Seminarians for a Culture of Life

Constitution

Seminarians for a Culture of Life

March 2019
Constitution of Seminarians for a Culture of Life

Article I: Name

Section 1: The organization shall be formally known as Seminarians for a Culture of Life and informally as SCL.

Section 2: Seminary chapters shall take the name “Seminarians for a Culture of Life” followed by “at” and the seminary, or house of formation, where the chapter is established.

Article II: Mission

Section 1: To prepare and equip seminarians and religious in the task and mission of spreading the Gospel of Life through cultivating a culture of life.

Article III: Motto

Section 1: Planting the Seed of Love for Life

Section 2: This motto calls to mind that we as seminarians are the seed of the Church that, nourished through seminary formation and Holy Mother Church, will one day bear the fruit of priesthood. The motto also calls to mind the importance of cultivating a love for the dignity of life in the hearts and minds of those we encounter.

Article IV: Purpose

Section 1: As an organization, we strive to foster a greater love and respect for a culture of life in the hearts and minds of seminarians and through seminary formation. We do so by developing a firm foundation of prayer, education on life issues, and action in order to spread and build a culture where all life, from conception to natural death, is protected, respected, and loved. We recognize that as future pastors of souls we will be tasked with the mission and responsibility of bringing truth, through love, to our flock especially the task of spreading the Gospel of Life. This is achieved by uniting seminarians, and those affiliated with them, through the establishment of seminary chapter groups. Seminarians for a Culture of Life strives to form partnerships and build relationships with the many trusted organizations that provide resources to help advocate for a culture of life. We strive to plant the seed of love for life in the hearts and minds of all that encounter Seminarians for a Culture of Life.

Section 2: The organization is to always be consistent with Catholic values and doctrine. We are to (a) remain faithful to the magisterium of the Church in all we do; (b) uphold Catholic Social Teaching, especially the Life and Dignity of the Human Person, with perseverance and determination; (c) promote an environment of prayer through our efforts; (d) foster intellectual growth through equipping seminarians with adequate resources; (e) be active in our efforts to build a culture of life through word and deed; (f) promote and conduct religious, educational, charitable, and other like activities in seminaries and through our communities; (g) unite seminarians, through the organization, under one common mission and banner to spread the Gospel of Life and build a culture of life.

Article V: Pillars of the Organization

Section 1: The Pillars of Seminarians for a Culture of Life shall be prayer, education, and action.
Section 2: The three pillars of Seminarians for a Culture of Life highlight our purpose and enable us to more effectively foster a culture of life. Without such structure, we would be doing things by instinct, but this structure enables us to focus our attention on the reason we stand for a culture of life. Through prayer, education, and action, we are grounded in a fundamental manner to our mission of building a culture where the dignity and sanctity of all life are upheld and respected.

Article VI: Membership

Section 1: Full membership in the organization is open to all seminarians and those men in religious formation. Seminary faculty and staff, as well as those affiliated with the seminary, are encouraged to participate with the activities of their local chapter as well as the national initiatives/activities of the organization.

Section 2: To be a member, one must attend a chapter event. The chapter administrator is to have a list of those who have attended their events and that list is to be submitted to the National Team. The overall membership of the organization is determined through the number of members who attend chapter functions.

Article VII: Manual of the Organization

Section 1: Seminarians for a Culture of Life shall release a Manual in which the organization presents an overview of itself, and how it strives to achieve its mission and purpose, in the effort of building a culture of life. General information regarding the activities, protocol, and efforts of Seminarians for a Culture of Life may also be found in this Manual.

Section 2: Seminary chapters shall be given a copy of the Manual at the time of the establishment of the chapter. Another copy is to be given to the chapter after updates or changes occur.

Section 3: Seminary chapters are required to participate in the minimum requirements listed in the Manual. If one or more of the minimum requirements becomes an obstacle to a seminary chapter, accommodations may be made. Chapters are allowed, and encouraged, to do whatever possible to advance a culture of life.

Section 4: It is at the discretion of the Board of Directors to update the Manual. The seminary chapters should be given a minimum of two months to implement new ideas, proceedings, or ordinances if a new or updated Manual is to be adopted.

