

Highlights of the SCB Chapter ABCs (Agreement, Bylaws, Charter) plus the new Handbook

Or, Things to Note about the New Documents

Over the past year, a core group of people revised the previously existing documents used by SCB Chapters to formalize their relationship with SCB and to govern their operations. This group included the SCB Executive Office (EO), the Chapters Representative to the Board of Governors (BOG), the Chair of the Chapters Advisory Committee, and SCB's legal team.

The result is four new documents that will be used to guide Chapters in their internal governance and their relations with the other parts of SCB. Previously, the Chapters had a Charter and Bylaws. The new replacement documents include an Agreement, Bylaws, and Charter (the ABCs of Chapters) as well as an operational Handbook. Much of the content of the ABCs is similar to what was used before, with a few important differences noted below.

Why the new documents? When SCB first began many years ago, it was a much smaller and less complex organization, and thus less subject to U.S. state and federal laws. The needs dictating Chapter documentation were minimal. In recent years, though, SCB has undergone major global growth and become increasingly complex in its organization, philosophy, and activities. As a result, SCB is now accountable to stricter rules and new requirements for nonprofit groups under U.S. state and federal laws. Updated and expanded documentation is now necessary for all SCB sub-groups (not just Chapters) to ensure SCB remains legally and financially responsible in its dealings with nonprofit laws and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

Re-ratifying with the New Documents: Active Chapters For existing active Chapters, switching over to the new documents will be simple. All Chapter members and Boards will need to review the Handbook, but only Chapter Boards will be required to review and sign the new Agreement and Bylaws. Existing Charters will remain in place. The Chapter President or Secretary will forward the newly signed Agreement and Bylaws to the BOG Chapter Representative, who will do a final review and then recommend re-ratification to the SCB President.

Ratification for New Chapters New Chapters that wish to form will need to have all members review the four documents (ABC and Handbook), sign the ABC, and forward these three documents to the BOG Chapter Representative for review and recommendation. New Chapters will become official once the SCB President has approved the paperwork. This is the same process as existed prior to the new documents.

PLEASE READ THROUGH ALL THE DOCUMENTS CAREFULLY! HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO NOTE AS YOU DO SO:

Agreement Highlights This document did not exist before. Some parts are new and some parts are taken from the old bylaws.

Article II (Use of Name and Logo): Many of you have asked about this topic over the years. Here's your answer.

Article V (Duration, Suspension, and Termination of Agreement): A Chapter is considered *Inactive* by SCB if it is unregistered for 2 years, has a website 2 years out of date, or fails to elect a Board.

In this case, all documents (ABC) and funds are to be sent to the EO to be held for 2 years. If a Chapter is then Inactive for 2 years (so a total of 4 years of inactivity), then the Chapter is considered *Dormant*, all rights and obligations between the Chapter and SCB are ended, and the funds and Chapter name revert to SCB.

Bylaws Highlights

Article I (Membership): Only SCB members can be voting Chapter members.

Article II (Board): Boards can now have up to 6 voting officers.

Article VII (Annual Organizational Plan): This document is to help keep your Chapter functioning throughout the year.

Article X (Public Policy Advocacy): Pay special attention to this article. It is new and one of the primary reasons the bylaws were revamped.

Article XI (Agreement): By approving the bylaws, the Chapter Board in effect agrees to abide by the procedures and guidelines stipulated in the Chapter Handbook. This is why it is so important that all Chapter members review the Handbook.

Article XIII (Amendments): Note that portions of Articles II, III, and V relating to officers and committees can be amended by individual Chapters to suit particular circumstances and needs. The other Articles are not amendable.

Charter Highlights This document is essentially the same as the old one. The main difference is that now all original members or the Chapter formation group sign the charter, instead of only the President. Kind of like the Declaration of Independence and all those John Hancock signatures.

Handbook Highlights This document is new, and will be used by all the SCB sub-groups to guide daily operations and procedures. Because it does not require a signature, it is easily changed and updated as necessary without raising legal or technical issues.

Section 3 (Governance): Annual registration is now January 1 to January 31 instead of December, and reports for the previous year. It will include financial reporting required by the Internal Revenue Service.

Section 4 (Fundraising): Read this section carefully. Basically, if a Chapter expects to need over US\$5000, then fundraising needs to be coordinated with the EO to avoid conflicts over funding sources. The BOG Chapter Representative must be contacted, either to request a SCB budget line item for the Chapter or to help with an ad hoc funding request. Careful records must be kept by the Chapter and reported during annual registration to comply with IRS rules.

Section 6 (Public Policy): Again, read this section carefully and contact John Fitzgerald (SCB Policy Director) with any questions. Note that lobbying is acceptable only as long as it takes a very small percentage of the Chapter's budget. All public policy actions must go through the 11-day approval process outlined in the Handbook. However, policy positions and actions are differentiated from scientific advice, which does *not* require approval. Also, there is no longer a disclaimer for Chapter policy activities; all positions and actions must be approved. Records of all such activities must be kept by the Chapter and reported twice each year, by June 30th for January-June and by January 31st for July-December.

Section 8 (Local SCB Meetings): If a Chapter expects to hold a conference-type meeting for 100+ people, the EO should be informed at least 12 months ahead of the date.