



Policies & Procedures Manual

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Introduction

This charming little guide has been organized with love and great thought. Its "soul" purpose is to provide interested persons and new members with all the information about the San Antonio Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence they could ever want – and then some! It may seem like a great deal of information – because it is. The good news is you don't need to commit it all to memory (unless you want to score some major points with the Sisters!).

Our rules are frequently bent and stretched. They are not made of concrete and we are not machines. Rules are guidelines. Sometimes they must be enforced strictly and other times loosely applied. **WARNING:** Each Fully Professed Member may interpret this document differently. Each person is an individual and each situation is unique. That's life. The real point is that the words written here give you a clear understanding of what the San Antonio Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence is about, and how the organization operates. While the general philosophy of SPI is similar worldwide, the policies and procedures described here are specific to the Abbey of the Alamo.

At the end of the day, we're an order of irreverent clown nuns who are a diverse group of adults that have come together for a common purpose: To serve the community. If all else fails, remember this: We exist to affirm, believe in, and encourage the essential good in each and every single person; *including* our fellow members.

Mission Statement

The Sisters of San Antonio, Abbey of the Alamo exist as a modern, communal order of 21st century nuns dedicated to community service, fund raising, outreach, advocacy, education for safer sex awareness, and to promoting human rights, respect for diversity and spiritual enlightenment. We believe all people have a right to express their unique joy and beauty and we use humor and irreverent wit to expose the forces of bigotry, complacency and guilt that chain the human spirit. We vow to promulgate universal joy and expiate stigmatic guilt through public manifestation and habitual perpetration.

Philosophy and Statement of Purpose

In 1979, the Motherhouse in San Francisco announced the reasons for our existence:

Diversity

Originally our statement contained the phrase "Gay Male Nuns". Our vision and philosophy have broadened, become more inclusive and become more consistent with the other aspects of our mission. We are a queer family.

"Queer" means the freedom to be an individual within a close-knit family of individuals: diversity and unity. The Sisterhood or any subset of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence (SPI) membership is open to all people. We gladly welcome all races, creeds, genders and sexual orientations. We are as diverse as our community; therefore, we must be all inclusive and non-judgmental when it comes to our membership. Our rules are frequently bent and stretched. Sometimes they must be enforced strictly and other times loosely applied. However, our lengthy screening process for new members became necessary because people were joining with incompatible motives.

Social Activism

SPI members are, by their very nature, agents of political change. Some members wish to identify only with the social service or spiritual aspects of the Order, but there is no escape from the controversial and political qualities of the membership. Members of SPI plan demonstrations and affect various social issues or organize parties to raise money for charities. The entire membership participates.

Social Service

SPI printed the world's first safe sex pamphlet, and organized the first AIDS benefit. When we are asked, "Why are you mocking nuns?" we answer: "We *are* nuns!" We do all that traditional nuns have done for centuries. We have raised lots of money for AIDS and other social causes. We visit the sick, feed the hungry and generally service the community. We are 21st century nuns!

Freedom of Expression

In keeping with this philosophy, we believe there should be few restrictions on our artistic creativity.

Although rare, at certain events the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence require all Postulants, Novices and Fully Professed Members (FP) to wear traditional habits, which are usually accessorized with buttons/pins, jewelry, makeup, etc. Most of the time, we are encouraged to develop our own unique habits incorporating the whiteface makeup and coronet into the appearance. This allows the individual spirit open, unrestricted expression. We are artists, as well as social activists, and our faces and bodies are our canvases.

Commitment

Although members attaining Fully Professed status are considered members for life, the road to that end is not an easy one. The Order requires its members, especially new ones, to demonstrate commitment to the ideals of the Order, the community at large, and to the individuals that comprise the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. As with all nuns, priests, clerics, shamans, and other holy individuals around the world, there is inherent in their title an immense amount of self-sacrifice. SPI members may not always agree with each other on a particular direction that the Order is pursuing, but they are expected to work for the good of the group and the community. Many times, since the founding of this Order, our members have made personal sacrifices so that the community would reap the full benefits of the efforts of SPI. Members have performed mundane but necessary services to the Order, participated in functions that they would not normally care to attend and given up some of their personal freedoms so that the group would flourish or even participated with the group though they were in severe physical pain. This is what it is to be a nun, what it is to support the community and what it is to serve the human race.

Membership

Aspirants

A layperson begins his or her journey to becoming a member of the Order by first becoming an Aspirant. Aspirants must be at least eighteen (18) years of age at the time of application, but because of our ministries, all subsequent levels of progression beyond this position (Postulant, Novice Guard, Novice Sister, Fully Professed Guard & Fully Professed Sister), must be over the age of twenty-one (21). Persons wishing to join The Sisters of San Antonio must contact the Mistress/Master of Novices (MON) and complete and return an application to join. The application will be presented at the next General Membership (GM) Meeting. There is no vote to determine whether an individual becomes an Aspirant. Once an individual has become an Aspirant, there are several requirements and recommendations for this person before they can move on to the next level of progression. All Aspirants are required to attend all general membership meetings. If they are unable to attend these meetings, they must contact the Mistress/Master of Novices in advance to explain why they cannot attend. They must physically attend a minimum of two (2) meetings to meet the minimum requirements for progression (this includes the meeting in which they are up for progression).

- The individual is required to maintain a regular presence in the House for a minimum of two (2) months.
- Aspirants are required attend two (2) Sisters of San Antonio sponsored general manifestations.
- Aspirants are not considered members of The Sisters of San Antonio, and they should in no way identify themselves as such.
- It is recommended that the Aspirants interview as many of The Sisters of San Antonio during this time, as to get to know the members of the order and what brought them to the Sisters. This will make it easier for them to choose a Big Sister/Brother and get a better sense of the mission of the Sisters.
- Aspirants are encouraged to track their experiences via a notebook provided by the Mistress/Master of Novices. This will give them a chance to document their progress, their experiences, and write down questions as they occur.
- The Aspirant is encouraged to use this time to reflect upon his or her calling and to become better acquainted with the work and mission of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.
- To demonstrate commitment to the ideals of the Order, the community at large, and to the individuals that comprise the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.

Once these minimum requirements are met, the Mistress/Master of Novices may recommend them for an interview with the Fully Professed Members.

Postulants

Postulants represent a level of membership that is senior to Aspirants, but still junior to Novice Guards, Novice Sisters, Fully Professed Guards and Fully Professed Sisters. Postulants are considered non- voting and non-dues paying members. They can neither serve as Directors nor chair committees.

Once an individual has become a Postulant, there are several requirements and recommendations for this person before they can move on to the next level of progression. The role of a Postulant is not to fetch drinks, carry an individual member's purse/bag or perform any other "personal, servant-like duties".