Section 5: The Manual shall serve as an addition to this constitution. To be approved, or amended, a two-thirds vote by the Board of Directors is necessary.

Article VIII: Non-Profit Status

Section 1: Seminarians for a Culture of Life is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization. The Employee Identification Number of Seminarians for a Culture of Life is 82-4217036.

Section 3: The fiscal year, known as the Annum Vitae (Year of Life), shall begin on August first and end on July thirty-first.
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Section 3: In the case of dissolution of the organization, remaining assets will be distributed to other 501(c)(3) organizations that promote the cultivation of a culture of life. This decision shall be made through unanimous consent of the Board of Directors.

Section 4: Seminary chapters, being official chapters of the organization, are required to submit financial information regarding donations given to their chapter by individuals, organizations, or businesses. This is to ensure the proper documentation of all finances through the whole organization. No funds will be taken from the seminary chapters nor will they be charged for any resources or material. A form to track financial information is to be provided to the chapter by the organization.

Section 5: Information regarding the above mentioned in Section 4 is to be submitted to the President no later than the twentieth day of the month of June (June 20) of the Annum Vitae.

Section 6: The Board of Directors is to file the appropriate version of Form 990, through the Internal Revenue Service, one (1) month after the Annum Vitae for that submission year. The form must be filed no later than the month of September.

Article IX: Seminary Chapters

Section 1: A seminary chapter is an established group of seminarians who desire to build a culture of life at their seminaries and communities. The seminary chapter, having been recognized and approved by the Board of Directors, forms a unique relationship with Seminarians for a Culture of Life and is, therefore, able to enjoy the benefits and resources that come with being a chapter of the organization.

Section 2: The main purpose of seminary chapters is to unite seminarians and religious, through the common banner and mission of Seminarians for a Culture of Life, in order to mobilize them to build a culture of life and spread the Gospel of Life. Our pillars of prayer, education, and action are the structure of these seminary chapters.

Section 3: To establish a seminary chapter, seminary administration must give their approval to the establishment of the chapter at their respective seminary. The National Team is to work diligently, so the seminary administration is fully aware of the efforts, goals, and protocols of the organization. Once the seminary has approved the chapter, and the President has contacted the seminary, the request to establish the chapter may be made to the Board of Directors. Upon approval by the board, the seminary will be given a chapter charter and the material needed/pertaining to their status as a chapter in the organization.

Section 4: Chapters take the name of the organization followed by the name of the seminary, or house of formation, where the chapter has been established (e.g. Seminarians for a Culture of Life at Mount Angel Seminary). The chapter will also be issued a number corresponding to the order in which it was approved by the Board of Directors.

Section 5: Chapters are to be involved in the “Minimum Activities for each Seminary Chapter” as mentioned in the Manual.

Section 6: We are dedicated to ensuring the organization functions well at every seminary; therefore, accommodations and adaptations may be made by the Board of Directors to ensure the seminary is able to receive and host a chapter. This is done at the request of chapter leadership and seminary administration.
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Section 7: Seminary chapters are to provide information concerning financial matters to the President no later than the twentieth day of the month of June (June 20). This includes, but not limited to, donations to the chapter received by individuals or organizations. This is to adequately track all funds due to our non-profit 501(c)(3) status. No funds will be taken from the seminary chapters nor will they be charged for any resources or material. There will be workshops during the months of March and April to alleviate this task and process. A form to track financial information is to be provided to the chapter by the organization.

Section 8: Seminary chapters with concerns regarding the local or national organization are to present such concern to the President. The Board of Directors will ensure that every issue, good or bad, is addressed in an efficient manner. The Board of Directors shall meet to discuss such concern in order to resolve any issues that may approach. If there is a greater concern or issue regarding an out-of-organization party that cannot be sorted by the chapter, the President is be informed immediately so the national organization may speedily work to resolve such issues.

Section 9: Seminarians are enabled to collaborate with one another for the advancement of the culture of life. This facilitates the sharing of ideas, concepts, and methods between different seminaries. Through these collaborative efforts, seminarians connect with one another and unite under a common mission and purpose to more effectively cultivate a culture of life.

