

Dear Colleagues,

I oppose the practice of requiring the payment of dues—to an honorific society—in order to vote on issues before the Academy. This amounts to exacting a poll tax, an illegal practice in most democracies. The proposal has been made that article 6.5 be rewritten to read:

6.5. Membership is terminated through death, resignation, or serious misconduct, in accordance with the procedures defined in the Internal Regulations.

I agree with this.

It has also been proposed that article 6.3 be rewritten to read:

6.3. Only those members who have paid their annual dues for any given year by the date set by the Administrative Council are entitled to vote, and stand for election to positions on the Academies bodies and committees during that year. Those who have not paid their dues as set out here may still nominate candidates for election as members.

For the reason stated above, I disagree with this.

This point aside, I endorse the report of the Working Group to prepare a new set of statutes for the Academy and the summary of that report posted by Catherine Jami on 9 August, 2026.

I have also been appalled by the continuing acrimony between and among certain members of the Academy. It has made me embarrassed to be a member.

Karen Parshall