

Virginia Regional Accreditation Symposium BYLAWS

ARTICLE 1: NAME

The name of this association shall be the Virginia Regional Accreditation Symposium (VRAS).

ARTICLE 2: PURPOSE

Section 1: VRAS, an active, purposeful network of higher education colleagues in Virginia, advances open discussion and dissemination of knowledge to support institutions achieving and sustaining SACSCOC accreditation.

The purposes of the VRAS are to:

- Build relationships among faculty and staff responsible for compliance with SACSCOC policies and principles.
- Provide resources for faculty and staff who deal with the intersection of state recognition and regional accreditation.
- Serve as a forum for discussion about salient accreditation-related issues and how they affect Virginia institutions.
- Share accreditation-related knowledge and experiences among Virginia institutions that may serve as an example or guidance to colleagues.
- Welcome, engage, and mentor new members from within our own and other accredited institutions within the Commonwealth to share knowledge and ensure the future growth of the VRAS.

VRAS is organized and shall be operated exclusively for educational purposes and shall not engage in any activity which is not permitted by an organization exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Section 2: VRAS' purpose includes hosting events for the audiences described above. References to the annual conference pertain to the annual, collaborative conference hosted in partnership with Virginia's assessment and institutional research organizations. References to webinars pertain to VRAS events. While VRAS focuses on Virginia institutions, its audience is not limited to Virginia institutions.

ARTICLE 3: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Section 1: VRAS shall consist of three groups: the 1) Executive Board, 2) Planning Board, and 3) General Members.

Section 2: The governing body of VRAS shall be the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall have control of and be responsible for the management of the affairs and property of the organization.

1. Additional Officers can be appointed upon request by the Executive Board.

2. The Planning Board is an advisory group consisting of Executive and Additional Officers who attend monthly VRAS organizational meetings called by the Executive Board. Planning Board members can be called on by the Executive Board to vote on organizational matters, serve as Additional Officers, and/or serve on Ad Hoc Working Groups.
3. Ad Hoc Working Groups may be appointed by the Executive Board to address specific events and/or areas of the organization.

Section 3: General members may attend monthly meetings of the Planning Board, but they may not vote.

ARTICLE 4: EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1: The Executive Officers of VRAS shall constitute the Executive Board.

Section 2: The number of Executive Officers of the Board may vary to fulfill the needs and goals of the Board but shall consist of no less than three (3), including a Chair and Vice-Chair (or two Co-Chairs) and a Secretary.

Section 3: The Executive Board shall have authority to make policies that are consistent with the Mission and Bylaws for VRAS.

Section 4: Nominations or volunteers for service as an officer will be accepted or declined by the Executive Board.

Section 5: Each Executive Officer shall attend (either in person, by phone, or other distance representation) at least half of the meetings of the Planning Board per year. Executive Officers must work at an institution based in Virginia.

Section 6: Elections for Executive Officers will occur at the annual conference, and they will serve until the next annual conference.

Section 7: If any officer is unable to complete his or her term, a replacement will be elected by majority vote of the Planning Board.

Section 8: The Chair or one Co-Chair must serve on the annual conference planning committee. The other Co-Chair or Vice Chair may also serve, but their service is not required.

Section 9: Duties of Executive Officers

1. The Chair/Co-Chairs (Chair) shall:
 - a. Act as spokesperson for VRAS.
 - b. Call and chair meetings of the Executive Board.
 - c. Perform any duties necessary to assist VRAS in achieving its purpose.
 - d. Appoint committees as needed to conduct affairs of VRAS and serve as ex-officio members of each committee.
 - e. Represent VRAS in relations with other professional and educational organizations and with government agencies, including the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV).

- f. Represent VRAS when planning and coordinating with Virginia’s assessment and institutional research groups.
 - g. Assign duties of additional officers to existing officers (as needed) if those additional officer positions remain vacant.
 - h. When there are Co-Chairs, the Co-Chairs delegate the Vice Chair responsibilities among themselves.
 - i. Serve on the annual conference planning committee per Article 4, Section 8.
 - j. Represent the interests of their constituent groups in Executive Board meetings. Constituent groups could include Virginia Community College System institutions, private and public institutions, and other schools with specific focus (e.g., medical schools, seminaries, etc.).
2. The Vice-Chair shall:
- a. Prepare (or assign a Planning Board member) webinar planning and logistics.
 - b. Represent the Chair when the latter is unable to perform the duties specified above.
 - c. Perform necessary treasury duties for the organization if a treasurer is not appointed.
 - d. Assumes the role of Chair after the current chair completes their service.
3. Secretary
- a. Record minutes during meetings of the Executive Board and Planning Board.
 - b. Maintain records for the current year in preparation for the following year’s events and improvements.