Article X: Additions

Section 1: Keeping in mind that every seminary is different, whether, by culture, demographics, or location, chapters are allowed and encouraged to find ways for Seminarians for a Culture of Life to better fit their particular situation and seminary, while still maintaining the statutes given by Seminarians for a Culture of Life.

Article XI: Logo and Seal

Section 1: The use of the logo and seal of Seminarians for a Culture of Life is to be done prudently and in a manner that does not put the reputation of the organization, or its members, at risk. Chapters are allowed to use the logo and seal at their discretion and convenience.

Article XII: Official Documents

Section 1: All official documents are to contain the signatures of the officers of the board, in office, at the time the document was approved. Documents that do not have the approval signatures may have board approval. To inquire about those documents, without board authentication, contact the national organization. Official documents of the organization are to be approved by a majority vote of Board of Directors.

Article XIII: Amendments

Section 1: In order to amend the constitution, an amendment should be submitted to the Chairman. The Chairman shall submit the request to amend the constitution to the Board of Directors. In order that the amendment is approved, and the change reflected in this constitution, a two-thirds majority vote from the Board of Directors is necessary.
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LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE ORGANIZATION

Article XIV: Board of Directors

Section 1: The Board of Directors shall serve as the governing body of the organization. It is the responsibility of the board to direct the organization by adopting sound, moral, ethical, legal, and appropriate governance to ensure the advancement of the mission and purpose of Seminarians for a Culture of Life.

Section 2: The Board of Directors shall be made up of at least three (3) voting members. This shall include a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and no more than four (4) board members. The voting members are each entitled to one (1) vote. In the case of an inconclusive vote on a question, when the vote is evenly split in a tie, the Chairman and Advisory Council are to decide the fate of the given question.

Section 3: The officers of the board are to be appointed by the Chairman of the board. The Chairman is to be elected by the Board of Directors and serves in said capacity until the Chairman is no longer a member of the board. The first to hold the office of Chairman is to be the founder. The Chairman is to serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the organization.

Section 4: There are to be no term limits to the members making up the Board of Directors. If a seated member of the said governing body wishes to resign, the individual is to make the request known in writing to the Chairman of the board. The Board of Directors is responsible for appointing a new member, to fill a vacant position, by a unanimous vote of all current board members.

Section 5: The impeachment of a current member of the board is to be done through unanimous consent by the members of the board, excluding the member who is in question to be impeached, and through consent of the Advisory Council.

Section 6: The Board of Directors is not to be concerned with micromanaging individual seminary chapters; rather, the board shall make decisions concerning the well-being of the organization as a whole, considering the needs of seminary chapters and those of the national organization.

Section 7: The board is to resolve any issues that may arise at the local chapters or at the national level. They are to consider using any sound and prudent means to resolve the given issues. This should all be done in order to allow all areas of the organization, local and national, to thrive in their efforts.

Section 8: It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to inform the National Team of any official changes so that the team can inform, in a timely manner, the whole of the organization.

Article XV: Meetings of the Board of Directors

Section 1: The Board of Directors is to meet quarterly through the Annum Vitae (August 1 - July 31).

Section 2: A quorum of the board is needed to conduct an official meeting. A majority of the board shall constitute a quorum.
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**Section 3:** The most recent edition of *Roberts Rules of Order* shall be abided by in order to maintain sound and productive meetings through the use of parliamentary law.

**Section 4:** A meeting Agenda is to be given to all board members twenty-four (24) hours prior to a meeting. The agenda is to follow the general structure of parliamentary law. If a board member desires an item to be on the agenda, the member is to submit the desired item, with an adequate description, to the Chairman a week prior to the meeting. Board members may address items not on the agenda at the appropriate time during the meeting when time permits such actions to be done.

**Section 5:** The Chairman presides at all meetings of the Board of Directors. In his absence, the Vice-Chairman is to assume that responsibility. The Secretary, or another appointed individual, shall maintain meeting minutes through the course of the meeting.

**Section 6:** Prayer is to be the first action, after being called to order, and the final action, before adjournment, of board meetings.

