

## Proposal Regarding Circles and Classifications of Societies, version 2

*[n.b. The originally proposed amendments are indicated in **red**; the additional changes suggested as a result of the first discussion session are indicated in **orange**.]*

For reference, the bylaws are available [here](#).

Currently, there is a financial incentive for new groups to remain classified Circles for five years, because of the language in the apportionment system adopted in 2007 that reads, "Circles [pre-fellowship groups] have their base apportionment calculated under the same formula described above, but pay 50% of the formula result for their first full year of affiliation, 60% for their second year, 70% for their third year etc. until they reach 100% or graduate from Circle status, whichever comes first."

In an effort to create a more egalitarian system, this proposal eliminates the distinction between Societies, Fellowships, and Circles entirely. Provisional admission is created in order to allow the Board of Directors to admit a new Society during the course of the year, before an Assembly takes place.

The apportionment system is amended as follows:

**"New Societies** ~~Circles [pre-fellowship groups]~~ have their base apportionment calculated under the same formula described above, but pay 50% of the formula result for their first full year of affiliation **and/or admission**, 60% for their second year, 70% for their third year etc. until they reach 100% ~~or graduate from Circle status, whichever comes first.~~"

And the bylaws are extensively amended:

### Article I

#### Section 2. Admission - Societies ~~and Fellowships~~.

a) In General. An organization shall be eligible for membership if its purposes are in harmony with those of the AEU, if it meets the qualifications hereinafter set forth, and if it complies with the procedural requirements of the AEU. Such organization **may** ~~shall~~ be admitted as ~~either a Society or a Fellowship~~, following a recommendation of the Membership Committee, as specified below ~~and in Section 5~~.

b) Provisional Admission. **The Board of Directors may, by majority vote, admit an organization as a Provisionally Admitted Society.** ~~An organization may be provisionally admitted as a Society by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. An organization shall be admitted to membership as a Society by a majority vote of the Assembly. To be eligible for provisional admission as a Society an organization:~~

~~i) Shall have met regularly and conducted a program~~

**i) Shall have met regularly and conducted public programs in harmony with the purposes of the AEU, including programs to elicit the ethical growth and development of its members;**

**ii) Shall have at least 10 individual members;**

~~i) Shall have met regularly and conducted a program for at least three (3) years after admission as a Fellowship;~~

~~ii) Shall have made provision for some Leadership services;~~

~~iii) Shall have made provision for the ethical education of children and/or of adults; and~~

~~iv) Shall have at least 50 individual members and shall be legally incorporated.~~

**iii) shall be legally incorporated as a not for profit organization according to the laws of the state in which it is located; and**

**iv) shall meet such other requirements as the Board and the Membership Committee shall establish.**

**c) Full Admission. A Society shall may be admitted to full membership by a majority vote of the Assembly. The eligibility requirements for full admission are the same as those for provisional admission.**

**d) All Societies and Fellowships admitted to membership before August 1, 2020 are considered fully admitted Societies. All Circles admitted to membership before August 1, 2020 are considered Provisionally Admitted Societies.**

~~e) Fellowships. An organization shall be admitted to membership as a Fellowship by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. To be eligible for admission as a Fellowship an organization:~~

~~i) Shall have met regularly and conducted a program;~~

~~ii) Shall have made provision for the ethical education of children and/or of adults; and~~

~~iii) Shall have at least 10 individual members.~~

### Section 3. Affiliated Organizations.

The Board of Directors of the AEU, after consultation with the National Leaders Council or the Membership Committee, may admit to affiliate status in the AEU any other organization, to be known as an Affiliated Organization, the purposes and programs of which, in the judgment of the Board, are auxiliary to and support the purposes and objectives of the AEU and its Committees. Such organization shall make written application for affiliated status, stating that it subscribes to the purposes and objectives of the AEU and pledging to support the AEU. Such affiliate status shall continue so long as the purposes and programs of the Affiliated Organization continue, in the judgment of the Board, to be auxiliary to and in support of the objectives of the AEU. Each Affiliated Organization shall have voting rights as set forth in Article II, shall be required to participate with the appropriate Committee as determined by the Board, and shall make a financial contribution to the AEU annually, in an amount to be determined by the Board.

