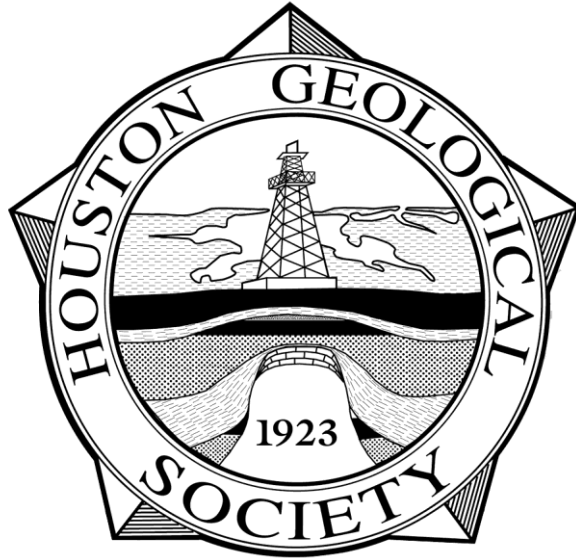


# HOUSTON GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



## POLICY MANUAL

Revised: March 2015

## HOUSTON GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

### POLICY MANUAL

The Houston Geological Society Executive Board is the Policy-making body of the Society. Policies are flexible guidelines. They guide the officers and chairmen of the Society in handling daily operations and in settling questions not clearly covered in the Constitution and By-laws. Policies may be changed by a majority vote of the HGS Board.

#### Contents

Mission and Vision Statements .....	Page 2
Accounting and Financial .....	Page 3
Administration and General .....	Page 6
Advertisement .....	Page 6
Awards .....	Page 7
Employment .....	Page 9
Insurance .....	Page 10
HGS Database Privacy Policy .....	Page 10
HGS Office Management Committee .....	Page 10
Joint Operations with Other Societies.....	Page 11
Meeting Attendance & Reservations .....	Page 12
HGS Event Cancellation Policies.....	Page 12

#### Mission Statement

**To provide earth science enrichment through technical education, networking opportunities, and community service.**

#### Vision

**To be the essential organization serving earth science professionals in the Houston community.**

#### Slogan

**“A local geoscience society with global reach.”**

### **Accounting and Financial**

The Executive Board will use its best efforts to run the Society with a balanced annual budget.

Whenever possible, each event or activity of the society will be self-funding.

Four officers will be authorized to sign HGS checks: The President, the President-Elect, the Treasurer and the Treasurer-Elect. Only one signature will be needed for checks equal to or less than \$12,500. Any check greater than \$12,500.00 must have two signatures. Any person(s) signing checks on behalf of the Society must include his HGS title in order to protect both the Society and the individual.

Signatories to the HGS savings and checking account(s) shall be updated annually. Outgoing signatories shall be removed from the list of authorized signers during the process of adding new authorized signers. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer-Elect to contact the financial institution(s) to determine the process for eliminating outgoing signers and addition of the incoming authorized signers. The President or Secretary may need to be involved in this process if the financial institution's policies so dictate.

Four officers will be authorized to approve and make withdrawals from the HGS managed investment accounts (CD's or other financial instruments): the President, the President-Elect, the Treasurer and the Treasurer-Elect. Approval from three of these officers will be needed to instigate any changes. The funds of the HGS will be invested in accordance with the Investment Policy and Procedures below.

#### **INVESTMENT POLICY**

The Finance Committee is charged with following these guidelines when making recommendations for investment policy for the account at Charles Schwab (2003) or with any other financial investment institution in the future:

- Investments will be made with the primary goal of preserving capital
- Investments will be made in low risk to moderate low risk financial instruments
- Optimum returns will be sought with a conservative investment policy
- Ease of liquidity will be considered when reviewing recommended investment changes
- Fixed Income and Cash Investments shall never make up less than 50% of the investment portfolio as per the guidelines approved by the HGS Board (2/2015). The make-up of the investment portfolio shall be recommended by the Finance Committee with input from the investment institution per the investment advisor(s). The investment portfolio mix is subject to the current guidelines established by the HGS Board. Significant changes to the investment policy require HGS Board approval.