- Postulants are required to attend all general membership meetings. If they are unable to attend these meetings, they must contact the Mistress/Master of Novices in advance to explain why they cannot attend. In the event that the Mistress/Master of Novices is not available the Big Sister/Brother must be notified who will in turn notify the Mistress/Master of Novices.
- When they attend Sisters of San Antonio sponsored events, Postulants are required to be in uniform (see description of habits). If the general membership establishes an event as mandatory, Postulants are required to attend, and the Mistress/Master of Novices must notify all new members of this at least thirty (30) days in advance.
- Postulants are required to maintain a regular presence in the House over a minimum of four (4) months.
- Postulants are now required to track their experiences via the notebook provided by the Mistress/Master of Novices. This will document their progress, their experiences, and write down questions as they occur.
- Postulants must select and maintain a Fully Professed Sister or Fully Professed Guard as a Big Sister/Brother.
- When in public, Postulants are required to be in the presence of Fully Professed Escort, and an acceptable distance is to be determined by their escort. It is highly advised that the Postulant be within arm's reach of a Fully Professed Member at all times when manifested publicly. Postulants may drive themselves to and from an event, but once they arrive at the event, they must immediately report to their assigned escort in a location that has been determined by their escort.
- Postulants must defer all questions and media interviews to a Fully Professed Sister.
- Postulants are required to consult with the Mistress/Master of Novices and their Big Sister/Brother regarding questions on the Order; it is the Postulant's duty to learn about the Order and SPI as a whole.
- It is recommended that Postulants participate and help process items at all general membership meetings.
- It is recommended that Postulants receive Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) and Food Handler Certification.
- Postulants must select one item from the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence's extensive history and present it at a General Membership Meeting.

Description of Habit:

Postulants are required to wear "whiteface" makeup and use black to pencil in Eyebrows, simple brow. Black Mascara and Black Eyeliner only. May use colored Eyelashes on the eyes. Postulants are not allowed to wear glitter or glitz gel. Color is restricted to the eyelashes only. In order to symbolize their silence and observance of the Order, Postulants are required to have white lips.

Sister:

For manifestations, Postulants are required to wear a grey habit, white bib, and short white veil. A non-descript, comfortable grey dress in modest length is most appropriate. Shoes should be black and fairly non-descript. Short heels, Mary-Jane style shoes, basic boots, etc. are all acceptable. Postulants may accessorize with a single bracelet, single necklace, single ring, single brooch, or earrings as approved by their chaperone (Wedding bands and piercing studs will not count as jewelry). The Mistress/Master of Novices retains final approval of jewelry.

Guard:

If a Postulant plans only to follow the path of Guard, they are required to wear a uniform of black pants or shorts and a grey button-down shirt (long or short sleeve at their discretion), and sensible black shoes. They must wear a ½ “whiteface” A colored eyebrow or a single pair of colored lashes (or lash, if only one eye has “whiteface” makeup) may be used. Postulant guards will be required to wear white on the lips.

After completing the minimum requirements, Postulants may request that their Big Sister/Brother, with the approval of the Mistress/Master of Novices, recommend them for Novice status at the next regularly scheduled general membership meeting. Upon approval from a progression vote, the Postulant can choose to become a Novice Guard or a Novice Sister. Refer to “Approval of New Member or Progression” for further details on progression.

Novices

The Novice role represents an intermediate level of membership that is intended to prepare the individual to become a Fully Professed member. If a member decides to switch their role (Sister or Guard), they remain the current level in the organization that they have already attained, i.e., a Novice Guard would become a Novice Sister. The role of a Novice is not to fetch drinks, carry an individual member’s purse or bag or perform any other “personal servant- like duties”. Novice are only allowed to chair an official Sisters of San Antonio event for their novice project. They are considered voting members but have no voting rights concerning elevations, suspensions, or excommunications. Novices can only hold the Director at Large position in the organization’s board.

Once an individual has become a Novice, there are several requirements and recommendations for this person before they can move on to the next level of progression.

- Novices are required to attend all meetings. If they are unable to attend, they must contact the Mistress/Master of Novices in advance to explain why they cannot attend.
- If the general membership establishes an event as mandatory, Novices are required to attend, and the Mistress/Master of Novices must notify all new members of this at least thirty (30) days in advance.
- Novices are required to maintain a regular presence in the House for a minimum of six (6) months.
- Novices are required to attend a minimum of two (2) “Novice Tea” events during their novitiate.
- Novices are required to track their experiences via the notebook provided by the Mistress/Master of Novices. This will document their progress, their experiences, and write down questions as they occur.

- Novices are required to maintain a Fully Professed member as a Big Sister/Brother.
- When in public, Novices are required to be in the presence of a Fully Professed member, and an acceptable distance is to be determined by their escort. They should be within visual distance of their chaperone at all times, with required proximity being dictated by the nature of the event/space.
- Novices are required to defer all media interviews to a Fully Professed member.
- Novices are required to consult with the Mistress/Master of Novices and their Big Sister/Brother regarding questions about the Order; it is the Novice Sister's duty to learn how to become a Fully Professed Sister of Perpetual Indulgence.
- Novices are required to complete a novice project.
- It is recommended that Novices participate and help process items at all general membership meetings. This includes the provision of input on issues regarding The Sisters of San Antonio.
- It is recommended that Novices be well versed with all training instruments of the Order, including the bylaws and this handbook.
- It is recommended that Novices attend a self-defense class.
- It is required that Novices receive Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) and Food Handler Certification.
- It is recommended that Novices receive CPR Certification.

Description of Habit:

Sister:

Novice Sisters are to wear “whiteface” makeup and accent this in any way they wish. Novice Sisters are allowed the use of no more than three Jewels (rhinestone, sequin etc.) on their face.

Novice Sisters must maintain a traditional habit consisting of a simple black dress in a sensible length of their choosing, white bib, House coronet, and long white veil. Veil fabric may be of varying textures but it must be opaque and only white. Handbag, jewelry, shoes, accessories, white feathers, and stockings are up to their discretion. Any deviation from this habit for any event should be discussed with their Big Sister/Brother and/or Mistress/Master of Novices.

Guard:

Novice Guards are to wear a minimum of ¼ of the face “whiteface” makeup and they are allowed to accent/embellish this makeup in any way they wish. Novice Guards are allowed only the use of three Jewels (rhinestone, sequin etc.)

Novice Guards are to wear black pants or shorts, a white button-down shirt (long or short sleeve at their discretion), a white baseball cap with a SAS Alamo patch on the front, and sensible black shoes. Novice guards may acquire and wear their vest with the commencement of their Novice Project.

