

BYLAWS  
OF  
*NATIONAL COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION RESOURCES, INC.*

Adopted February 2, 2015

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ARTICLE I

NAME OF CORPORATION

The name of the Corporation is *National Council of Higher Education Resources, Inc.*<sup>1</sup> The acceptable acronym shall be "NCHER". Hereinafter, the Corporation may be referred to as "the Corporation", "the Council", or "NCHER".

ARTICLE II

STATE OF INCORPORATION, PRINCIPAL OFFICE, REGISTERED AGENT

Section 1. State of Incorporation. The Corporation is incorporated in the State of Delaware. The address of the registered office of the Corporation in the State of Delaware is:

229 South State Street  
Dover, Delaware 19901

and the name of the registered agent of the Corporation at such address is the Corporation Service Company, Inc.

Section 2. Principal Office. The principal office of the Corporation shall be in the District of Columbia.

Section 3. Other Offices. The Corporation may establish other offices within and without the State of Delaware or the District of Columbia.

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<sup>1</sup> On May 15, 2012, the membership of the organization voted to do business under this name. Until changed, the formal incorporated name of the organization is the National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs, Inc.

## ARTICLE III

### MISSION OF THE COUNCIL

The Mission of NCHER is to enhance member organizations' abilities to help families and students develop, pay for, and attain their educational goals so they can pursue meaningful and rewarding work and become contributing members of society.

## ARTICLE IV

### MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Classes of Membership. Membership on the Council shall be on an institutional, organizational, or agency basis rather than on an individual or personal basis, and is contingent upon application, Board of Directors approval, and payment of dues. Applications for Emeritus Membership shall be subject to approval by the Board of Directors in accordance with guidelines it establishes. The Council shall have the following classes of membership:

- a. Voting Membership. Voting Membership on the Council shall be open to all nonprofit organizations providing higher education services. Higher education services shall include, but are not limited to: (1) providing information or services to students, parents, families, borrowers, and/or postsecondary education institutions designed to (a) improve college readiness upon graduation from high school, (b) improve college access and enrollment, (c) assist students and parents in understanding and accessing financial aid, (d) improve financial education and literacy, debt management, and budgetary skills, (e) assist students in making and planning for career choices, (f) assist students in evaluating, selecting, and applying to postsecondary institutions, or (g) provide services designed to prevent or avert student loan delinquency and default; (2) providing financing for, purchasing, and/or originating student loans; (3) administering postsecondary education scholarships and grants; (4) providing loan guaranty services on behalf of the federal government; or (5) servicing student loans. Each member shall have one vote regardless of the scope or number of higher education services provided.
- b. School Membership (Non-voting). School (non-voting) membership in the Council shall be open to all nonprofit and for-profit postsecondary education institutions interested in helping families and students develop, pay for, and attain their educational goals so they can pursue meaningful and rewarding work and become contributing members of society.

- c. Affiliate Membership (Non-voting). Affiliate (non-voting) membership in the Council shall be open to all nonprofit and for-profit organizations, not otherwise eligible for Voting Membership or School Membership, interested in helping families and students develop, pay for, and attain their educational goals so they can pursue meaningful and rewarding work and become contributing members of society or who provide services to members that further their mission to help families and students develop, pay for, and attain their educational goals so they can pursue meaningful and rewarding work and become contributing members of society or who provide financial education and literacy, college career planning, expanded college access, debt management, delinquency aversion, default prevention, or collection services. Organizations eligible to be considered for Affiliate Membership include:
  - i. Any for-profit organization such as lenders, collection agencies, and loan servicers providing services enumerated in Article IV, Section 1a, and
  - ii. Other organizations approved by the Board of Directors.
- d. Emeritus Membership. Emeritus Membership shall be open to individuals who have been employed by a Voting Member, School Member, or Affiliate Member of the Council and who are no longer employed full-time in a field related to provision of higher education services. The Board shall specify the benefits of Emeritus Membership.

Section 2. Membership Contingent Upon Payment of Dues. Membership in the Council, and continuance of such membership, shall be contingent upon payment of applicable annual dues which shall be payable by August 31 of each year. The amount of such annual dues shall be determined by affirmative vote of a majority of the Voting Members present at an authorized meeting of the Council.

Section 3. Installment Plan. Notwithstanding any provision of this section to the contrary, the President is authorized to establish, upon the request by a member citing fiscal distress or extraordinary circumstance, the establishment of an installment plan for the payment of dues by such member. Any such established installment plan must provide for the full payment of dues by said member and payment may not extend beyond the fiscal year in which payment is due. The President shall report all established installment plans to the Board without reference to the specific member unless requested by the Board in executive session.