#### **INVESTMENT PROCEDURES**

The following procedures will be used to monitor or alter the investments of the Houston Geological Society in the Charles Schwab (or other financial investment institution) Account. These procedures are not meant to apply to any fund not directly overseen by

the HGS Board and the Finance Committee (i.e. Foundations, Scholarships). The procedures may be altered by a majority vote of the HGS Board.

- The Finance Committee Chairman, or a committee member appointed by the chairman, will monitor the investment activity on a monthly basis. This will continue as long as the signatories to the account desire.
- The Finance Committee Chairman will serve as the point of contact with the investment manager unless the HGS Board chooses differently. The authorized contact must be approved and noted in the Board minutes if the Finance Committee Chairman is not such.
- The Finance Committee Chair will be an authorized signatory on the investment accounts. Any and all transactions need to be approved by the 3 of the 4 authorized HGS Board Members. A monthly report of the account will be prepared and delivered to the HGS Treasurer for inclusion with the Treasurer's report to the Board.
- The Finance Committee Chairman may be requested to make presentations of the investment's performance to the Board. If appropriate, the Private Client Account Representative or other agent of the financial institution may also be requested to discuss the investment's activity.
- The Finance Committee and the Board's signatories will evaluate re-balancing investments on a quarterly or semiannual basis. If recommended, written approval or recorded minutes of three valid signatories (barring unusual circumstances) will be necessary to change the position in the investment instruments.
- If written approval is not received within 24 hours the investment decision may be canceled. E-mail received at the HGS office or by the Finance Committee Chairman will constitute written approval of the investment decision.
- Signatories to the investment account will be updated annually. Outgoing signatories will be removed from the list of authorized signers during the process of adding new authorized signers. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer-Elect to contact the investment institution(s) to determine the process for eliminating outgoing signers and addition of the incoming authorized signers.

#### MISCELLANEOUS ACCOUNTING & FINANCIAL

The Society should maintain liquid assets equal to at least one year's operating expenses. For this purpose, operating expenses are defined as office expenses, overhead expenses and net *Bulletin* expenses.

The Society is a not-for-profit 501(c) 6 organization. The HGS does not qualify for sales tax exemption on its purchases, but does not have to collect sales tax on what it sells (2005).

A full financial audit of the HGS finances shall be conducted after:

- There is turnover in the Office Director position;
- A suspicious or fraudulent circumstance is brought to the attention of the President and the HGS Executive Board, evidence is presented to the Executive

Board, and a majority vote by the Executive Board members requests a full financial audit;

- Precluding either of the above events occurring, the finances of the HGS shall be audited every three years.

#### EXPENSE PAYMENT POLICY

The HGS Treasurer will reimburse budgeted committee expenses from HGS savings and checking account(s) within 45 days of submittal or hotel contract agreement. Non-budgeted committee expenses up to \$100 above the approved committee budget (3/2005) will be reimbursed if approved in advance by the Executive Board member who acts as liaison for that committee. (8/3/99) The HGS Board must approve any non-budgeted expense request exceeding \$100.00. It is each committee's budget responsibility to submit a budget request for approval by April 30 prior to the fiscal year in which the expense is to occur.

It is the Committee Chairman's responsibility to document income and expenses and provide a monthly report of committee activities to the respective Board representatives.

Unspecified scholarship donations will be divided equally between the HGS Foundation (undergraduate students) and the Warren Calvert Memorial Fund (graduate students).

Credit cards are the method of payment when reservations for an event are made online at the Society's web site or by telephone to the HGS office. Credit cards will only be accepted at conferences where registration pricing exceeds \$200.00. Any other event requiring credit card acceptance will need to be authorized by the Board.

