

CONSTITUTION OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIA RESEARCH GROUP

April 12, 2024

I. PREFACE

The Southeast Asia Research Group (SEAREG) was created in 2013 as a multi-campus initiative to highlight and advance the best new research by young social scientists working on Southeast Asia. The main objectives of the organization focus on intellectual rigor, community, and diversity. These objectives are achieved through three core programming pillars: 1) the annual conference in North America; 2) the annual conference in Asia; and 3) grants and mentoring to mentor and foster young talent.

Objectives

Intellectual Rigor: SEAREG promotes research on Southeast Asia that is theoretically informed, analytically sophisticated, and methodologically precise and diverse. The organization provides intellectual infrastructure and resources to support promising new research by social scientists committed to the synergies of discipline, area, and method. SEAREG's goal is to develop a community of scholars of Southeast Asia who have strong methodological skills, rigorous social science training, and a firm commitment to understanding the workings of Southeast Asian countries. We especially emphasize the synthesis of deep area knowledge with rigorous and transparent academic research techniques.

Community: SEAREG aims to grow and enrich the community of social scientists studying Southeast Asia around the world by connecting students of Southeast Asia from different countries of origin, disciplines, and research interests through annual meetings, thematic panels, social opportunities, and professionalization workshops. We expect this vibrant community to lead to understanding, innovation, scholarly collaboration, and friendship.

Diversity: SEAREG is devoted to nurturing scholars from a diversity of lived experiences, intellectual backgrounds, and methodological approaches. We believe we can learn more when a greater variety of experiences and new ideas are represented in the scholarly arena. Mentorship programs, professionalization workshops, and presentation opportunities are aimed at enhancing the reach and career opportunities of researchers from as wide a variety of backgrounds as possible.

Core Programs

North America Conference: SEAREG conferences provide a forum for social scientists to evaluate research that is grounded in an academic discipline and focused on one or more Southeast Asian countries. The networking and presentations that take place at these events showcase innovative scholarship - on individual countries or issues transcending national boundaries - within and across disciplines. The conference meets our goals through several traditional activities: 1) Keynote lectures on the State of the Field and Region by academic and regional experts respectively; 2) Workshops with five competitively selected SEAREG fellows; 3) Thematic panel sessions to showcase work by more senior scholars; 4) Poster sessions to encourage conversations around new work by emerging scholars; and 5) Breakout networking and professionalization sessions.

Asia Conference: These events enable scholars based in Southeast Asia to join the SEAREG network in person without incurring costly travel to North American conferences. They also foster possibilities for collaboration with scholars in the region and contribute to our efforts to build local capacity in the countries we study. The Asia conference also includes the five traditional SEAREG activities outlined above.

Fostering Young Talent: SEAREG encourages emerging social scientists who wish to develop and apply disciplinary expertise to questions relevant to Southeast Asia. In addition to selecting talented SEAREG Fellows to present unpublished working papers at our conferences, we provide pre-dissertation grants and conference travel grants. The pre-dissertation grants enable scholars to develop essential in-country knowledge critical to preparing an outstanding thesis that contributes meaningfully to Southeast Asian studies. Pre-dissertation grants also include mentoring sessions with senior scholars, as students prepare their dissertation proposals.

Leadership & Membership

To achieve our objectives and maintain our core programs, SEAREG relies on devoted and diverse leadership. The organization is led by a six-person Executive Council, which includes an elected Chair. The Executive Council is responsible for fiduciary responsibility in managing SEAREG external grants and membership dues and in running the five (5) committees that facilitate SEAREG activities. The committees are: 1) Fellow Selection; 2) Conferences; 3) Pre-Dissertation Grants; 4) Travel Grants; and 5) Organized Panels.

SEAREG senior members are those who attended at least three (3) SEAREG conferences in the last five (5) years. A SEAREG member is a person who attended any SEAREG conference at any time and who paid the registration fee or received a scholarship/grant to cover the fee.

II. SEAREG EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Composition & Rotation

Council Members: The Executive Council is comprised of six (6) voting members who are drawn from among the ranks of SEAREG's senior members. Under exceptional circumstances, the Council will include one (1) non-voting ex officio member.

Ex Officio Member: In the event the Principal Investigator (PI) for the grant that supports SEAREG is not an elected member of the Executive Council, that individual will serve as an *ex officio* member. This is a non-voting position. The purpose of including the PI in an ex officio capacity is to ensure that Executive Council decisions are consistent with the terms of the grant and requirements of the host institution.

Term: The term length for Executive Council members is six (6) years. Members are eligible for re-election without limit.

For purposes of Executive Council appointments, the SEAREG year begins on July 1 and ends on July 30.

Elections: Elections are held every two (2) years, and under normal circumstances, two (2) Council positions are open for every election. Under exceptional circumstances, including but not limited to an early resignation of an Executive Council member, more Executive Council positions may be available in any given election.