## ARTICLE V

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. Powers and Duties of the Board of Directors. Management of the activities and affairs of the Council shall be vested in a Board of Directors ("the Board"). The Board shall:

- a. be in charge of the affairs of the Council between meetings of the membership;
- b. fix the hour and place of meetings of the Council (Article VII, Section 1), except as provided in Article VII, Section 2;
- c. make recommendations to the Council;
- d. supervise the work of the President of the Council; and
- e. perform such other duties as are prescribed by the Certificate of Incorporation and the Bylaws, or by the consent of the Council.

The Board of Directors shall be subject to the order of the Council and none of its acts shall conflict with actions taken by the Council.

Section 2. Composition of Board of Directors. The Board of Directors of the Council shall be composed of sixteen Directors consisting of the Chair, the Chair-Elect, the Immediate Past-Chair, the Treasurer, and twelve Directors elected at large from the Voting Membership. A Voting Member and its affiliates may hold no more than one Director position on the Board at any one time. The President shall serve as a non-voting member and Secretary of the Board.

Section 3. Terms of Office. The term of office on the Board of Directors for the officers elected by the Voting Membership shall be identical to the term of office described in Article VI, and shall be two years for the Directors at Large elected by the Voting Membership. The terms of the Directors at Large shall be staggered so that six are elected one year and six the next.

Section 4. Liaison Representatives to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may seek through liaison representatives advice and consultation of various interest groups involved in the Council as School or Affiliate Members. Liaison representatives are employees of School or Affiliate Members. They shall sit with the Board at meetings of the Board and shall be afforded all of the rights and privileges of members of the Board except for the vote.

Section 5. Executive Committee. There shall be an Executive Committee of the Board of Directors composed of the officers of the Council enumerated in Article VI, Section 1, and one Director at Large elected by the Board from the currently serving Directors at Large. Each Director at Large elected by the Board to the Executive Committee shall serve on the Executive Committee for a one year term. The Director at Large may be elected by the Board to one consecutive one year term to the Executive Committee so long as the person continues to be a Director at Large. The Executive Committee shall receive nominations and recommend the appointment of the Director at Large to the Board for approval, no later than 30 days following the reconstitution of the new Board or no later than 30 days following the resignation of such Director at Large. The Executive Committee, chaired by the Chair, shall be charged with the responsibility for day-to-day management of the affairs of the Council and shall be subject to the order of the Board of Directors. The President of the Council shall report to the Board of Directors through the Chair and the Executive Committee and shall serve as an ex-officio and non-voting member and Secretary of the Executive Committee.

Section 6. Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors. The date of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors shall be determined by the Chair. The Chair, or President at the Chair's direction, shall provide the Board with a minimum of 60 days prior written (including electronic mail) notice of such meeting.

Section 7. Other Meetings of the Board of Directors. Meetings of the Board of Directors, other than the Annual Meeting, may be called by the Chair, the President, or any four Directors.

Section 8. Notice of Meeting, Attendance, etc. Notice of any meeting of the Board of Directors, other than the Annual Meeting, shall be given at least three days before such meeting by any usual means of communication. Attendance by a Director at a meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a Director attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called. A majority of the Directors shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Board of Directors. The act of a majority of the Directors present in a meeting at which a quorum is reached shall be considered an act of the Board of Directors.

Section 9. Open Meetings. Except as provided herein, meetings of the Board of Directors shall be open to all members of the Council. The Board of Directors may close meetings or portions thereof to attendance by members for the following purposes: (a) consulting with legal counsel; (b) discussing litigation or prospective litigation by or against the Council; (c) reviewing information that is confidential or should not be generally known, such as delinquent dues; (d) discussing contractual issues whose disclosure could negatively impact the contractor's performance or compromise the Council's interest in competitive solicitation; (e) discussing or deliberating upon the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring,

disciplinary action, dismissal, or periodic evaluation of NCHER staff; or (f) handling disciplinary matters or rules violations by members.

Closed meetings shall be held only upon affirmative vote of the Board of Directors in an open meeting. The motion to hold a closed meeting or to close a current meeting shall specifically state the purpose for such closed meeting, and reference to the motion and the stated purpose shall be reflected in the minutes of the open meeting during which the motion was made. The Board of Directors shall restrict the consideration of matters during closed meetings to only those purposes specifically exempted and stated in the motion. No contract, motion, or other action adopted, passed, or agreed to in a closed meeting shall become effective unless the Board of Directors, following the closed meeting, reconvenes in open meeting and takes a vote on such contract, motion, or other action which shall have its substance reasonably identified in the open meeting.

Section 10. Board Policies. The Board of Directors shall annually review and adopt policies for the efficient management of the Council. Such policies shall address at a minimum the collection of dues and other revenues, contractual, and expenditure authority for the President and other NCHER staff, signatory requirements for the expenditure of funds, and the full and accurate accounting of the finances of the Council.