#### Budget Preparation Timelines and Key Dates

##### March

Finance Committee Chairman meets with Treasurer-Elect and Office Director to determine the number of active committees to which budget request forms will be sent. Forms are to be sent to all committee chairmen and Board officers who have events that require budget approval.

##### April

Finance Committee Chair and Treasurer-Elect compile budget information, prepare presentation for Board consideration, and ask for clarification from committee chairs as needed. Deadline for budget requests to be returned to the HGS office is April 30.

##### May

Finance Committee Chair and Treasurer-Elect complete budget presentation for Board consideration.

##### June

Budget is presented by Treasurer-Elect and Finance Committee Chairman to the Board for approval.

### **Administration and General**

Each HGS Chair is responsible for training his successor.

All written contracts and official documents of the Society shall be signed by the President. In the event the President is unavailable to sign contracts by deadline dates or is otherwise absent from the Society, signing authority will fall in the following order of succession: President-Elect, Vice President, and Secretary. (Article III, Sections 3, 4, and 5; Constitution and Bylaws). Any person(s) signing documents or contracts on behalf of the Society must include his HGS title in order to protect both the Society and the individual. Original signed contracts and official documents will be kept in the safe. The Office Director and the HGS Treasurer will have the combination to the safe.

Remembrance donations for deceased HGS members may be made at the discretion of the President or action by the Board. Remembrances shall not exceed \$200.00 and should be made payable to the organization designated by the survivors.

The HGS will not allow the distribution of political campaign material at the HGS meetings. (10/94)

Retention schedule for past issues of the *Bulletin* is:

Current year – retain all extra copies

Immediate past year – retain 10 copies

All prior years – retain 3 copies (12/96)

### **Advertisement**

Full payment should accompany requests for advertising space in the *Bulletin*.

Partial payments are acceptable but must be approved on an individual basis. In all cases, an initial payment is required and must be for an amount not less than the cost of one issue's ad space. Payments cannot be accepted on a month-by-month basis.

Renewals for existing accounts may be invoiced if credit history is satisfactory, but payment must be received in thirty (30) days. If necessary the advertisement will be temporarily held out of further issues until the payment is received.

International advertisers MUST send full payment with requests for ad space. Payment should be made in U.S. dollars.

Tear sheets can be provided on request. Complimentary complete issues to an advertiser on a regular monthly basis are strongly discouraged.

Complimentary *Bulletin* advertisements will be determined by the Editor.

## Awards

An award may be given for the Best Original Paper submitted for publication in the *Bulletin* or oral presentation made at a HGS meeting.

A **HPAC Distinguished Service Award** may be given to an HGA member.

An Award may be given to an Earth Science Teacher (based upon the recommendation from Awards Committee).

In addition to the scholarships awarded by the respective committees, Outstanding Student Awards may be given by the Society (based upon the recommendation from Awards Committee).

**Rising Star Award** honors individuals who are relatively new to the HGS and have made significant and promising contributions to the enhancement and success of the society.

**Chairman's Award** honors members whose extraordinary efforts or unique contributions to their committee deserve special recognition.

**President's Award** honors members whose extraordinary efforts or unique contributions in a fiscal year or over a short period of time deserve special recognition.

**HGS Distinguished Service Award** honors members who have given long-term valuable service to the Society.

**Honorary Life Membership** honors members who have distinguished themselves in the science of geology or have contributed outstanding service to the success and welfare of this organization. The honoree must have received the HGS Distinguished Service Award. The recipients' contributions also continue to grow steadily in scale and value after they have been made. On occasion Honorary Life Membership has been granted to individuals whose contributions to the Houston Geological Society have spanned decades and who have most subsequently, and most deservedly, assumed a lower profile.

The **Gerald A. Cooley Award** honors the memory of the man we remember as the personification of dedication, service and leadership continuing long after official office terms expire. It recognizes true dedication to the profession of petroleum geology in general, and to the Houston Geological Society in particular. The award honors those who have continued to serve the society well above and beyond the call of duty over many years. A candidate must have received both the Distinguished Service and Honorary Life Membership Awards to be eligible for consideration. It is the Society's highest award.