Diversity: The Executive Council shall reflect the diversity of lived experiences and cultural heritage of our membership and the population we serve, which we define as scholars, citizens and residents of the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations plus Timor-Leste (ASEAN+). To ensure representation, one Executive Council seat will be reserved for a senior member who does not identify as male. A second Executive Council seat will be reserved for someone who received their secondary education in an ASEAN+ state. The other four (4) seats are at large and open to any senior member without restriction.

Council Selection Procedures

Nominations: Any SEAREG member may nominate a SEAREG senior member as a candidate for the Executive Council. Self-nominations by SEAREG senior members are acceptable.

Eligibility: Nominees must be SEAREG senior members and have fulfilled one of two requirements: 1) Served on a SEAREG committee within the last four (4) years; or 2) Hosted a SEAREG conference.

Voting: Members must have senior member standing to be eligible to vote in council member elections.

Elections: Elections are held by Single Transferable Vote (STV) system, wherein voters rank the candidates according to their preference and their vote can be transferred according to whether their preferred candidate is eliminated or elected with surplus votes, such that their vote goes toward someone they prefer over others in the running.

The top two (2) vote recipients consistent with the Executive Council composition diversity principles (outlined in the previous “Composition & Rotation” section) will be seated.

III. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAIR ROLE & SELECTION

Responsibilities: The Chair leads the Executive Council in setting the strategic direction and policies of SEAREG, and represents SEAREG in external engagements and collaborations. This position is responsible for overseeing the organization’s activities and ensuring these align with SEAREG’s objectives.

Accountability and Governance: The Chair is accountable to the Executive Council and SEAREG members, upholding the values and objectives of the organization. The position plays a pivotal role in fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment within the Executive Council and the broader SEAREG community.

Eligibility: The Chair is elected from among the existing Executive Council members. Eligibility for the Chair position is contingent upon being a current member of the Executive Council.

Voting: The election of the Chair is conducted through a voting process, requiring a two-thirds majority vote from the six (6) members of the Executive Council.

Term: The Chair serves a term of six (6) years and is eligible for re-election at the end of their term.

Transition and Succession: The Chair is responsible for coordinating the transition with their successor at the end of their term. In the event unforeseen circumstances lead to the Chair vacating their position before the six-year period, a replacement will be selected from the existing Council through an election by Council members. The opening on the Council will be filled as quickly as possible with an election by senior members, with the existing Council members dividing responsibilities until the election.

IV. COMMITTEES

SEAREG's objectives and the implementation of its programs and activities are carried out by its committees, which include five (5) standing committees - 1) Fellow Selection; 2) Conferences; 3) Pre-Dissertation Grants; 4) Travel Grants; and 5) Organized Panels - and ad hoc committees. Each committee is led by an Executive Council member and comprised of two (2) senior members. The Executive Council may also initiate new committees for programs in response to opportunities and demands from the broader SEAREG community.

Committee Leadership: The Executive Council decides amongst itself which council member leads each committee. At the beginning of each council term, the Executive Council will meet to select a committee leadership division. It is assumed that the council member will lead the committee for the entire duration of the term. Any council member can propose themselves for leadership on any committee. The established mechanism is a majority vote within the Executive Council.

Committee Composition: The leading council member will select two (2) SEAREG senior members to serve on the committee.

Diversity: The entirety of the fifteen (15) senior members serving on SEAREG committees – hereby dubbed the Central Committee – shall, similar to the SEAREG Executive Council, reflect the diversity of lived experiences and cultural heritage of our membership and the population we serve, which we define as scholars, citizens, and residents of the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations plus Timor-Leste (ASEAN+). To ensure representation, we strive to mimic the reserved position ratios of the SEAREG Executive Council: one-fifth ($\frac{1}{5}$) of Committee positions are reserved for senior members who do not identify as male; and one-fifth ($\frac{1}{5}$) of Committee positions are reserved for senior members who received their secondary education in an ASEAN+ state. The remaining Committee positions are at large.

While every effort will be made to reflect the diversity of lived experiences and cultural heritage of our membership and the population we serve, practical realities of availability may prevent these targets from being realized. If this occurs for a second consecutive term, the Executive Council will convene a special session to review diversity and inclusion in the SEAREG organization.

Other Selection Priorities: At the beginning of each term, the Executive Council will circulate a call for nominations to SEAREG senior members. In addition to the diversity principles outlined

above, the Executive Council will prioritize senior members who have not served on the Committee before, those who have served the fewest number of years, and those who have served the least recently.

Term: Committee members serve a term of one (1) year and may be invited to serve for additional terms. There is no term limit. However, the priorities outlined above will be applied.

V. CONSTITUTIONAL RATIFICATION AND AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

The ratification procedure for the SEAREG Constitution begins with the distribution of the draft Constitution among the SEAREG community.

From the day of posting and distribution, comments and suggestions from the SEAREG community will be accepted for a period of two (2) weeks.

At the end of this two-week consultation period, the Executive Council will incorporate suggestions as appropriate and distribute the revised draft Constitution to SEAREG senior members.

Ratification of the draft Constitution will be through a majority vote of the senior membership, as currently composed.

Further amendments to the Constitution will require support from two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the Executive Council, followed by the ratification procedures as outlined above.