~~Pre-fellowship groups accepted for membership shall be referred to as Circles and shall participate with the assistance and guidance of the Membership Committee.~~

Section 4. Adjustment of Status - Societies and Fellowships. The Membership Committee shall annually review the membership status of Societies and Fellowships. Such status may be adjusted as follows: ~~Societies which fail to meet the requirements of Article I, Section 2b for three (3) consecutive years may lose their status as Societies.~~ Societies that have been members for fewer than five years (including provisional membership) and fail to meet the requirements of Article 1, Section 2(b) for one year may be suspended or terminated from AEU membership. Societies that have been members (including provisional membership) for more than five years and fail to meet the requirements of Article 1, Section 2(b) for three years may be suspended or terminated from AEU membership.

a) ~~Societies which fail to meet the requirements of Article I, Section 2b for three (3) consecutive years may revert to Fellowship status.~~

b) ~~Fellowships which fail to meet the requirements of Article I, Section 2c for three (3) consecutive years may lose their Fellowship status, but may, with Board approval, become Circles.~~

Article I, Section 5b:

b) Involuntary Termination. The membership of any **fully admitted** Society may be **suspended or** terminated for reasonable cause by a two-thirds vote at any Regular or Special Assembly. Such vote shall be taken only following a resolution of the Board after review and recommendation by the Mediation Committee. The Society involved shall be given written notice of such resolution and the reasons thereof not less than three (3) months prior to such Assembly and shall have the right to attend such Assembly and be heard on such resolution. In addition to the adjustment set forth in Section 4~~5~~, the membership of any **provisionally admitted Society** Fellowship or the status of an Affiliated Organization may also be **suspended or** terminated for reasonable cause by the Board after review and recommendation by the Mediation Committee.

Article I, Section 5c:

c) Use of Name Restricted. Admission to membership in the AEU of any member organization shall constitute its consent and agreement that on termination of such membership, whether voluntary or involuntary, such organization will cease to use the name Ethical Society, ~~or~~ Fellowship, **or Circle**; Ethical Culture Society, ~~or~~ Fellowship, **or Circle**; or Ethical Humanist Society, ~~or~~ Fellowship, **or Circle**; or variation thereof, and will otherwise avoid the use of words or conduct which convey the impression of membership in or affiliation with the AEU.

Article I, Section 6: Restrictions on Member Organizations (new addition):

**e) Member organizations shall conduct their affairs in accord with the requirements for IRS Section 501(c)(3) organizations.**

Article I, Section 7 (New Section; current Section 7 moved to Section 8). This has been added because of the removal of requirements from Section 2.

### **Section 7. Expectations of Societies.**

**In addition to the requirements set forth in Section 2 above, all member Societies are encouraged to:**

- a) make provision for the ethical education of children and/or adults**
- b) make provision for a program of ethical action**
- c) make provision for Leadership services as they are able**

Article I, Section 8 - Previously Section 7

Section 87. Individual Members: The AEU is authorized to admit to membership Individual Members under such requirements and rules (including provisions for termination) as the Board may adopt from time to time. Such Individual Members would not be eligible to run for the Board but would be eligible to participate as members of AEU Committees.

Article II, Section 7:

a) Societies and Fellowships. Each Society and Fellowship shall be entitled to one (1) vote plus one (1) additional vote for each 50 individual members or fraction thereof (provided such fraction consists of at least 10 members). Each Society and Fellowship shall vote through delegates appointed by it from among its members and shall be entitled to one (1) delegate for each vote it may cast pursuant hereto. In the absence of available members, a Society and Fellowship may instead appoint delegates who are members of a different Society, Fellowship, or an Affiliated Organization. Each Society and Fellowship may apportion among its delegates the total number of votes to which it is entitled.

c) Affiliated Organizations. Each Affiliated Organization shall be entitled to one (1) delegate, drawn from among its members, having one (1) vote. In the absence of an available member, an Affiliated Organization may instead appoint a delegate who is a member of a Society, Fellowship, or a different Affiliated Organization.

### **Article III, Section 2**

e) Voting Rights. Only the delegates representing Societies, Fellowships, and affiliated organizations as defined in Article II, Section 7 shall cast ballots in the election and each Society and Fellowship shall have one ballot for each vote to which it is entitled.

### Article IV, Section 1

c) Voting Rights. Only the delegates representing Societies, ~~Fellowships~~, and affiliated organizations as defined in Article II, Section 7 shall cast ballots in the election and each Society ~~and Fellowship~~ shall have one ballot for each vote to which it is entitled.

### Article VII, Section 3

Section 3. Chaplaincy Responsibilities and Titles: An Ethical Culture/Ethical Humanist Chaplain for Health Care shall be responsible for ministering to the spiritual life of those receiving health care services. Chaplains shall be certified Ethical Culture Leaders or lay members of an Ethical Culture Society, ~~Fellowship, Circle or Exploratory Group~~, or Individual Members of the American Ethical Union.

### Motion to Amend the Proposal Regarding Circles and Classifications of Societies

Move to amend the proposed Article I, Section 2d to read:

d) All Societies and Fellowships admitted to membership before August 1, 2020 are considered fully admitted Societies. All Circles admitted to membership before August 1, 2020 **and meeting all requirements established in Article I, Section 2(b) as of that date are considered fully admitted Societies. Circles admitted to membership before August 1, 2020 but not meeting all requirements established in Article I, Section 2(b) as of that date** are considered Provisionally Admitted Societies.

*[Revision approved by majority vote]*