

Constitution of the National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow

Article 1: Name

The name of this organization is the National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow, hereafter referred to as “National ACT.” Each local chapter that is a member of National ACT has its own name.

Article 2: Affiliation

National ACT establishes close relationships with professional agricultural communications and agricultural journalism organizations.

Article 3: Purposes

The purposes of this organization are as follows:

- A. To promote the interchange of ideas among students and faculty members at colleges and universities offering professional education in agricultural communications or related programs.
- B. To stimulate interest in the profession of agricultural communications on the local, national and international levels.
- C. To foster both personal and professional relationships between students and agricultural communications professionals.

Section 1. Mission

The National ACT empowers collegiate students to excel in agricultural communications by providing professional development, hands-on experience, and networking opportunities. We connect academia, industry, and the public to prepare the next class of agricultural communicators.

Section 2. Vision

The vision of National ACT is to be the leading collegiate organization in developing and strengthening agricultural communications students through professional growth opportunities and educational programs. We aim to inspire a future where innovative storytelling and strategic communications drive the growth and sustainability of the agricultural industry.

Article 4: Membership

Membership is composed of undergraduate and graduate students actively interested in agricultural communications or related areas of study. Associate membership is composed of faculty members in agricultural communications or related programs, including chapter advisers.

Article 5: Amending the Constitution

Amendments to this constitution require approval by two-thirds of dues paying chapters in attendance at the business meeting in which the amendment is being considered. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the National ACT executive adviser 30 days prior to a national business meeting. The National ACT executive adviser must provide copies of the properly submitted amendments to chapters in good standing 14 days prior

to a national business meeting. Amendments to this constitution can be voted on at either of National ACT's two official business meetings. In the event an action needs to be addressed between the official business meetings, the National executive adviser can call for an electronic vote of dues paying chapter delegates.

Bylaws of the National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow

Article 1: Membership and Dues

Section 1. Individual and Chapter Membership and Dues

National membership dues are established at the official business meeting held each summer. Dues are paid through the local treasurer or chapter adviser to the National ACT executive treasurer. When no local chapter exists, individual members may pay their dues to the National ACT executive treasurer. Initial chapter rosters and payment of dues (or payment information) must be submitted by October 1. Chapters that submit a membership roster by October 1 and are in the process of paying their dues during the fall semester will have voting privileges at official business meetings. Chapters that have not submitted initial rosters and payment information by the October 1 deadline will not have voting privileges at official business meetings. New members can pay dues and be added to chapter rosters anytime throughout the academic year.

Section 2. Membership Information

The National ACT will not release any membership information (including name, email, etc.) beyond chapter/institution affiliation with the organization.

Article 2: National ACT Officer Team

Section 1. National ACT Officers

National ACT officers include the president, vice president, secretary/treasurer, member relations coordinator and communications coordinator. The National ACT officer team is composed of the officers of the national organization and the National ACT executive adviser, with the president serving as chair. The National ACT executive treasurer will serve as an ex-officio member of the officer team who is not required to attend all meetings but will advise the National ACT executive adviser on the financial status of the National ACT organization. It is the duty of this committee to:

- A. Handle all matters of policy between meetings of National ACT.
- B. Be responsible for the program at the summer and winter/spring National ACT business meetings.

Section 2. National ACT Officer Responsibilities

Duties of the National ACT officer team members, the National ACT executive adviser and National ACT executive treasurer are the following:

A. President

- 1) To preside at all National ACT meetings.
- 2) To appoint and oversee such committees as he/she deems necessary.
- 3) To maintain contact with members and all advisers.
- 4) To maintain contact with professional organizations.
- 5) To coordinate the agenda for the two National ACT business meetings,
- 6) To organize elections.
- 7) To manage and maintain the National ACT constitution.

- 8) To assist the secretary/treasurer with fundraising efforts.
- 9) To prepare the president's file for the president-elect at the end of the term.

B. Vice President

- 1) To preside at all meetings in the absence of the president.
- 2) To oversee and coordinate the National ACT Critique and Contest.
- 3) To assist the secretary/treasurer in generating sponsorships for the Critique and Contest.
- 4) To prepare the vice president's file for the vice president-elect at the end of the term.

C. Secretary/Treasurer

- 1) To record minutes at the two National ACT business meetings as well as the National ACT officer team meetings.
- 2) To work with the National ACT executive treasurer to compile National ACT membership rosters.
- 3) To secure sponsorships and develop fundraisers for National ACT.
- 4) To correspond with external audiences on behalf of National ACT.
- 5) To prepare the secretary/treasurer's file for the secretary/treasurer-elect at the end of the term.