Upon meeting these minimum requirements, Novices may request that their Mother/Father, with approval of the Mistress/Master of Novices, recommend them for Fully Professed member status at the next regularly scheduled general membership meeting. Refer to “Approval of New Member or Progression” for further details on progression.

Fully Professed

The Fully Professed members serve as the primary leadership of the Order. They decide the direction, the rules and all-important aspects of the Order. Fully Professed members are voting members for life, except in the case of resignation, excommunication or temporary loss of voting privileges pursuant to the bylaws. Fully Professed members may chair Sisters of San Antonio sponsored events. They may also serve as a Big Sister/Brother mentor to Postulants and a Mother to Novice Sisters. Fully Professed members are allowed to hold any Director position. Fully Professed members must attend general membership meetings. It is required that fully Professed sisters maintain a valid TABC Certification. Refer to “*Approval of New Member or Progression*” for further details on progression.

Description of Habit:

Sister:

Generally, Fully Professed Sisters are to wear “whiteface” makeup and accent this in any way they wish.

Fully Professed Sisters must maintain a traditional habit consisting of a sensible black dress of their choosing, a white bib, the Alamo Coronet, and a long black veil. This will occasionally be required for some events as determined by the House (may be worn at any time of their choosing otherwise). Normally, a Fully Professed Sister will manifest in a habit of their choosing, keeping it appropriate to the event and space, with veils, coronets, attire, and other embellishments of their choosing

Guard:

FPM Guards are to wear a minimum of ¼ to full “whiteface” makeup and accent/embellish this in any way they wish. They are not restricted on jewels.

The formal habit shall be a Leather (or pleather) vest with the “Official” SAS Patch, Harness (optional), Black Baseball cap with the Alamo Patch on the front, black pants or shorts, black button-down shirt (long or short sleeve at their discretion), and sensible black shoes. Both the makeup and the outfit are required to remain masculine in nature.

An important note on the Guard role (at any level)

The role of a Guard is to assist and support the membership of the Order. They may be asked to set-up and tear down materials for events (i.e. tables, décor, etc.), protect member's personal belongings

during performances, carry banners/flags for parades, help guard members from harm, ease tensions when the need arises, carry extra bags of condoms for outreach activities and/or similar types of “physical” work. As previously stated: The role of a Guard is not to fetch drinks, carry an individual member’s purse/bag or perform any other “personal, servant-like duties”. However, they may be asked to assist with tasks for the House that are made more difficult in a dress and heels.

Appearance

Cleanliness is next to Godliness, and members of the Order are expected to maintain a standard of hygiene. Bathing, brushing teeth, use of deodorant and the judicious use of perfume or cologne is greatly appreciated by fellow members and the community at large. Formal and festive habits should be kept clean and in good repair.

Each member should be prepared to maintain his/her own ensemble. If a costume needs extra attention, that member should be prepared to bring any necessary materials to the event to maintain that ensemble (i.e. extra latex, safety pins, makeup, etc.). Each member’s ensemble should be appropriate to the event (i.e. no G-strings for formal events). Members also need to be responsible for their ensemble decisions. For example, unless a member is comfortable walking in ultra-high heels for four to five hours at a time, those heels would not be a good ensemble choice for events that require long periods of uninterrupted walking (i.e. Gay Pride)

Saints

A Saint is a layperson whose life and accomplishments are in keeping with the Order’s philosophy and statement of purpose. Any member past the Postulant level may recommend a person for canonization, but the candidate must be voted on by seventy-five percent (75%) plus one (1) of the general membership at a meeting. A canonization to celebrate the person’s life and accomplishments may be performed as a public fundraiser for that Saint’s favorite charity, or it can take place at any event that is agreed upon by both the General Membership and Saint (i.e. banquet, drag show, comedy roast, anointing, baptismal ritual, bungee jumping, etc.). Saints are not considered members of the Order. They have no membership rights (i.e. voting, progression, etc.), and they cannot speak to the press or the community on behalf of the Order.

Angels

An Angel is a layperson who has made some sort of contribution to the Order. This can include, but is not limited to, contributing money/materials or performing some technical service (i.e. hairdresser, seamstress, interpreters, legal counsel, light/sound technician, etc.). Any member past the Postulant level may recommend a person for canonization, but the candidate must be voted on by seventy-five percent (75%) plus one (1) of the general membership at a meeting. Angels are not considered members of the Order. They have no membership rights (i.e. voting, progression, etc.), and they cannot speak to the press or the community on behalf of the Order.

Approval of New Members & Progression

For Aspirants

A person becomes an Aspirant upon their Formal Application being submitted to the Mistress/Master of Novices and upon their attendance of their first GM Meeting. An Aspirant is not considered a member of The Sisters of San Antonio. An interview by the Fully Professed Membership with the candidate should take place not during a General Membership Meeting, but before, after, or another time/place entirely that is appropriate. A vote of 50% + 1 by the present Fully Professed Membership representing quorum is required before the person is allowed to progress to a Postulant. All progressions will take place at the end of the next General Membership Meeting, if approved.

For Postulants

After conferring with each other on the candidate (if possible), either the Big Sister/Brother or Mistress of Novices may propose a candidate for progression (once the member has satisfactorily achieved all requirements set forth) to the Fully Professed Membership, and a time and place will be determined for an interview of the candidate by the available present Fully Professed Membership. Questions on Sistory, purpose, and drive are typical (but not exclusive) to the nature of the interview with the exception of visiting Fully Professed members, all nonvoting members and visitors are to leave the room before the Fully Professed Sisters and Fully Professed Guards interview the candidate. After this interview, the candidate will be asked to leave the room while the Fully Professed Members discuss and vote on the candidate. Progression must be approved by a 75 % + 1 majority vote representing quorum. All progressions will take place at the end of the next General Membership Meeting, if approved.

For Novices

After conferring with each other on the candidate (if possible), either the Mother/Father or Mistress of Novices may propose a candidate for progression (once the member has satisfactorily achieved all requirements set forth). To the fully Professed Members, and a time and place will be determined for an interview of the candidate by the available present Fully Professed Membership. Questions on Sistory, Purpose, Mission, and drive are typical (but not exclusive) to the nature of the interview. With the exception of visiting Fully Professed members, all nonvoting members and visitors are to leave the room before the Fully Professed Sisters and Fully Professed Guards interview the candidate. After this interview, the candidate will be asked to leave the room while the Fully Professed Members discuss and vote on the candidate. Progression must be approved by 75 % + 1 of all Fully Professed Members representing a quorum. All progressions will take place at the end of the next General Membership Meeting, if approved.