ARTICLE 5: ADDITIONAL OFFICERS

Elections for Additional Officers will occur at the annual conference, and they will serve until the next annual conference. Additional Officer positions are optional and may be appointed on an ad hoc basis by the Executive Board (Article 4, Section 9). Excluding the Program Officer, Marketing & Membership Officer, and Treasurer, Additional Officers do not need to work at an institution based in Virginia.

1. The Program Officer shall:
- a. Assist with event planning for the annual conference and webinars, including:
 - i. Location reservations.
 - ii. Menu and catering reservations.
 - iii. Lodging reservations.
 - iv. Materials (e.g., printed agendas, notepads, pens).
 - v. Technology.
 - vi. Accessibility accommodations.
 - vii. Securing speakers/presenters/panelists.
 - viii. Creating an agenda.
2. The Marketing and Membership Officer shall:
- a. Manage communications and marketing for the annual conference and webinars.

- b. Maintain rosters.
 - c. Manage registration for VRAS events.
- 3. The Evaluation and Assessment Officer shall:
 - a. Conduct evaluations/surveys of VRAS events, programming and services.
 - b. Assess events, programming and services and how well they support the VRAS mission.
 - c. Work with other planning Board members to improve VRAS events, programming and services.
- 4. The Technology Officer shall:
 - a. Maintain a file sharing space for the Planning Board.
 - b. Develop and maintain electronic publications including but not limited to the VRAS website.
 - c. Update website with content from other Board members:
 - i. Information about upcoming webinars and the annual conference.
 - ii. Agenda, presentations from previous annual conferences and webinars.
 - iii. VRAS contact information, planning Board members, VRAS mission, vision and purpose.
 - d. Maintain VRAS listserv.
- 5. The Treasurer shall:
 - a. Collect and maintain dues, if any.
 - b. Collect registration fees for VRAS events, if any.
 - c. Safeguard and disburse VRAS funds as necessary.
 - d. Monitor and plan for the continued financial viability of the organization.
 - e. Ensure VRAS follows state and national laws regarding fiscal responsibility of 501(c)(3) (non-profit) organizations.

ARTICLE 6: GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Membership in VRAS is open to, but not limited to, all faculty and staff from both public and private institutions of higher education, as well as any person who has a professional interest in institutional accreditation in post-secondary education.

Section 2: Membership shall include all individuals who formally declare their membership when they register for an event hosted or co-hosted by VRAS during the fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). Membership will remain current for two years. Persons may initiate or maintain membership by submitting a written request to a member of the VRAS Executive Board. There shall be no membership discrimination based upon age, race, sex, or ethnic or national origin. Membership is individual and not transferable.

Section 3: The membership year shall extend from the beginning of the month in which the annual conference is held until the end of the next annual conference.

Section 4: The membership fee, if any, shall be determined by the Executive Board of VRAS.

ARTICLE 7: RULES OF PROCEDURE

Section 1: Decisions of the Executive Board and VRAS shall be adopted by consensus. Consensus shall be understood to mean the absence of any objection expressed by an officer to the adoption of the decision in question.

Section 2: Responsibilities of the Executive Board

The Executive Board will:

- Ensure that all pertinent points of view are considered.
- Maintain the dignity of the meeting by providing all Board members the opportunity to speak.
- Present issues for discussion in a manner that is understood by all.
- Discuss issues after adequate information and education has been provided for each Board member on such issues.
- Document clearly and in writing the decisions of the Board.

A quorum for the Executive Board shall constitute (3) people with the intention of conducting business for the organization: the presence of three (3) Executive Board members shall constitute a quorum or the presence of two (2) Executive Board members and (1) Planning Board member. Meetings can be in-person, virtual, or via phone.

Section 3: Responsibilities of the Planning Board

The Planning Board will:

- Expect that the Chair is capable of molding different approaches and opinions into a general consensus.

If Board members agree on a course of action by a clear consensus, the Chair may state that the issue is resolved by consensus, or by the “sense of the meeting.” The Chair’s statement is recorded in the minutes as the decision of the meeting. If the Board members do not agree on a course of action by a clear consensus, the Chair may institute a vote.