D. Member Relations Coordinator

- 1) To work with the host chapter to plan the Professional Development Conference.
- 2) To actively seek out ways to more fully engage members and local chapters with National ACT opportunities and events.
- 3) To work with the president to enhance student and alumni relations.
- 4) To seek nominations for National ACT awards, including the Honored Professional Award, the Distinguished Alumnus Award, the Distinguished Member Award, the Honored Chapter Adviser Award, and the Chapter of the Year awards.
- 5) To maintain correspondence with members via email.
- 6) To work with the communications coordinator to post chapter content on the National ACT website, social media and other digital communications platforms as necessary.
- 7) To prepare the member relations coordinator's file for the member relations coordinator-elect at the end of the term.

E. Communications Coordinator

- 1) To maintain the National ACT website and keep it current with the latest opportunities for members.
- 2) To coordinate photographs at all National ACT conferences and activities.
- 3) To actively post, based on the guidelines found in the organization's social media plan, to National ACT social media outlets.
- 4) To seek nominations for any digital media campaigns and contests presented to the membership.

- 5) To update and maintain National ACT's social media plan.
- 6) To write and submit news releases when needed.
- 7) To prepare the communications coordinator's file for the communication coordinator-elect at the end of the term.

F. National ACT Executive Adviser

- 1) To advise the National ACT officer team.
- 2) To serve as the main contact for all chapters and members.
- 3) To assist with correspondence, when necessary, with professional agricultural communication organizations and with local ACT chapters and members.
- 4) To work with National ACT executive treasurer to establish the yearly budget for the National ACT organization.
- 5) To ensure all national officers meet the qualifications and responsibilities outlined herein.

G. National ACT Executive Treasurer

- 1) To manage all finances and accounts on behalf of the organization.
- 2) To work with the National ACT secretary/treasurer to compile the National ACT membership rosters.
- 3) To pay all bills associated with the organization's activities.
- 4) To file all tax forms on behalf of the organization each year.
- 5) To maintain the organization's status as a not-for-profit entity.
- 6) To work with the National ACT executive adviser to establish the yearly budget for the National ACT organization.

Section 3. Term of Office

The term of office is from the point of election at a summer business meeting until a new officer team is elected at the next summer business meeting. An officer may serve only two terms. National officers must be dues-paying members. Additionally, officers must be enrolled in and in good standing academically at their respective university or colleges during their term of office. An officer who is not enrolled during a full academic year at their respective university/college or is not in good standing academically will forfeit the office. An officer will be removed from office if he or she fails to perform his or her officer duties or misrepresents himself or herself or the organization in an unprofessional manner. If an office is vacated, the remaining National ACT officer team members, in consultation with the National ACT executive adviser, may either (1) seek out and appoint a replacement officer or (2) absorb the extra duties without appointing a replacement.

Section 4. Officer Candidate Election Process

All officers are elected by the following procedures:

- A. A candidate must complete and submit a national officer application to the National ACT president by 24 hours prior to the National ACT elections meeting.
- B. A candidate may indicate up to two desired office positions on the application.
- C. Electronic copies of the completed national officer applications will be distributed to chapter advisers and/or members in attendance at the national summer business

- meeting prior to the election process.
- D. “Slide downs” are allowed only once per candidate, and the office is selected by the candidate.
 - E. In the event no “slide downs” occur and no applications are submitted for an open national position, nominations will be taken from the floor during elections. Self-nominations are accepted.
 - F. Candidates from the floor cannot “slide down.”
 - G. If an office has no candidates and no one has submitted a national officer application for that office, a person who has previously “slid down” and was unsuccessful may run for the open office although it is a second “slide down.”
 - H. No more than two candidates from the same university may be elected to serve on the National ACT officer team during the same term.
 - I. If no more than a total of five candidates run for the five offices and three or more candidates are from the same university, nominations from the floor during elections will be accepted.
 - J. If no more than a total of five candidates run for the five offices and three or more candidates are from the same university and no nominations from the floor are received, three candidates from the same university may be elected.

Section 5. Officer Candidate Presentations

Candidate presentations will be conducted during the election process in this format:

- A. If feasible, the National ACT officer team will determine annually, 30 days prior to the business meeting, whether to allow candidates who are not physically present at the national conference to participate virtually in the election process.
- B. Each candidate may give up to a one-minute speech.
- C. Each candidate who “slides down” will be allowed a 30-second speech to state his/her qualifications for the office he/she slid to.
- D. The National ACT officer team reviews and selects the questions to ask the officer candidates. All candidates running for that office will be asked the same question.
- E. No campaign material or solicitation other than the application and timed speech is allowed.

