, and must be conducting university programs for the upper division classes toward the baccalaureate degree.

## Section 2.

Prospective institutions making application for membership in the Sooner Athletic Conference must have active NAIA affiliation, to include an active NAIA membership application, and may not at the time be on the NAIA's list of suspended or probationary members.

## Section 3.

Members of the conference must adhere and agree to the following:

- A. To supervise and control athletics sponsored by this conference so that the activities will be administered in accordance with the rules and purposes set forth in the constitution and bylaws of the conference.
- B. To establish and maintain high standards of ethical conduct and fair play.
- C. To pay annual dues to the conference by the date set by the conference Commissioner.
- D. To participate in men's and women's basketball and a minimum of one fall sport for men, one fall sport for women, one spring sport for men and one spring

sport for women. All such sports must be sports that are sponsored by the conference.

- E. To compete in conference-scheduled, regular-season contests in all sports they sponsor, provided the conference mandates a regular-season schedule in that sport.
- F. To compete at conference championship events in all sports they sponsor, provided the conference declares a champion in that sport.

#### Section 4.

If a member's accreditation is removed and/or status changes to for-profit at any time during its membership, the member shall immediately lose its membership in the conference. However, the member institution's President may request a continuance of membership for the remainder of the fiscal year. Such request must be in writing and should include rationale for postponing the ceasing of membership. Should the Council of Presidents grant a continuance, membership then terminates automatically upon conclusion of the current fiscal year unless the accreditation and/or not-for-profit designation has been reinstated.

#### Section 5.

**Membership Application and Approval Process:** A prospective institution may be admitted to membership in the conference in the following manner:

- A. New members may be admitted by application or invitation. Any such application from a prospective member must be made to the conference Commissioner at least thirty (30) days prior to the next regular conference meeting. The conference Commissioner shall notify all member institutions regarding membership applications at least fifteen (15) days preceding the next regular meeting.
- B. A new member may be admitted with the affirmative vote of at least three-fourths (3/4) of the Council of Presidents.
- C. A new member shall be assessed a one-time entry fee equal to the annual dues fee in place when the Council of Presidents grants final membership approval. The entry fee shall be paid in full prior to the new member's initial competition in the conference.
- D. A new member shall be integrated into conference schedules within two (2) years of final approval by the Council of Presidents and such member shall be eligible for conference championship competition at that time.

## Section 6.

### Associate Membership:

- A. Associate membership shall provide an alternate entry option to membership in the Conference and may be accorded to institutions with active or associate member status in the NAIA.
- B. An institution may belong to the Conference as an associate member with the affirmative vote of at least three-fourths (3/4) of the Council of Presidents. Associate members shall serve an evaluation period for at least one (1) year, after which time such an associate member shall be eligible for full membership in the Conference, which shall then require the affirmative vote of all members of the Conference with full membership status.
- C. Associate members shall be provided a schedule of competition and shall have voting privileges only in matters related to the specific sports in which they participate. Associate members shall be eligible for athletic and academic achievement awards in such sports. During the first year of membership in the Conference, associate members shall not be eligible to win Conference championships or participate in Conference postseason events in any sport in which they participate, unless an exception is provided in the sport guidelines.
- D. Annual dues for associate members shall be the same as those for full members.
- E. Associate members, once admitted to the Conference, shall be assessed a one-time entry fee in an amount to be determined by the Council of Presidents. The entry fee shall be paid in full prior to the associate member's initial competition in the conference. Should the associate member subsequently be affirmed for full membership in the Conference, the amount of this one-time entry fee shall be applied toward the one-time entry fee required of new full members.

## Section 7.

### Per-Sport Membership:

- A. Per-sport membership shall provide opportunity for an NAIA active member to join the Conference on a per-sport(s) basis if the institution otherwise holds membership in an affiliated conference/A.I.I. which has fewer than six (6) institutions declaring intent to participate in NAIA postseason in the given sport(s). Per-sport members shall submit eligibility certification, request exceptional rulings, submit self-reported violations, and report statistics through the Conference.

- B. An institution may belong to the Conference as a per-sport member with the affirmative vote of at least three-fourths (3/4) of the Council of Presidents. Per-sport membership status shall be for a one-year period and shall be reviewed annually by the Council of Presidents.
- C. Per-sport members shall be provided a schedule of competition and access to the conference championship event in the specific sport(s) in which they participate and shall have voting privileges only in matters related to such the specific sport(s). Per-sport members shall be eligible for athletic and academic achievement awards.
- D. Annual dues and other assessments for per-sport members shall be determined by the Council of Presidents.

## Section 8.

### Termination of membership:

- A. Involuntary Termination. Membership of any member institution failing to maintain the conference standards, as set forth in the conference constitution, bylaws and in such rules and regulations as the conference may enact, may be terminated by the three-fourths (3/4) vote of the members of the conference with full membership status.
- B. Voluntary Termination. Member institutions wishing to resign from the conference shall submit a letter of resignation to the conference Commissioner, who shall refer it to the Council of Presidents for final disposition. Notice of intent to resign shall be given by June 30<sup>th</sup>, two calendar years prior to the effective date of such resignation. The resignation of a member institution will not be accepted until all obligations, financial and otherwise, have been met, and the member must remain in good standing in every respect until the resignation is effective.
  - 1. A withdrawal fee in the amount equal to its annual dues will be paid by the exiting institution if the Conference is notified between one and two calendar years of the effective date of withdrawal.
  - 2. A withdrawal fee in the amount equal to twice its annual dues will be levied if notice of withdrawal is submitted less than one calendar year prior to the effective date of withdrawal.
  - 3. No fee will be assessed if the Conference is given two calendar years notice of withdrawal.