The presence of one (1) Executive Board member and half of the Planning Board membership shall constitute a quorum for the intention of conducting business for the organization. Meetings can be in-person, virtual, or via phone.

ARTICLE 8: ADOPTION AND REVISION OF THE BYLAWS

Section 1: The Executive Board may amend these Bylaws by majority vote at any regular or special meeting of the Planning Board. Written notice setting forth the proposed amendment and summary of the changes to be affected shall be given to each officer within the time and the manner provided for the giving of notice of meetings.

Section 2: These Bylaws shall become effective upon ratification by the Executive Board. Written notice setting forth the proposed Bylaws to be affected shall be given to each officer within the time and the manner provided for the giving of notice of meetings.

ARTICLE 9: FINANCES

Upon dissolution of VRAS, the Executive Officers shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all liabilities of the group, dispose of all assets of VRAS exclusively for the purposes of VRAS. The recipient organization shall qualify for tax exemption as determined by the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or future United States Internal Revenue Law.

ADOPTION OF BYLAWS

Members of the 2019-2020 Board reviewed, ratified and adopted the foregoing Bylaws, consisting of the 4 preceding pages, as the Bylaws of this organization.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED by the Board of Directors on January 10, 2020: Linda Birtley, Union Presbyterian Seminary; Susan Bosworth, William and Mary; Cindy Chiarello, James Madison University; Skip Kastroll, Liberty University; Geoffrey Klein, Christopher Newport University; Kathy Walker, Randolph-Macon College

Members of the 2024 Executive and Planning Board reviewed, ratified, and adopted the foregoing Bylaws, consisting of Articles 1-8, as the Bylaws of this organization.

September 2024 – the following changes were made based on Board discussions June 2022-September 2024:

- Article 3 expanded and changed to reflect current practices.
- Article 4, Sections 1, 2, 6 clarified.
- Article 4 changed to reflect current practices.
- Article 5, Section 1 expanded and changed to reflect current practices.
- Article 5, Section 2 removed duties no longer relevant/required.
- Article 6, Section 3 clarified section and updated Treasurer duties.
- Article 8 clarified based on new organization in Article 5.

Members of the 2025 Executive and Planning Board reviewed, ratified, and adopted the foregoing Bylaws, consisting of Articles 1-9, as the Bylaws of this organization.

May 2025 – the following changes were made based on Bylaws Working Group and Planning Board discussions from September 2024-May 2025.

- The Articles were reordered to create a logical flow. The edits below reflect the new articles.
- Article 2 (Purpose): Added Section 2 to define the events VRAS hosts, to include the annual conference and webinars.
- Article 3 (Organizational Structure): Section 1 describes the groups within VRAS, and Section 2 describes the role of the groups within VRAS. Section 3 indicates that general members can attend monthly meetings of the Planning Board, but they cannot vote.
- Article 4 (Executive Officers): The roles of the Executive Board and who is a part of the Executive Board are more clearly defined. Section 8 specifies that the Chair or one of the Co-Chairs must serve on the annual conference planning committee. Section 9 further specifies the roles of the Executive Officers. Additionally, the Vice Chair must serve as Chair for the upcoming FY.
- Article 5 (Additional Officers): The roles of additional officers are further specified.

- Article 6 (General Membership): This is a new article replacing the former membership article. Article 6 clearly defines the role of general members and uses some of the same sections from the former membership article.
- Article 7 (Rules of Procedure): Section 2 redefines a quorum of the Executive Board and describes possible meeting formats.

February 2026 – The following changes were made in consultation with the Planning Board:

- Article 4, Section 5 (addition): Executive Officers must work at an institution located in Virginia.
- Article 4, Section 6 (addition): Elections for Executive Officers will occur at the annual conference, and they will serve until the next annual conference.
- Article 4, Section 9 (revision): Adjustment to duties for Chairs/Co-Chairs (they now represent VRAS to constituent groups, and they no longer plan workshops).
- Article 5 (adjustment to Additional Officer positions and duties): Election of Additional Officers occurs at the annual conference. Additional Officers do not need to work at an institution based in Virginia. Removal of Logistics Officer; Program and Logistics Officers' duties are combined under the Program Officer. Removal of Constituent Representative, and their duties were added to the Chair/Co-Chair. To summarize, the Additional Officers are now: Program Officer, Marketing & Membership Officer, Treasurer, Evaluation and Assessment Officer, and Technology Officer.