Quite often, new members who have completed all requirements are still not approved due to a number of reasons (i.e. needing more time to develop, perfect some defects, needing work on dependability or commitment, etc.). This is done with great compassion. Occasionally, it is determined that potential new members are not suitable for the Order and great compassion is exercised in informing that person. This is usually done by the Big Sister/Brother, Mother/Father, and/or the Mistress/Master of Novices.

Transferring Sisters

When a Fully Professed member from another active House of Perpetual Indulgence relocates and wishes to join The Sisters of San Antonio, that Fully Professed member must present a letter of recommendation from their previous House. To be considered a valid recommendation, the House issuing the letter of recommendation must be considered active and the prospective Fully Professed Member must have been active in that House. For purposes of this section, an active House of Perpetual Indulgence is considered such when they are performing work in accordance with the overall mission of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence on a continuing basis. Upon presenting the letter of recommendation, the new Fully Professed Member (Sister or Guard) will participate in a three (3) month observation of The Sisters of San Antonio. The Fully Professed member will wear the traditional headpiece of his/her former House with a veil of their choosing. Fully Professed Guards that are transferring from another house will continue to follow the dress code of a Guard in their former House. The transferring Fully Professed member will have the voting rights appropriate to a Novice and will be entitled to attend all meetings of the Fully Professed Sisters membership to observe the process and provide insight. The transferring Fully Professed member may not vote on progressions or matters brought before the Fully Professed membership for a vote. Upon the conclusion of the three (3) month observation period, the transferring Fully Professed Member may request to be considered a Fully Professed Sister or Guard within The Sisters of San Antonio.

Transferring Fully Professed members seeking to join The Sisters of San Antonio who cannot present a letter of recommendation from an active House of Perpetual Indulgence will be required to serve a six (6) month period as a Novice and will be subject to the rules of The Sisters of San Antonio governing Novices.

Transferring Novices (Sisters or Guards) from other houses wishing to join The Sisters of San Antonio must also present a letter of recommendation as described above. Novices will begin their journey with a three (3) month trial period referred to as Aspirant Novice. During this period, they will wear the coronet (sister) or appropriate dress (guard) for their previous House. At the end of that trial period, the Fully Professed Members will vote on their acceptance to the house as a Novice. If accepted, they will be granted the San Antonio House Coronet/Dress code of a Novice and must select a Mother/Father. Additionally, they will only be required to serve a *minimum* of 3 months as a Novice before being eligible for elevation (recognizing their time served as an Aspirant Novice).

Big Sisters/Brothers and Mothers/Fathers

Any Fully Professed may be a Big Sister/Brother to a Postulant or a Mother/Father to a Novice. These mentorship roles review the performance and behavior of the new members, make reports to the Mistress/Master of Novices and general membership, answer new member's questions and act as a liaison between the new member and the Fully Professed Sisters. They encourage new members to discover a name that fits the individual's character and offer costuming and makeup ideas. They are expected to educate the new member on what it is to be a member as well as what the group will expect of them. Fully Professed may mentor no more than three (3) junior members at any given time. Under special circumstances the membership may vote for a dispensation. Due to potential conflicts,

members may not sponsor or act as a Big Sister/Brother or Mother/Father to their spouse, roommate or significant other.

Missionary Member

A Missionary Member is any Fully Professed Member that is unable to participate with the House due to physical proximity but who wishes to continue serving the Order in an area that is not within a close proximity to an existing House of The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. Any FPM applying for this status should have maintained an active good standing for one full year prior to beginning Missionary status. They may be approved for Missionary status by a fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) of the eligible Fully Professed Members present. They receive a copy of the Missionary document to substantiate their position in the Order. Missionaries are expected to keep in contact with the Order in writing regarding their activities, or with the Mistress/Master of Novices. Missionaries are to phone-in a minimum of every other General Membership Meeting. Missionaries shall have their status reviewed semiannually by the Fully Professed Membership and the Mistress/Master of Novices.

Dispensation

A dispensation is a temporary exception to the policies and procedures granted by a fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) vote of the Fully Professed Membership.

Leave of Absence (temporarily inactive – less than 3 months)

A Member may request a Leave of Absence if they expect to be away from functions for a short period of time (less than three months). They must make this request to the Mistress/Master of the House in writing and will go into effect upon receipt of the letter unless otherwise stated in the request. They forfeit all voting rights, the right to chair committees, and the right to mentor new members. During a Leave of Absence, a member may not manifest as a Sister without dispensation voted upon by the general membership of the Sisters of San Antonio. A member on leave has made a choice to take a break from the Sisters, so the member **and** House should respect that separation from the Sisters until the member on leave returns.

Prior to reaching the 3-month mark, a member of the board will reach out to inquire as to how the Sister wishes to proceed with their status.

Sabbatical (temporarily inactive – more than 3 months)

A Fully Professed Member may request a vacation/holiday from Sisters of San Antonio duties, activities and participation by delivering a letter to the Mistress/Master of the House stating this desire. The length of the sabbatical may not exceed one year. If you have not applied for Emeritus Status before the year of Sabbatical has ended, the member will automatically fall out of good standing. They forfeit all voting rights, the right to chair committees and the right to mentor new members. During a sabbatical, a member may not manifest as a Sister without a dispensation voted on by The Sisters of San Antonio. A member on sabbatical has made a choice to take a break from the Sisters, so the member **and** House should respect that separation from the Sisters until the member on sabbatical returns.

Prior to reaching the 3-month mark, a member of the board will reach out to inquire as to how the Sister wishes to proceed with their status.

Emeritus/Retired Member

An Emeritus member is an FPM in good standing who:

1. Requests this status for his/herself when they know they will be away from the regular functions of the House for an extended period of time beyond that covered by a Sabbatical.
2. The member is placed in this status by a unanimous vote of the FPM eligible to vote at a General Meeting should the FPM in question be unable to make the request themselves for some reason.

A Sister Emeritus does not have voting privileges, though they are welcome to attend any and all meetings, does not hold any office, and does not instruct novices, or postulants. The opinion, advice, and counsel of a Sister Emeritus are invited.

A Sister Emeritus is considered a member of the Sisters of San Antonio for life.

A Sister Emeritus is welcome to appear at official House events, in habit or out, and they may manifest in habit for other occasions provided they provide advance notification to the House of their manifestation and operate with a deference to referring questions about the House to the active membership of the House (when and where appropriate). An adherence to the protocols for visiting and manifesting other cities stands.

An Emeritus member may return to active membership any time, by attending three (3) consecutive General Membership Meetings. At such time, they announce their intention to return to active status to the membership.