The **Corporate Star Award** honors Companies who have made significant contributions to the Houston Geological Society. These contributions can be monetary (cash) or in kind (donation of services, materials, or an individual's time). Currently, there are four levels of contribution as follows:

Platinum Level	\$25,000 and over
Gold Level	\$10,000 to \$24,999
Silver Level	\$2,000 to \$9,999
Bronze Level	\$500 to \$1,999

If a potential awardee has donated personal time an estimate shall be made as to what the dollar value of that time is. Consideration must also be made to determine is the time span for an awardee a single year or the accumulation of a number of years (catching up on awards that should have been made in previous years).



## **Employment**

The HGS will act as a responsible employer.

The HGS shall employ an Office Director, Office Assistant, and Web Site Administrator.

The HGS will have a written job description and personnel policy and Employee Manual.

The HGS shall contribute to a reimbursement plan for full time employees acquiring their own health insurance coverage (Health Care Assistance) and some matching amount to full time employees qualified retirement plan. The requirements and guidelines for these "plans" are found in the Employee Manual. (Pending compliance with the federal Health Care Act.)

The HGS will conduct annual performance and evaluation reviews. Raises and benefits for employees will adhere to industry standards.

The HGS will adhere to legal guidelines for hiring and firing employees.

The HGS office will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Friday (2/15). The HGS office will close on federal holidays. (4/07)

The HGS does not make any loans or advances to its employees. 5/94

Complaints concerning the HGS office should be forwarded to the Office Management Committee, preferably in writing.

**Christmas bonuses, if any, will be awarded for superior performance.**

### **Insurance**

The HGS will maintain Directors and Officers liability coverage on its Board members.

The HGS will maintain liability insurance that will cover off-site courses, business meetings, and social events.

The HGS will maintain insurance on its office and staff, including theft, employee crime, general liability, computer and office equipment, property damage and auto liability for rented vehicles.

### **HGS Database Privacy Policy**

The HGS database contains personal and confidential information and all care should be taken to protect the privacy of the members. The Directory is not to be reproduced, copied or used for solicitation without the prior written permission of the Executive Board of the HGS.

From time to time, related/sister organizations may request HGS mailing labels. This request may be granted in those cases where the product or service offered will provide a direct benefit to the members of the HGS and there is a reciprocal exchange of mailing lists for mutual society benefits (AAPG, GCAGS, etc.) This request may also be granted to educational institutions. One set of mailing labels will be provided. (11/2007)

HGS Database records will NOT be provided to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties in electronic form

### **HGS Office Management Committee**

The Office Management Committee consists of the Office Committee Chairman, the President-Elect and, the Finance Committee Chairman. This committee oversees the operation of the HGS office.

An annual office budget shall be prepared by the Office Committee Chairman and submitted to the Finance Committee Chairman when requested for inclusion in the Society's budget for the fiscal year.

The Office Committee shall have a personnel policy and job description manual that includes job duties and responsibilities of HGS employees (Office Director, Office Assistant, and Web Site Administrator).

The Office Committee shall update the Employee Manual with current Board approved employee benefits (i.e., health care assistance, qualified employee retirement plan). This manual will be given to all new employees and updated and replaced routinely (January 1 and July 1) with Board approved changes and additions.

The Office Committee Chairman shall provide an annual evaluation and performance review for current office employees on an annual basis.

The Office Committee shall monitor the Health Care Assistance plan and matching qualified employee retirement plan for employees and provide a separate report for each plan in the Office Committee monthly report.

**Joint Operations and Meetings with Other Societies.**

A joint meeting of the HGS and other professional societies in the petroleum industry may be held at the discretion of the Vice President. HGS and said professional societies shall compile separate reservation lists. The organizing society will bill the participating society for its number of attendees at the current meal charge, plus a proportionate cost of other expenses (speaker's meal, bar tender, cashier, AV, etc.).