**Section 7:** Board meetings are to be open to the public unless otherwise stated by the Chairman of the board. Minutes from each board meeting are to be posted at a location where the general public may access them. Some items of the meetings may be marked as “privileged information” which constitutes discussion during board meetings that are closed to the general public. Privileged information is to be made available to the Advisory Council and, if appropriate, may be shared with seminary chapter leadership.

**Article XVI: Advisory Council**

**Section 1:** The Seminarians for a Culture of Life Advisory Council comprises bishops, laywomen, and religious women who advise the President and Chairman, as well as the Board of Directors, on matters regarding the direction of the organization and how it may better implement ideas and strategies to build a culture of life.

**Section 2:** The advisers are invited to the council by the President and Chairman. They serve as part of the governing body, within the organization, through their advising. The Advisory Council influences, in a direct manner, the proceedings of the Board of Directors.

**Section 3:** When a vote of the Board of Directors results in a tie, the Advisory Council is called upon to break the said tie.

**Section 4:** The Council meets with the President and the Board of Directors one time a year at a time agreed upon by a majority of the advisers. This meeting is done via online video conference.

**Article XVII: National Team**

**Section 1:** The National Team of the Organization is the action group of Seminarians for a Culture of Life that cares for the day-to-day administration of the organization. It is this group of members that work closely with the chapters, members, and partners of Seminarians for a Culture of Life. The team reports to the Board of Directors.
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Section 2: Members of the National Team may be any person who is affiliated with the organization. This group of leaders within the organization are primarily seminarians. Members who are highly involved in their chapter are encouraged to join the National Team when leadership opportunities are open.

Section 3: Each member of the team has specific responsibilities that he/she is asked to carry out in order to advance the mission of Seminarians for a Culture of Life. There shall be a President, his Executive Assistant, directors for various needs of the organization (e.g. public relations, development, ecumenical relations, outreach), Representative(s), and Promoter(s). If a position is vacant, the Board of Directors must be sure to fill said vacancy in a timely manner.

Section 4: The Board of Directors may add any additional position(s) to the National Team if there is a need for a specific responsibility to be done. Seminary chapters may also request the addition of a position to the team when the need arises.

Section 5: The National Team officers, with the exception of the President, shall be appointed or removed by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. The President is to be appointed or removed by unanimous consent of the board.

Section 6: Those expressing the interest to join the national team must make their request known to the President. The President shall respond accordingly with further instructions. At a consequent time, the President shall inform the Board of Directors.

XVIII: Roles and Responsibilities of National Team Officers

Section 1: The President

Subsection A: The President of the organization shall serve as the official representative of Seminarians for a Culture of Life. This includes the national organization and local chapters.

Subsection B: This individual is responsible for providing the general and in-depth upkeep of the organization. If he is not the Chairman of the board, he should work diligently with the Chairman to ensure all areas of the organization are running well.

Subsection C: He should keep adequate communication with the seminary chapters and the seminary administration. It is his responsibility to maintain archives and records of the organization.

Subsection D: He is to direct and oversee the responsibilities of the National Team and appoint committees of the team as needed.

Subsection E: The President shall serve as the Chief Operating Officer when he is not also the Chairman of the Board of Directors. The first President shall be the founder of the organization and is to be known as the President-Founder.

Subsection F: This individual reports to the Board of Directors and Advisory Council.

Section 2: Executive Assistant the President

Subsection A: This individual shall serve as the assistant to the President. It is his/her responsibility to ensure the President has the needed material in order that he may fulfill his responsibilities.
Subsection B: This person is to serve as the Vice-President of the organization in the absence of the President.

Subsection C: He/She is to assist in maintaining records and archives, contacting seminary chapters, scheduling meetings, and those tasks given to him/her by the President that will assist in the growth of the organization.

Subsection D: This individual reports to the President.

Section 3: Representative(s)

Subsection A: The Representative(s) of the organization represent seminary chapters in a designated geographical location. They are the point of contact for seminary chapters on the national team.

Subsection B: They are to maintain adequate contact with seminary chapters in their region and update the national team on the activities, events, and initiatives of seminary chapters.

Subsection C: They are to ensure that every chapter in their region is well taken care of and that the chapters, and their members, have the necessary tools to help them effectively cultivate a culture of life.

Subsection C: These individuals report to the President.