Membership Closure

Voting members may vote by fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) to close the Order to new members for a specified period of time. This should only be done when the number of Fully Professed cannot handle (as mentors) the number of junior members coming in per our Policies and Procedures (reference: *"Membership - Fully Professed"*)

Elections

The Directors of The Sisters of San Antonio are the backbone of the Order. They serve the general membership and have no authority outside that granted to them by the General Membership, but they have special responsibilities. For how these positions are elected, please refer to the Bylaws of the Order.

The Board of Directors

Mistress/Master of the House / Abbess (President)

The Mistress/Master of the House convenes and notifies members of general membership meetings as well as chairs general membership meetings. They compile agendas for the general membership. They are responsible for tracking attendance at meetings and events. They present information at general membership meetings. They ensure all other Directors and committee chairs are fulfilling their duties. They are responsible for insuring that the Corporation is conducting business in accordance with laws and guidelines governing 501(c)3 non-profit organizations. The Mistress/Master of the House is the official Chief Executive of the Order and the official spokesperson when one is required and/or no other is present. They are responsible for communicating with members on Sabbatical.

They are also a resource to the general membership for the inspiration of blessings, ceremonies and rituals that may be, at times, a part of events or manifestations. They perform rituals and blessings in public. If the Abbess is unavailable, this role can be performed by any Fully Professed member.

Mistress/Master of Protocol (Vice President)

Mistress/Master of Protocol shall assume the duties of the President during their absence. They shall coordinate all committee activities and serve as an advisor for all committees. The Vice-President shall also maintain order and keep the flow of the meetings going to maximize use of time. The Vice-President shall coordinate all venues for various meetings of the Board and/or the general membership. The Vice-President shall serve in an assistive capacity to both the Secretary and the Treasurer as well. The Vice-President will also oversee all other Mistress/Master positions (Novices, Propaganda, Events, etc.)

The Mistress/Master of Protocol is charged with keeping track of the Policies, Procedures, Bylaws and any other rules of the Order. Their duties shall include the clarification of any written rules of the Order and to help settle any disputes that might arise due to these rules.

Mistress/Master of Communications (Secretary)

The Mistress/Master of Communications takes and disseminates minutes of all general membership meetings to members. They are responsible for seeing that an accurate attendance record is kept. They are also responsible for maintaining and distributing the official mailing list of the Order. The Mistress/Master of Communications is the official Secretary of the Order. They are also the person who takes responsibility to care for historical records, documents, props, etc. for the Order.

Mistress/Master of Coffers (Treasurer)

The Mistress/Master of Coffers deposits money in The Sisters of San Antonio bank accounts, balances checkbooks and writes checks. They will present financial reports at general membership meetings. They will file forms with federal and state governments (i.e. taxes, etc.) in accordance with laws and guidelines governing 501(c)3 non-profit organizations. They will solicit foundations for grants. The Mistress/Master of Coffers is the official Chief Financial Director of the Order.

Director at Large

The duties of the Director at Large member will be to assist in any capacity as determined by the Board as well as to oversee committees and events.

Additional (Missionary) Positions

These roles are not Directors, but are no less important in the day to day work of the House!

Mistress/Master of Novices

The Mistress/Master of Novices Interviews Postulants and Novices regarding their progression. They answer Members' questions regarding The Sisters of San Antonio rules, history, etc. They make reports at general membership meetings regarding the status of various members and distributes The Sisters of San Antonio habits to Novices and Postulants. They communicate with and track Missionaries.

The Mistress/Master of Novices is responsible for distributing all training instruments to Novices and Postulants.

They shall hold a “Novice Tea” at least once a quarter to explain the instruments of the Order and to help new members express their ideas and problems in a “safer” environment. The Mistress/Master of Novices is ultimately the individual in charge of all Novices and Postulants.

Mistress/Master of Propaganda

The Mistress/Master of Propaganda is charged with overseeing the creation of press releases, written web content, publicity and other written documents that are used to market the "brand" of The Sisters of San Antonio. The Mistress/Master of Propaganda is charged with overseeing the presentation of graphic images and layouts used in posters, fliers and the other promotional materials. They are also charged with regulating the standards and usage of the official logo of The Sisters of San Antonio.

They are also charged with maintaining the structure and functionality of the official Sisters of San Antonio website (www.sanantoniosisters.org) and any other social media web pages maintained by The Sisters of San Antonio.

Mistress/Master of Bliss

The Mistress/Master of Bliss is charged with overseeing The Sisters of San Antonio' safer sex outreach programs. They maintain inventory of outreach supplies and schedules regular safer sex outreach manifestations, insuring that we target many different factions of the local community. They schedule ongoing safer sex and STD education for the House.

Mistress/Master of Habits

The Mistress/Master of Habits is charged with overseeing the inventory and production of headpieces and formal habits of The Sisters of San Antonio.

Mistress/Master of Saints and Angels

The Mistress/Master of Saints and Angels is charged with maintaining contact information and records of all Saints and Angels. They oversee the creation of certificates for Saints and Angels.

Mistress/Master of Events

The Mistress/Master of Events is charged with maintaining a current contact list for businesses that The Sisters of San Antonio may choose to work with, including:

- Local Charities whose work is in line with the Mission of The Sisters of San Antonio
- Nightclubs and other venues that may be good locations for Sister Events
- Local businesses that may support the work of The Sisters of San Antonio with donations, either financial or goods for raffles, door prizes, or giveaways.

They are also charged with overseeing the conceptualizing, ordering and sales of branded clothing, trinkets and theme-related give away items that are requested by The Sisters of San Antonio. This person is also tasked with finding auction items for fundraisers.

UNPC Delegate and Alternate

The United Nuns Privy Council requires that two members of each House participate as Delegate and Alternate. They will be required to attend the monthly conference call of the UNPC and to give a report to the Council about the achievements and pitfalls of the House. After the call, the Delegate and/or Alternate must prepare a report of the phone call and distribute it to the House at the next monthly meeting. The Delegate and Alternate are nominated and elected at the Annual Membership Meeting. They serve a one (1) year term with no limits to the number of terms they serve.

Personal Conduct

Behavior

Members of the Order **are** The Sisters of San Antonio, and their attitude and actions should reflect positively on fellow members and the House as a whole. Internal House affairs are never to be discussed in public by any member of The Sisters of San Antonio. Members must take personal responsibility for their actions and attitude at all times. At any time, these actions or attitudes that do not reflect positively on the House and it is brought to his/her attention, the member should consider modifying his/her attitude or excuse himself/herself from the event. If deemed necessary a Quorum of Fully Professed member's present may remove them from the event.

Members of the Order need to establish for themselves exactly **how** much consumption of alcohol is appropriate. All members need to be aware of each other and the surroundings. No member should ever feel it is not their place to politely speak up if problems arise. Members should **never** feel uncomfortable around other members. Members should be aware that they are **servants of the community**, and as such, should not expect free drinks, cover, line jumping or other special considerations. Members should expect to pay their own way and show appreciation (i.e. leave tips) when gratuities are offered. In general, members need to bring "mad money" to events in case cabs are required or any other unforeseen expense.