Section 6. National ACT Officer Voting Procedures

National ACT officers are elected by a majority of chapter delegates present at the elections meeting (one designated delegate per active chapter). If no candidate has a majority, a run-off election will be conducted between the top two candidates. In the event of a tie between two candidates, the current National ACT officer team will cast the deciding vote.

Section 7. National ACT Adviser Selection Process

A potential exists for up to six National ACT advisers – one executive adviser and five from the local chapters of the newly elected National ACT officers – chosen in the following manner:

- A. One National ACT executive adviser, referred to throughout this document as “National ACT executive adviser,” is selected every three years by the National

ACT officer team and approved by the voting delegates at the National ACT summer business meeting.

- B. In the second year of the National ACT executive advisers' term, applications will be accepted for the National ACT executive adviser-elect. The National ACT executive adviser-elect will shadow the National ACT executive adviser for one year and will serve as an ex-officio adviser.
- C. If the National ACT executive adviser should move out of academia or for any other reason be unable to serve, the National ACT executive treasurer will serve as interim National ACT executive adviser and complete the academic term. The National ACT officer team will select a new adviser to begin service after approval of the voting delegates at the following National ACT summer business meeting.
- D. In the event the National ACT executive treasurer is unable or unwilling to serve as interim, the president's adviser will serve as interim. If the president has no adviser, or that adviser is unable or unwilling to serve, the National ACT officer team, in consultation with the National ACT executive treasurer (if available), will appoint an interim adviser from among current or past National ACT advisers or other qualified local ACT chapter faculty or staff.
- E. The National ACT headquarters are located at the university/college where the National ACT executive adviser is employed.
- F. The National ACT archives are located at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Section 8. National ACT Executive Treasurer Selection Process

The National ACT executive treasurer is selected from the past National ACT executive advisers by the National ACT officer team and approved by the voting delegates at a National ACT business meeting.

- A. The National ACT treasury will be housed at a bank in proximity to the university/college where the National ACT executive treasurer is or has been employed.
- B. If the National ACT executive treasurer can no longer fulfill his or her duties, the accounts will be transferred to the current National ACT executive adviser until a replacement can be selected and approved by the voting delegates at a National ACT business meeting.
- C. The National ACT executive adviser will have signatory powers on the account in the event the executive treasurer cannot fulfill his/her duties.
- D. The National ACT executive adviser will conduct, or designate a qualified individual to conduct, an audit of the executive treasurer's records every three years.
- E. The executive treasurer will retain the position until he or she steps down or the National ACT executive adviser finds significant flaws in the financial records.

Section 9. National ACT Officer Meetings

The National ACT officer team is authorized to meet by telephone, web conference, or through other electronic communications media ensuring all the members may simultaneously hear each other and participate during the meeting.

Article 3: National ACT Business Meetings

Section 1. National ACT Business Meetings

National ACT will hold two official business meetings each year. The summer business meeting will be held in conjunction with the convention of a professional agricultural communications organization. The winter/spring business meeting will be held in conjunction with the National ACT Professional Development Conference. The National ACT officer team will determine the logistics for both business meetings, including setting the agenda for the meetings.

Section 2. Local Chapter Representation at National ACT Business Meetings

Each dues-paying university/college represented at a business meeting is entitled to one vote. Such dues must be paid by the annual dues deadline. A chapter's voting delegate will represent the chapter in all voting procedures. A chapter's voting delegate is chosen by chapter members and must register with the National ACT president prior to the beginning of the business meeting.

Section 3. Virtual National ACT Business Meetings

The National ACT official business meetings may be conducted in a virtual setting if deemed necessary by the National ACT officer team.

Section 4. Business Meeting Conduct

Business meetings are conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order (current edition).

Article 7: Local Chapters

Section 1. Local Chapter Constitutions and Bylaws

Local chapters shall establish constitutions and bylaws and elect such officers as they deem necessary. Local chapters' constitutions and bylaws must be in conformity with the National ACT constitution.

Article 8: Contests and Awards

Section 1. National ACT Critique and Contest

National ACT conducts the National ACT Critique and Contest. Updated rules and entry information will be posted to the National ACT website by November 1. Entries may be submitted between November 1 and May 15 of a specific academic year.