Section 4: Director(s)

Subsection A: Works closely with the President to ensure his/her responsibilities are fulfilled.

Subsection B: The tasks of the director(s) are given in detail once a particular area of focus has been designated to their respective position as directors on the team. This can include, but not limited to, a Director of Public Relations, Ecumenical Relations, Development, and Outreach.

Subsection C: These individuals report to the President.

Section 5: Promoter(s)

Subsection A: The promoter is tasked with the responsibility of promoting the organization and assisting the Representative(s) or Director(s) in their area of work within the team.

Subsection B: These individuals report to the President.

Article XIX: Seminarians on the Board or Team

Section 1: If any seminarian desires to take any leadership position with the organization’s Board of Directors or National Team, he must be in good standing with the Church, his diocese, and the seminary in which he attends. The seminarian must first fulfill his responsibilities as a seminarian, keeping in mind the four (4) dimensions of priestly formation: human formation, spiritual formation, intellectual formation, and pastoral formation. He must receive permission from his diocesan superior (the bishop directly or the bishop through consent from his Vocations Director or Director of Seminarians).

Article XX: Seminary Chapter Leadership

Section 1: Every seminary chapter is to have a sound individual, known as the Chapter Administrator, that leads the chapter at the respective local seminary. If there is a need for more than one Chapter
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Administrator at a seminary chapter, accommodations may be made. Chapter Administrators should be chosen by their seminary administration or chapter membership body. This individual will be known to the national organization as the Chapter Administrator, but the chapter may refer to him by another title (e.g. chapter president, chapter coordinator, chapter director).

Section 2: The Chapter Administrator should keep in contact with the President of the national organization to ensure the effectiveness and proactiveness of the local chapter.

Section 3: The Chapter may also elect/appoint any other positions of leadership in keeping with seminary policy or local custom. The Chapter Administrator is to serve as the head of the chapter. It is highly recommended that each chapter have a priest chaplain.

Article XXI: Partner Organizations

Section 1: The Board of Directors and National Team shall strive to build productive and sound partnerships with organizations that promote a culture of life. Recognizing their proactive work in building and fostering a culture of life, we seek to learn from them and work with them in order to spread and foster a culture where the dignity and sanctity of life are upheld and respected.

Section 2: These partner organizations are invited at the request of the President or an organization itself may request to partner with Seminarians for a Culture of Life. The organization recognizes with gratitude the work of our partners and their worthy efforts to promote the dignity and sanctity of human life.

Section 3: Seminarians for a Culture of Life works diligently to ensure that those organizations named as partners respect Church teaching and promote the sound establishment of a culture of life. We may partner with organizations whose duty it is to shed light on those persons, parties, or movements involved with politics, but the organization itself is not one of a political nature nor does it endorse a political party or individual. Those partnerships are formed in order to better prepare seminarians with the needed knowledge of politics and the culture of life in current and future ministry.

Article XXII: Superiors Within Seminary Formation

Section 1: In an effort to being open and receptive to those tasked with the duty of forming seminarians, the Board of Directors works to collect opinions and ideas from those who seek to form us into priests with the heart and mind of Jesus Christ. We strive to be receptive of their efforts to help us grow as individuals and as an organization.

Section 2: Within this group are bishops, vocation directors, and seminary administration. This is not a governing group within the organization; rather, it serves as a collaborative effort between the organization and superiors within seminary formation.

Article XXIII: Affiliation to Institutions

Section 2: Seminarians for a Culture of Life is not under the governance of any particular institution. The organization is affiliated to seminaries, or houses of formation, through the chapters established at their respective seminary. The governing bodies of this organization are the Board of Directors and Advisory Council. We welcome, and strive to implement, all constructive recommendations from superiors within seminary formation.
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Approval by the Board of Directors

Date: March 02, 2019

Mr. Jorge E. Mendoza Gonzalez
President-Founder & Chairman of the Board

Mr. James Tasy
Vice-Chairman of the Board

Mr. Chase Willcuts
Secretary of the Board

Seminarians for a Culture of Life
“Planting the Seed of Love for Life”

1 Abbey Drive, St. Benedict, OR 97373
sems4acultureoflife.org
info@sems4acultureoflife.org
(559)645-9592