Social Networking

Members should be aware that they are representatives of the House at all times. This includes profiles and interactions on sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Myspace, etc.... Internal House affairs are never to be discussed or posted in any public forum by any member of The Sisters of San Antonio. While social networking allows for quick and constant interaction with other houses, all members should remember that policies, procedures and guidelines vary from house to house. All members are to observe the policies, procedures and guidelines of this house first and foremost.

- Postulants are NOT allowed to create public online accounts. They are allowed to reserve an account but may not publish them.
- Novices are allowed to create their online profiles and are able to communicate with other houses and sisters. This does NOT mean a Novice may speak for the House through Social

Networking, only that they may develop relationships with other Sisters/Guard. Novices are must work with their Big Sister/Brother on appropriateness of posts to social network sites.

Conflict Resolution

As adults, you should feel free to speak openly and honestly with any member of the House about concerns you have about their behavior or actions. We should also be humble enough to listen to our fellow Sisters when they express such concerns and not just dismiss them out of hand without genuine reflection. However, if you have a personal conflict or issue with another member of the House arises that you legitimately feel you cannot resolve between yourselves, you should engage another member (your Big Sister/Brother, the Abbess, or another member that is not directly involved) to be a mediator and help the two of you come to an understanding.

The Sisters attract big personalities, and big personalities do not always mesh harmoniously every single day, but you should remember that your fellow Sisters are here to be of Service to the community, just like you, and not to engage in personality wars.

Accountability / Three Strike Policy

If there is a concern with any member's conduct or attitude that threatens the well-being, reputation, or good works of the House, action will be taken along the following guidelines:

1. First Strike

The incident is brought to the offending member's attention in a diplomatic manner by a Fully Professed Member. At that time, a short memo, in written form, must be submitted to the Secretary to file into a "complaints" folder archive in the file storage of the House and dated appropriately. The memo simply need state who was present at the conversation, what was discussed, and what the agreed-on path forward was to resolution. The secretary will contact both parties and confirm they agree the contents of the memo reflect the discussion had before adding it to the archive.

2. Second Strike

If Step 1 fails, the matter is brought to the Mistress/Master of the House and/or the Mistress/Master of Protocol's attention, and they will intercede. At the time, as the issue has become more serious, a formal memo is now required to document:

"On X date, I spoke to Y person/s in regards to complaint Z. The allegations were A, B, C. Discussed path to resolution was the following actions: D, E, F. Review of the status of this will be reviewed again on <date>."

Actionable steps must be defined and a defined timetable to resolution must be established. At the next general meeting, the memo will be submitted to the House, all individuals involved in the meeting can acknowledge the memo is a truthful accounting of the meeting and agreed on steps, and the memo will be added to the complaints archive folder with an agenda action item to follow up on the issue on the date given in the memo. If both parties are not present at the meeting, the secretary will follow up directly with those not present to obtain confirmation.

During the next meeting after the resolution date, the House will inquire: were the items discussed completed in good faith? Is this issue currently resolved? If it is, and the House feels satisfied it has been resolved in a manner that speaks well of our House, it will be voted on to be marked "Resolved".

3. Third Strike

If Step 2 fails, the Mistress/Master of the House and/or the Mistress/Master of Protocol will bring the matter before the Membership for disciplinary actions up to removal of membership for junior members in the House with a seventy-five percent (75%) plus one (1) vote of all voting members present constituting a quorum. Documentation of the previous steps will be provided showing that every good faith effort was made to resolve the issue without it rising to this level.

Grievances

Grievance procedures are a means of dispute resolution that can be used to address complaints by members against The Sisters of San Antonio as a whole. Grievance procedures are intended to allow The Sisters of San Antonio to hear and resolve complaints in a timely and cost-effective manner, before they result in litigation. Each member shall have the right to bring any grievances forward in a safe and just manner, without worry or risk to their position within the Corporation.

The Mistress/Master of Communications (Secretary) must receive a letter of request for mediation and a copy of the request is then forwarded to the and the Mistress/Master of the House (Mistress/Master of the House). The Mistress/Master of The House (Mistress/Master of the House) shall appoint no less than three (3) persons to serve on the Mediation Committee. Members may be temporarily removed or added from this committee to guarantee a lack of bias or prejudice against the parties involved in the mediation request. The chair shall call a Mediation Committee meeting.

The first step will be to determine if this is a proper grievance to be investigated by this Corporation. Those actions that violate city, state or federal law should be referred to the proper authorities by the requester, not by the Corporation. At the option of the Mediation Committee, and with the permission of the aggrieved parties, the committee may attempt to reconcile the differences without outside assistance. If that attempt is unsuccessful, then an outside, impartial mediator will be contacted by the Committee. The mediator will meet individually with both parties and then arrange a joint meeting for resolution. Each party will be allowed to bring one witness, notarized statements from witnesses and one member of their support network (this person will not be able to address the mediator, the situation or the other parties involved).

Guidelines for appropriate behavior will be drawn up and agreed upon by all parties. Repeated violation or disregard for these guidelines will result in either removal from the site or adjournment of the mediation. If the mediator cannot affect a satisfactory resolution, they will make a recommendation to the Mediation Committee and, subject to the approval by the Fully Professed Membership, may suggest further action, including total dismissal of the grievance.

Sexual Harassment

For the purposes of the sexual harassment section, the following terms will be defined as:

- **Quid Pro Quo Harassment** occurs when a member's submission to, or rejection of, sexual advances becomes the basis for organizational decisions or tangible benefit or detriments.
- **Hostile Volunteer/Work Environment Harassment** occurs when unwelcome sexual jokes, innuendo, comments or actions create an offensive volunteer/work environment.

The Sisters of San Antonio has a strong commitment that all members should enjoy an environment free from all forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is any unwelcomed or unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment is **illegal** and **will not be tolerated**. Therefore, The Sisters of San Antonio has implemented a sexual harassment policy that will treat sexual harassment as any other form of serious member misconduct. Conditions which constitute harassment on the basis of sex and/or sexual identity include any unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal and/or physical sexual conduct when:

- Submitting to such conduct is made a term or condition of elevation;
- Submitting to or rejecting such conduct is used as the basis for membership or elevation decisions; or
- Such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive volunteer/work environment. Inappropriate behavior and/or conduct, based on the above information, is strictly prohibited and performance of this behavior is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including excommunication from The Sisters of San Antonio, Inc.