## Article V

### Governance

#### Section 1.

The Conference shall be governed by a Council of Presidents ("COP"), which shall consist of the Presidents of each member institution. The Council of Presidents shall have the ultimate authority for making decisions for the conference and shall govern in the specific areas of conference business as set forth in the conference bylaws and all amendments thereto. The Council of Presidents shall elect a Chair by a majority vote of the member Presidents, to serve a one-year term, and said Chair may also be elected to such additional one-year terms as the members of the COP shall deem appropriate. The Chair of the COP shall also be the conference representative to the NAIA Council of Presidents.

## Article VI

### Officers

#### Section 1.

The elected officers of this Conference shall be: the Chair of the COP, a Vice-Chair of the COP, a Commissioner, and an Executive Committee of the Athletic Directors of member institutions. Terms of office shall begin annually on July 1 or at such time as the COP shall determine.

#### Section 2.

The Commissioner of the Conference shall be elected by majority vote of the COP. The term of this office shall be one year, and the election shall be held at the end of the conference year or at such times as the COP shall determine.

#### Section 3.

The Executive Committee shall be composed of three athletic directors of member institutions, each serving a three-year rotating term, with one new member elected each year for a three year-term. No member of the Executive Committee shall be able to succeed himself/herself, and elections will be held at the annual spring meeting. Executive Committee members shall be elected by a majority vote of all member institutions. The Commissioner shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee.

#### Section 4.

The Eligibility Committee shall be composed of three members: the Conference Eligibility Chair, who shall be selected by the Executive Committee; the Chair of the Faculty Athletic Representative Committee (in the event the chair of the FAR committee is the same person who serves as the conference Eligibility Chair, the FAR committee shall elect one of its members to serve on the Eligibility Committee); and the Conference Commissioner.

#### Section 5.

The Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) Committee shall be composed of all of the faculty athletic representatives of the member institutions, each of whom shall be selected by the President of his/her respective institution. The Commissioner shall also serve as an ex-officio member of this committee. This committee shall meet at least once a year at such time as shall be set by the FAR chair, who shall be elected by a majority vote of the FARs of the member institutions.

#### Section 6.

The Conduct in Competition Committee shall be composed of at least three members who shall be appointed by the Commissioner. Members of the committee shall serve three-year rotating terms, with one new member elected each year for a three-year term. The Commissioner shall serve as an ex-officio member of this committee. This committee shall meet at least twice a year, or as many times as the members of such committee shall deem necessary.

#### Section 7.

The Champions of Character Committee shall be composed of the campus liaisons from each member institution. The Commissioner shall serve as an ex-officio member of this committee. This committee shall meet at least once a year or as many times as the members of this committee shall deem necessary.

### Article VII

#### Meetings – Voting

#### Section 1.

The Council of Presidents (COP) shall meet at least twice each year, which may be in person or virtual, at the discretion of the COP. Any such meeting shall be held at such time and place as the COP shall determine. All Presidents shall attend all meetings of the Council of Presidents or shall send a duly appointed representative. However, only Presidents shall be authorized to vote on business under the control of the COP, as set forth in the conference bylaws.

The Conference Commissioner shall attend all meetings of the COP but shall not have a vote on any matters. As the Commissioner is the Chief Operating Officer of the conference, his/her role in the COP meetings is only advisory. In addition, the COP may invite such other officers of the conference or such other athletic officials of member institutions, or of the NAIA, to attend any meeting of the COP, which the COP shall determine appropriate.

## Section 2.

The athletic directors of each conference member institution shall have at least two meetings per year, one in the Fall and one in the Spring. The Fall meeting shall be held in September each year and the Spring meeting shall be held in May. Both meetings shall be held on such dates as shall be set by the Commissioner. Additional meetings may be held as determined by the Commissioner in consultation with the Executive Committee of the conference.

## Section 3.

Special meetings for the conference may be called by the Commissioner or by any member of the Executive Committee. Actions taken at any specially called meeting shall have the same force and effect as actions taken at the regularly scheduled meetings.

## Section 4.

Each conference member with full membership status shall have one vote on any and all issues that may come before the conference. Associate members shall have one vote on all matters pertaining to sports that their institution participates in. All votes shall be cast by the athletic director on behalf of his/her member institution, or by his/her designated representative. The athletic directors shall not vote on matters reserved by the conference bylaws to the COP.

## Section 5.

A majority vote shall be sufficient to pass any and all legislation or to resolve other matters before the conference except in situations specified otherwise by the conference constitution.

## Section 6.

Voting at all conference meetings of the COP or of the Athletic Directors, may be by mail, telephone, or e-mail at the discretion of the COP Chair or of the Commissioner. The results of all votes on conference matters shall be communicated to all conference members by electronic mail, within seven days of such vote.

## Article VIII

### Amendments

Three-fourths (3/4) affirmative vote of the Council of Presidents is necessary to amend the Constitution.