Section 2. National ACT Honored Professional Award

National ACT presents the Honored Professional Award for up to one outstanding agricultural communicator annually. The National ACT officer team selects this recipient. By March 1, The National ACT member relations coordinator will distribute a call for nominations for this award. Nominations must be submitted by May 15.

Section 3. National ACT Distinguished Alumnus Award

National ACT presents the Distinguished Alumnus Award for up to one outstanding ACT alumnus member annually. The National ACT officer team selects this recipient. By March 1, The National ACT member relations coordinator will distribute a call for nominations for this award. Nominations must be submitted by May 15.

Section 4. National ACT Distinguished Member of the Year Award

National ACT presents the Distinguished Member of the Year Award for up to one outstanding agricultural communications student who has had a significant role in the success of local chapter activities. The National ACT officer team selects this recipient. By March 1, The National ACT member relations coordinator will distribute a call for nominations for this award. Nominations must be submitted by May 15.

Section 5. National ACT Honored Chapter Adviser Award

National ACT presents the Honored Chapter Adviser Award for up to two outstanding ACT chapter adviser annually. By March 1, The National ACT member relations coordinator will distribute a call for nominations for this award. Nominations must be submitted by May 15.

Section 6. National ACT Chapter of the Year Awards

National ACT presents the Chapter of the Year Awards recognizing local ACT chapters in the areas of educational activities, social activities, leadership activities, fundraising activities, member recruitment and retention activities and community service. An overall Outstanding Chapter of the Year award will also be awarded. Judges will be selected to review entries and select award winners. Entries will be evaluated using a ranked point system (Borda count method). Prior to March 1, the National ACT member relations coordinator will make a call for nominations for this award. Nominations must be submitted by May 15.

- A. Each judge will rank all eligible entries from first place through last place.
- B. Rankings will be converted to points based on the total number of eligible entries in the award category. First place will receive points equal to the total number of entries, second place will receive one fewer point, and each subsequent rank will receive one fewer point until the final-ranked entry receives one point.
- C. Points awarded by all judges will be totaled.
- D. The entry receiving the highest total point score will be declared the winner.
- E. The Outstanding Chapter of the Year Award shall be presented to the chapter receiving the highest cumulative point total across all Chapter of the Year award categories.
 - 1) In the event of a tie, the chapter receiving the greatest number of first-place rankings across all award categories shall be declared the winner. If a tie still exists, the number of second-place rankings shall be compared, followed by third-place rankings, and so forth until the tie is broken.

Section 7. Recognition of Award Sponsors

~~National ACT recognizes tenure of sponsors to the organization currently for five years through awards at five-year increments. The National ACT officer team will coordinate the recognition each year.~~

Article 9: Amending the National ACT Bylaws

Section 1. Bylaws Amendment Process

Amendments to the bylaws require approval by two-thirds of dues paying chapters in attendance at the business meeting in which the amendment is being considered. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the National ACT executive adviser 30 days prior to a national business meeting. The National ACT executive adviser must provide copies of the properly submitted amendments to chapters in good standing 14 days prior to a national business meeting. Amendments to the bylaws can be voted on at either of National ACT's two official business meetings. In an event an action needs to be addressed between the official business meetings, the National executive adviser can call for an electronic vote of dues paying chapter delegates.

Article 10: Nonprofit Status Under Section 501(c)(3) of Internal Revenue Code

Section 1. National ACT Organization under Internal Revenue Code

National ACT is organized exclusively for charitable, educational, religious or scientific purposes, within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future federal tax code).

Section 2. Use of National ACT Earnings

No part of the net earnings of National ACT shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, directors, officers or other private persons, except that National ACT shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of Section 501(c)(3) purposes. No substantial part of the activities of National ACT shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and National ACT shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

Section 3. Dissolution of National ACT

Upon dissolution of National ACT, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, i.e. charitable, educational, religious or scientific, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government for a public purpose.

Article 10: Notice of Non-Discrimination

Section 1. Non-Discrimination Notice

National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, or sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation) in any of its activities.

National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow was formed July 12, 1970.
Constitution revised July 23, 2000.
Constitution revised July 23, 2002.
Constitution revised July 25, 2004.
Constitution revised July 31, 2008.
Constitution revised July 27, 2010.
Constitution revised October 1, 2011.
Constitution revised February 7, 2014.
Constitution revised January 16, 2016.
Constitution revised July 1, 2017.
Constitution revised July 29, 2020.
Constitution revised July 19, 2022.
Constitution revised August 1, 2023.
Constitution revised August 5, 2024.
Governing documents revised July 19, 2026.

Signed copy available from the Executive Treasurer or Executive Adviser.