While Quid Pro Quo Harassment is typically clear because a volunteer/employee is either rewarded or damaged in return for sexual favors, Hostile Volunteer/Work Environment Harassment is not always as recognizable. Because much of the work we do is in a sexually charged environment, the impact of the behavior, not the intent of the person doing the act, determines if sexual harassment has occurred. Always remember that "unwelcome" is decided by the impact on recipient of the behavior, not the intent of the person initiating the behavior. Also, a hostile environment can be created when a third-party witnesses sexual behavior, conduct or comments between two or more consenting people and finds such activity "unwelcome" in the volunteer/work environment.

Some example questions to ask yourself prior to initiating questionable behavior include:

- Would I want this on the evening news?
- Is there equal power, initiation and participation between me and the person I'm interacting with?
- Would I do this if my significant other were standing next to me?
- Would I want someone to do this to my significant other? Some behavior to consider whether appropriate or not:
 - Making propositions.
 - "Touching" or "brushing" improperly.
 - Repeatedly asking another person out.

If a member has experienced any form of sexual harassment, Quid Pro Quo or Hostile Volunteer/Work Environment, all members shall follow the following procedures to report the incident:

- The member shall **immediately** report the harassment to an Director of The Sisters of San Antonio
- Member-to-member and/or member-to-nonmember harassment shall be reported to a Director of The Sisters of San Antonio.

No board member or other member may retaliate or discriminate against any member for filing a complaint. Anyone acting in such a manner will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, excommunication from The Sisters of San Antonio, Inc.

Each and every allegation will be taken seriously, investigated thoroughly and completely, and an appropriate course of action will be taken to resolve the situation in the most expeditious means possible by law.

Bullying

We define bullying as a repeated aggressive behavior where one person (or Group of People) in a position of power deliberately intimidates, abuses, or coerces an individual (or individuals) with the intention to hurt that person physically or emotionally. Acts of bullying can be physical, verbal, relational, or cyber. Any reported incidents of bullying will be investigated swiftly and thoroughly, with necessary actions being taken. Special circumstances may result in the immediate dismissal of a member from the organization.

Suspension

A Fully Professed Member may be temporarily suspended, by a seventy-five percent (75%) plus one (1) vote, any member's rights or privileges, as set forth in this manual or in the bylaws. Suspension is for behavior that is deemed egregiously inappropriate. These rights or privileges may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Voting privileges
- Appearance in habit
- Public representation of the order
- Chairing committees
- Mentoring new members

Once suspended, a seventy-five percent (75%) plus one (1) vote of the Fully Professed Membership is required to reinstate any rights or privileges.

Excommunication

A seventy-five percent (75%) plus one (1) majority of the Fully Professed Members at two (2) consecutive general membership meetings must approve the permanent expulsion of another member. This instrument is used as an absolute last resort after all other efforts over an extended period of time have been exhausted. Only the most grievous and offensive actions are subject to this instrument.

Spiritual Gatherings

Information about our regular general meetings (and other meeting types) can be found in the Bylaws document. Apart from those, we have a few other types of meetings that we gather for:

Novice Tea

Novice Teas are meetings that offer an environment in which sponsored Novices may discuss in confidence their anxieties, concerns and shared situations with the other new members and the Mistress/Master of Novices. These meetings help facilitate solutions for special situations that arise from time to time between new members and other members of the Order or the public. These informal sessions are set up to be fun and social, as well as instructional and insightful. Novice Teas may only be attended by Postulants, Novice Guards, Novice Sisters and the Mistress/Master of Novices. Any other member of the Order may attend at the specific invitation of the Mistress/Master of Novices. Novice Teas are closed to all nonmembers and should be held at least quarterly.

Fully Professed Tea

Fully Professed Teas are meetings in which Fully Professed Members discuss the details of mentoring new members, insuring that there is consistency in the methods used by each Big Sister/Brother and Mother/Father as they mentor new members. These gatherings also help facilitate solutions for special situations that arise from time to time. These informal sessions are set up to be fun and social, as well as insightful. Fully Professed Teas may only be attended by Fully Professed Members and should be held at least quarterly, as set by the Mistress/Master of Novices.

Retreats

Retreats are meetings of the membership that typically extend for a full day or more. They are usually held in a secluded location where the group can concentrate on better getting to know each other and the Order. Although no "official" business is conducted at these meetings, they can be both formal and/or parties. They may be open to member classification as voted on by the general membership prior to the Retreat. Retreats are not usually open to nonmembers, unless a professional is hired to facilitate a specific workshop.

Manifestations

Mandatory (Official) Events

To qualify as an official event, the event must be approved by a vote of fifty (50) percent plus one (1) of voting members and meet any of the following requirements:

- The event is solely sponsored by The Sisters of San Antonio,
- The event is cosponsored by The Sisters of San Antonio, or
- The Sisters of San Antonio is a beneficiary.
- Novice Projects of our membership are automatically considered mandatory events.

Attire is decided by the Mistress/Master of Habits after discussion with the House

To make an event mandatory, the membership must approve that by a vote of fifty (50) percent plus one (1) of voting members three months before the event date.

Planned Events

To qualify as planned event, the event does not require majority. The event is “planned” if discussed and decided upon more than 24 hours in advance. The attire is decided upon as a group consensus by the attending members.

Spontaneous Events

To qualify as a spontaneous event, it must be decided in less than 24 hours in advance. Spontaneous Events usually have no specified attire and are usually free-form.

Financial Policies and Procedures

To provide sound stewardship of the financial resources entrusted to us by our Community, it is the policy of The Sisters of San Antonio to maintain an effective system of internal fiscal controls.

Dues

Novices and Fully Professed Members are dues paying members of the House. The dues are \$25/six months or \$50/year. These can either be paid in a lump sum or once every six months at the General Membership Meeting. Dues are collected by the Mistress/Master of Coffers and are to be deposited into the Operations account. Any member three (3) months late will go to Inactive (not in Good Standing) status with the House until the debt is resolved.

Cashbox and Money Raised

The petty cash amount in the cashbox shall be \$75.00, containing small bills (normally \$1's and \$5's). The Cashbox will be maintained by the Mistress/Master of Coffers (Treasurer). Petty cash amounts larger than the standard \$75.00 need to be pre-arranged with the Mistress/Master of Coffers (Treasurer).

In addition, arrangements need to be made at least one (1) week prior to the day/night of the event with the Mistress/Master of Coffers (Treasurer) to pick up the cashbox. All event donations must be handled in the following manner:

- Post event cash must be counted by two (2) members in a secure location prior to leaving an event.
- Only Novice Members and above (no Aspirants or Postulants) may count or verify event cash.
- A “Post Event Cash Count Form” must be completed and signed by two members before leaving an event.
- The transfer of cash box/ funds to the Mistress/Master of Coffers (Treasurer) must be completed within three (3) days of the event. In the event the Mistress/Master of Coffers (Treasurer) is not available, the cashbox should be given the Mistress/Master of the House (Mistress/Master of the House).
- At no time should event cash be used for event related expenses.
- The cashbox must be monitored at all times by the point nun of the event or by a designated Fully Professed Member.
- The collection of monies at the event can be done by all members of the House.
- No funds will be distributed to beneficiaries prior to the deposit.