Complimentary *Bulletin* advertisements for a sister society will be determined by the Editor.

If necessary, the HGS may cover expenses for the President or representative to attend the GCAGS meetings and the AAPG Day. When the GCAGS President-Elect is a member of the Houston Geological Society, he/she may apply for expenses to attend the GCAGS Board meetings.

A Board member, particularly in regard to contractual obligations or financial liabilities, must monitor any joint events with any other society.

### **Meeting Attendance & Reservations**

Active, Associate, Emeritus, Honorary Life, and Student members will pay the current Board approved full price for their meals and registration.

Reservations for HGS technical meetings are made by completing the online reservation form at the HGS website or by calling the HGS office. At all meetings, member's names are checked against the reservation list. All persons without reservations ("walk-ups"), regardless of membership classification will be seated on a space-available basis and charged the current Board approved walk-up rate for the meeting.

Speakers are provided a complimentary meal and registration.

At the discretion of the assigned committee board member and appropriate committee chairs, complimentary meals, and registration may be given to other attendees (i.e. underemployed members who work at the meetings, distinguished visitors, awardees, etc.) provided that the cost of these meals and registration is allocated within the budget. Costs are booked against the meal expenses of the appropriate meeting.

At the annual awards meeting, meals for scholarship winners and their faculty sponsors not covered under industry sponsorship are charged to the awards dinner meeting. Complimentary meals are not given to members of the press.

At the discretion of the assigned committee board member and the appropriate Committee Chair, gratis registration may be given to committee members or volunteers if they are contributing to the operational execution of the event (i.e. hosting/co-hosting the Zoom meeting, providing logistical support to in-person event, etc.) or they dedicated significant time in the planning of the event.

Special meal requests (i.e., vegetarian) may be made online at the time of completing the reservation form, by contacting the HGS office, or by contacting the chair of the committee at the event.

(See also the Meeting Attendance and Reservations Policy posted on the HGS website.)

### **HGS Event Cancellation Policies**

#### **Dinner Meeting Cancellation Policy**

If a member cannot keep his dinner or lunch reservation, it is his responsibility to cancel or send an alternate. Reservations must be cancelled no later than 3:30 PM on the last business day prior to an evening event or by noon of the business day prior to a breakfast or luncheon event. Cancellation requests made by phone, text, or voice mail at the HGS office phone number after these deadlines will NOT be honored.

#### **Continuing Education Course, Applied Geoscience Conference, and Local Field Trip Cancellation Policy**

This shall be dependent on course cancellation policy. Cancellation procedures for Continuing Education-sponsored events is dependent upon course instructor and venue cancellation policies. Course cancellation policy will be posted on the individual course

or field trip registration HGS website page. The Committee Chairman for the event shall maintain a waiting list for purposes of replacing registrants who have to cancel their reservations.

Grand Canyon Field Trip and Major HGS Event Cancellation Policy

If a registrant must cancel his/her reservation more than 150 days before the trip or event, the registrant will be refunded the difference between what has been paid less the \$500 non-refundable deposit (Hatch policy for Grand Canyon Field Trip) and a 5% processing fee. Should the registrant's cancellation drop the HGS below the required minimum head count, then the registrant is responsible for their registration cost unless persons on the waiting list agree to participate and raise HGS above the minimum required head count. If a registrant must cancel his/her reservation for the Grand Canyon Field Trip less than 150 days prior to the trip or major event, no refunds will be made and registrant will forfeit any submitted funds to contracted vendor or conference sponsor.

This cancellation policy applies to the Grand Canyon Field Trip in every situation and there will be no exceptions made for any reason. Hatch will not issue refunds for cancellations due to illness or late arrivals due to travel delays. Hatch River Expeditions advises registrants who are concerned about the possibility of canceling their trip to purchase travel insurance and consider adding a "cancel for any reason" clause to the policy. Their preferred provider is Travel Insured.

The HGS trip leader shall maintain a waiting list for purposes of replacing registrants who have to cancel their reservation.