

The Midwest Slavic Association

Bylaws

Effective: September 23, 2026

1. **Mission:** The Midwest Slavic Association (MWSA) is a regional affiliate of the Association of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES). It represents the states of **Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin**. The mission of the MWSA is to promote East European and Eurasian studies through academic scholarship and education in the Midwest by creating a community of scholars and students dedicated to the field. The primary way it achieves this is through the organization of the annual Midwest Slavic Conference (MWSC).
2. **Structure:** The Midwest Slavic Association is hosted and administered by a higher education institution in one of the represented states. By serving as host, the college or university agrees to provide: 1) staff support to organize the Midwest Slavic Conference (please see section 5.1 for full details); 2) financial support to cover costs of the MWSC and/or to charge and collect conference registration fees; 3) a webpage for the MWSA; and 4) administrative support for the MWSA and associated committees.
 - 2.1. **Current Host:** The host of the Midwest Slavic Association since 2003 has been the Center for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (CSEEEES) at The Ohio State University.
 - 2.2. **Change in Host:** If an institution wishes to host the MWSA, a request must be submitted to the association's leadership in advance of the annual conference for consideration by the organization's leadership (please see section 3) and for a vote at the annual meeting by members. A formal proposal describing the institution's ability to fulfil the needs and activities outlined in section 2 should be presented at the annual meeting.
3. **Leadership:** The leadership of the Midwest Slavic Association is composed of a president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, conference organizer, and graduate student representative. Each member serves a term as outlined below but they may resign at any time by submitting their resignation in writing to the rest of the leadership. At least one of the executive positions, excluding that of secretary-treasurer, must be filled by a faculty member employed at an institution other than the host institution to ensure diversity of opinion and representation.
 - 3.1. **Secretary-Treasurer:** The secretary-treasurer of the Midwest Slavic Association provides reports to the rest of the MWSA leadership, MWSA members, or other interested parties on the finances of the conference, participation, etc. Additionally, the secretary-treasurer facilitates questions and communications between the president and vice-president as needed.
 - 3.1.1. **Selection:** The secretary-treasurer is a role filled by a staff member from the host institution and is filled on an indefinite term. Change in personnel at

the host institution should be communicated to the rest of the MWSA's leadership but does not require their approval.

3.1.1.1. Since 2023, Emma Pratt, the assistant director of CSEEEES, has filled this role.

3.2. Conference Organizer: The conference organizer of the Midwest Slavic Association oversees the organization of the annual conference. Primary duties include booking the conference facilities, facilitating the distribution of the call for papers, organizing the overall conference schedule and related events, distributing and providing yearly feedback reports to the rest of the MWSA leadership, etc. Additionally, the conference organizer facilitates the annual MWSA Student Essay Competition.

3.2.1. Selection: The conference organizer is a role filled by a staff member from the host institution and is filled on an indefinite term. Change in personnel at the host institution should be communicated to the rest of the MWSA's leadership but does not require their approval.

3.2.1.1. Since 2023, Alicia Baca, the outreach coordinator of CSEEEES, has filled this role.

3.3. Graduate Student Representative: The graduate student representative of the Midwest Slavic Association is a current MA or PhD student from any college or university in the region. The student representative agrees to serve on the MWSC committee, assist with the advertisement of the annual essay competitions, and propose ideas for plenary panel speakers.

3.3.1. Selection: The graduate student representative serves a two-year term and is advised to only serve one term. Prior to the start of each two-year term, the secretary-treasurer or conference organizer of the MWSA distributes a Call for Nominations for the position of graduate student representative with self-nominations also accepted. All nominations are reviewed by the current leadership, narrowed down to two candidates and then voted on by MWSA members. Senior leadership of the MWSA may request to speak with a student's advisor for recommendation if they feel it is needed.

3.3.1.1. The current graduate student representative of the Midwest Slavic Association is Siobhán Seigne (Ohio State U.) with term expiring in 2027.

3.4. Vice-President: The vice-president of the Midwest Slavic Association is a faculty member from any college or university in the region. In order to serve in this position, they must remain at the same institution for the full duration of their term (four years) as officer in MWSA. The vice-president agrees to serve on the MWSC committee, assists the president in leading an annual meeting as part of the Midwest Slavic Conference, fills in during a leave of absence of the president, and oversees the Undergraduate Student Essay Competition (please see section 5.3).

3.4.1. Selection: Vice-presidents serve on a four-year term and can serve multiple terms. Prior to the start of each four-year term, the secretary-treasurer or conference organizer of the MWSA distributes a Call for Nominations for the position of vice-president with self-nominations also accepted. A current serving vice-president must submit a nomination if he/she wishes to serve another term. All nominations are reviewed by the current leadership, narrowed down to two candidates and then voted on by MWSA members.

3.4.1.1. The current vice-president of the Midwest Slavic Association is Anna Aydinyan (Kenyon College) with term expiring in 2029.

3.4.2. Term: Terms are four years and run from June 1 of the first year through May 31 of the fourth year. This allows for continuity between the MWSC, student essay competitions in May, and voting on leadership in March or April during the MWSC in the fourth year.