It is understood that revenue from events sponsored by other organizations for which The Sisters of San Antonio are providing assistance, are not required to be deposited into The Sisters of San Antonio bank account. Unsolicited donations of less than \$100, collected by a sister or a guard, should be turned in to the Mistress/Master of Coffers (Treasurer) or the Mistress/Master of the House (Mistress/Master of the House) at the next General Membership Meeting. A written receipt of the donation will be given to the sister or guard as a paper trail of the transaction.

Expenses and Check Reimbursements

For the purposes of this paragraph, no two (2) members making the request can be married, partners, roommates, in a relationship, or related.

Any expenses exceeding \$30 must be approved by the House prior to the expenditure. Any purchase over that amount made without approval may not be reimbursed. Anything under \$30 purchased for the purposes of specific committee will be reimbursed under the following guidelines.

Sisters of San Antonio expense reimbursements will only be dispersed after the following criteria are met:

- A completed "Check Reimbursement Form" must be submitted at the next general membership meeting.
- The Reimbursement must be approved by two (2) Directors of The Sisters of San Antonio, one of whom must be the Mistress/Master of Coffers.
- Expenses incurred by a Director must be approved by two (2) other Directors.
- Original receipts or other documentation of the expense(s) must be attached to the "Check Reimbursement Form"

Any reimbursement forms received after the cut-off times will not be honored and shall be considered as a donation from the individual to The Sisters of San Antonio. Circumstances which do not fit into the above timelines must be pre-approved by two (2) Directors, one (1) of whom must be the Mistress/Master of Coffers (Treasurer).

Sisters of San Antonio check requests will only be completed after the following criteria are met:

- A completed "Check Request Form" must be submitted.
- The request must be approved by two (2) Directors of The Sisters of San Antonio.
- Requests submitted by an officer must be approved by two (2) other Directors.
- An official Estimate, Proposal or Invoice must be attached to the "Check Request Form".

Under no circumstances shall a pre-signed, blank check be issued.

Donation Acknowledgement Letters

Letters of acknowledgement for donations in check form of \$25 or greater will automatically be sent by the Mistress/Master of Coffers (Treasurer). Donation checks less than \$25 will not automatically be issued a letter of acknowledgement, but it can be requested. Letters of acknowledgement need to be

signed by the Mistress/Master of Coffers (Treasurer) for validation. A written receipt shall be given for cash donations that are more than \$25 at the time of donation.

Rule Changes

Fifty (50) percent plus one (1) of the Fully Professed Membership must approve changes and additions to this document. It must be put on the agenda and submitted to the Secretary at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting. If the vote passes, the changes go into effect immediately. If any conflict arises regarding this document and The Sisters of San Antonio Bylaws, the Bylaws shall supersede this manual.

Whistle Blower Policy

The Sisters of San Antonio requires all members to observe high standards of ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As representatives of the Organization, we must practice honesty and high integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. It is the responsibility of all Directors and members to report violations or suspected violations in accordance with this Whistle Blower Policy. No one who in good faith reports a violation of the code shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse consequences. A member who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including excommunication from The Sisters of San Antonio.

This Whistle Blower Policy is intended to encourage and enable members and others to raise serious concerns within The Sisters of San Antonio prior to seeking resolution outside The Sisters of San Antonio.

The Code addresses The Sisters of San Antonio' open-door policy and suggests that members share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with someone who can address them properly. In most cases, the Mistress/Master of Protocol is in the best position to address any area of concern. Members are encouraged to speak with someone whom they are comfortable approaching. Directors are required to report suspected violations of the Whistle Blower Policy to the Fully Professed Membership, who has specific and exclusive responsibility to investigate all reported violations. For suspected fraud, or when members are not satisfied or uncomfortable with following the Organization's open-door policy, they should contact The Sisters of San Antonio' Mistress/Master of The House directly.

The Mistress/Master of The House is the Compliance Director for The Sisters of San Antonio. They are responsible for investigating and resolving all reported complaints and allegations concerning violations of policy and shall advise the Fully Professed Membership. The Compliance Director is required to report to the Fully Professed Membership at least annually on compliance activity.

The Mistress/Master of Protocol shall address all reported concerns or complaints regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls or auditing. The Mistress/Master of The House shall immediately notify the Mistress/Master of Protocol of any such complaint and work with them until the matter is resolved. Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of policy must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of policy. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offence and the

Mistress/Master of The House (Mistress/Master of the House) must file a formal grievance on behalf of The Sisters of San Antonio.

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously to the Mistress/Master of Protocol. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct adequate investigation. The Mistress/Master of Protocol will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within five (5) business days. All reports will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

Document Amendment History

Appendix A

- ** Page 10, Section Novice II Sisters,
Replaced last sentence. Per membership approval during meeting 7/17/13.
 - ** Page 14, Section Officer Elections,
updated to match By-Laws. Per membership approval during meeting 8/6/13.
 - ** Page 16, Section Director at Large,
Modified in its entirety. Per membership approval during meeting 8/6/13.
 - ** Page 9, Section Postulants
Makeup adornment changed during meeting 8/19/2014
 - ** Page 11, Section Novice/FPM Guard
Attire changed and approved during meeting 2/18/2016
 - ** Entire Document
reviewed and modified by committee and approved by the House on 1/12/2018.
- 9/25/18: Entire document reviewed by committee &
10/16/18: Entire Document voted into acceptance by the House.

Changes made:

- Legacy “strikethrough” words from previous edit were removed
- Changed “omniversal” to “universal” to reflect Sisters mission properly
- Noted “House coronet” rather than just “coronet” for Novice sisters.
- Wording changed to reflect a desire for MoN and Big Sister/Brother to chat about elevation before putting them forward, but not made a requirement to ensure no possibility of elevations being held hostage.
- Transferring Sisters section reviewed and updated to modify the transferring Novice process to be more reflective of getting to know the candidate as an Aspirant Novice, but still giving credit for “time served” in the entire Novice period should they be accepted in the House.

- Modifications made to Emeritus/Retired status around how the status is achieved and what they may/may not do in that status, and how to return to Good Standing status should they wish to come out of retirement.
- Manifestations were modified to note that Novice Projects are now ALWAYS a mandatory event for the House attendance.