3.5. President: The president of the Midwest Slavic Association is a faculty member from any college or university in the region. In order to serve in this position, they must remain at the same institution for the full duration of their term (four years) as officer in MWSA. As president, the faculty member agrees to serve on the MWSC committee, attend the conference, convene an annual member meeting during the conference, and represent the association as needed. This includes: 1) The president of the MWSA serves as the representative to ASEEEES for the Council of Regional Affiliates, whose members serve in rotation on the ASEEEES Board of Directors (please see published ASEEEES [Bylaws](#)); and 2) oversees the Graduate Student Essay Competition (please see section 5.3).

3.5.1. Selection: Presidents serve a term of four years and can serve multiple terms. Prior to the start of each four-year term, the secretary-treasurer or conference organizer of the MWSA will distribute a Call for Nominations for president with self-nominations also accepted. A current serving president must submit a nomination if he/she wishes to serve another term. All nominations are reviewed by the current leadership, narrowed down to two candidates and then voted on by MWSA members.

3.5.1.1. The current president of the Midwest Slavic Association is Alisa Ballard Lin (Ohio State U.) with term expiring in 2029.

3.5.2. Term: Terms are four years and run from June 1 of the first year through May 31 of the fourth year. This allows for continuity between the MWSC, student essay competitions in May, and voting on leadership in March or April during the MWSC in the fourth year.

4. Membership: The MWSA does not charge a specific annual membership fee. Instead, all individuals who participate in the annual Midwest Slavic Conference are granted membership for that year. Membership is open to all undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, independent scholars, and faculty active in the field of East European and Eurasian studies. While formally focused on the Midwest,

the MWSA welcomes engagement with students and scholars from across the U.S. and abroad.

5. Events and Activities:

5.1. Midwest Slavic Conference: The Midwest Slavic Conference is the primary event and activity supported by the Midwest Slavic Association. It is an annual academic conference hosted at a regional college or university open to all disciplines of research and inquiry related to Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Currently it is held in the spring, typically late March to early April, and starts with a keynote and reception on Friday evening, with panels all day Saturday and in the morning on Sunday. A meeting of members and MWSA leadership is held at some point during the conference.

5.1.1. The host institution of the MWSC is responsible for: drafting and distributing a Call for Proposals; securing a venue for the conference and providing for conference tech needs; collecting abstract submissions; convening a conference committee to review submissions; publishing and updating a website to share information about the conference with participants in advance, as well as extensive email communications in the lead up to the conference; finalizing conference panel assignments and finding chairs/discussants; identifying and inviting a keynote speaker; hosting an opening reception; creating and printing a program; organizing special events such as luncheon lectures or a student mixer; and staffing the conference.

5.1.1.1. The conference committee should be composed of at least eight faculty members, two each to review history, humanities, linguistics, and social science papers. Where possible, increasing the committee members has allowed for the humanities papers to be further subdivided to decrease the burden on that portion of the committee. The president and vice-president of the MWSA always serve on the committee.

5.1.2. Fees: The institutional host of the conference is responsible for the financial administration of the conference, including securing grant funding and co-sponsorships to keep registration costs as low as possible to encourage participation. The final conference costs should break even, not garner income for the host institution. Each year, the secretary-treasurer as the administrative lead for the conference will work with his/her home institution and the vice-president and president of the MWSA to determine what are feasible rates based on past costs and projections for the current year.

5.1.2.1. As compensation for their service to the organization, the president and vice-president of the MWSA are not assessed a conference fee and receive free lodging for the conference. Additionally, all members of a particular year's conference committee are not assessed a

conference fee, and if they do not live in the vicinity of Columbus, receive free lodging for the conference if they participate in it.

5.1.2.2. All invited panel chairs are provided with a reduced registration fee.

5.2. Annual Meeting: As part of each year's conference, the president of the MWSA shall convene a meeting with both the vice-president and secretary-treasurer in attendance at a time that does not overlap with conference panels or other programming. The audience for the meeting is all current members, with the president giving a recap of important news or developments that might impact the MWSA or MWSC, upcoming leadership vacancies, or items up for vote, such as leadership position nominations or member motions. The secretary-treasurer will provide a financial recap of the conference and general feedback or items of interest regarding conference administration. The time of the meeting will be announced in advance to all conference participants and publicized in all conference related materials.

5.2.1. No later than one week prior to the conference, any member may suggest an item for consideration at the meeting by submitting it to the conference leadership by email.

5.3. Student Essay Prize Competition: As a regional affiliate of ASEEEES, the MWSA is committed to holding a Student Essay Prize Competition. A Graduate Student Essay Prize Competition is held each spring with the winner for the MWSA being submitted for consideration in the [ASEEEES Graduate Student Essay Prize](#). A separate competition is also held for undergraduate students. ASEEEES has agreed to provide one-calendar year memberships to the MWSA winners in each category. The president of the MWSA chairs the review of the graduate competition and/or forms a committee of three to review the essays. The committee can include different faculty from the president's home institution, or other MWSA faculty. Likewise, the vice-president of the MWSA leads the review of the undergraduate essay competition and may form a committee to review submissions. The MWSA publishes the information on its website, advertises the competition to all students who have or are participating in the MWSC, and distributes an announcement to regional schools as well.

6. Governance: The Bylaws of the Midwest Slavic Association outline the governance structure of the organization, its mission, and the responsibilities of host institutions and organizers of the Midwest Slavic Conference. They are intended as a living document that can be changed and updated by the MWSA's leadership with concurrence from members' secured through annual meetings.

6.1. The current bylaws were codified by CSEEEES and adopted by members on October 28, 2024.