Section 11. Vacancies. Upon the Chair or President receiving a letter of resignation from any Director, the Executive Committee shall receive nominations and recommend the appointment of a new Director to the Board for approval, no later than 30 days following the resignation of such Director. If the remaining term of the resigning Director exceeds one year, the new Director's appointment shall extend until the following June 30, and the new Director's appointment to the remaining term of the resigning Director shall be subject to approval by the Voting Membership at the next available election as described in Article VI, Section 6.

## ARTICLE VI

### OFFICERS

Section 1. Number, Election, and Term. The officers of the Council shall consist of the Chair, the President, the Chair-Elect, the Immediate Past Chair, and the Treasurer. The Chair-Elect shall automatically succeed to the office of Chair (a) upon a vacancy occurring in such office or (b) upon expiration of the term of the office of the Chair. The Chair shall serve for a one year term starting July 1, and shall automatically succeed to the office of Immediate Past Chair upon the expiration of the term of office as Chair. The Treasurer of the Council shall take office on the July 1 immediately following the election, and shall serve for the term of two years. The Chair-Elect and the Treasurer shall be elected by Voting Members of the Council and

shall not be eligible for reelection to a successive term in the same office. Any vacancy occurring in the office of Chair-Elect or Treasurer between Annual Meetings of the Council shall be filled for the remainder of such term by special election by the Voting Membership from a slate proposed by the Nominating Committee.

Section 2. Chair. The Chair shall serve as Chair of the Board of Directors and as Chair of the Executive Committee. The Chair shall supervise and control the management of the Council in accordance with the Certificate of Incorporation and with these Bylaws. The Chair shall, when present, preside at all meetings of the membership.

Section 3. Chair-Elect. The Chair-Elect shall, in the absence or disability of the Chair, perform the duties and exercise the powers of that office. In addition, the Chair-Elect shall perform such duties and shall have such powers as are incident to the usual corporate duties of a vice Chair, and shall have such other powers as the Board of Directors shall prescribe.

Section 4. President. The President shall be appointed by the Board of Directors and serve at the will of the Board of Directors. The President shall be employed under contract by the Council and be responsible to the Board of Directors. The President shall serve as chief executive officer of the Council and as a non-voting member of the Board of Directors. The President shall hire, supervise, and dismiss such other employees of the Council as may be required. The President shall serve as Secretary of the Board and shall keep accurate records of the acts and proceedings of all meetings of the membership and the Board of Directors. The President shall have general charge of the corporate books, records, and of the corporate seal. The President shall sign, in accordance with Article V, Section 10., any certificates of membership in the Council, and execute any deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, and other instruments which may lawfully be executed on behalf of the Council, except where required or permitted by law to be otherwise signed and executed and except where the signing and execution thereof shall be delegated by the Board of Directors to some other officer or agent; and in general, shall perform all duties incident to the office of President and such other duties as may be assigned from time to time by the Chair or by the Board of Directors. The President or his/her designee shall serve as ex-officio member of all committees of the Council.

Section 5. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall oversee the keeping of full and accurate accounts of the finances of the Council, and shall cause a true statement of its assets and liabilities as of the close of each fiscal year and of the results of its operations for such fiscal year, all in reasonable detail, to be made and filed at the registered or principal office of the Council within four months after the end of such fiscal year. The Treasurer shall be responsible for receipt and disbursement of all monies of the Council under policies approved by the Board of Directors and shall cause to keep adequate and appropriate records of such receipts and disbursements. The Treasurer shall be ready whenever required to turn over to the Board of Directors all monies, accounts, record books, papers, vouchers, and other records pertaining to

the financial affairs of the Council. The Treasurer shall, in general, perform all duties incident to the office and such other duties as may be assigned from time to time by the Chair or the Board of Directors.

Section 6. Nominating Committee. Officers of the Council and the Directors at Large shall be elected from a slate proposed by a Nominating Committee following solicitation of recommendations from the Voting Membership. Such slate shall consist normally of at least two candidates for each position and shall be presented by mail ballot to the Voting Membership prior to March 15 of each year. In compiling the slate, the Nominating Committee shall use its best efforts to ensure that officers of the Council and the Directors at Large reflect the diversity of organizations that comprise the Voting Membership. Votes are compiled and decisions are announced in writing to the Council no later than May 15 of each year. The Nominating Committee shall consist of the four Past Chairs of the Council or its predecessor organization who have served most recently and are employed by or are official representatives of organizations that are still active Voting Members in the Council.

## ARTICLE VII

### MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Section 1. Regular Meetings. The Council shall hold an Annual Meeting of the membership at least once each year, at a time, medium, and venue to be chosen by the Chair and the Board of Directors. A quorum of Voting Members, as prescribed by the parliamentary authority of Article X, shall be required for any action so taken at an Annual Meeting.

Section 2. Special Meetings. The Chair or the President shall have the power to call a special meeting of the full Council membership upon the occurrence of events which, in his/her judgment, warrant the consideration and attention of the Council. A special meeting may also be called (a) by a majority vote of the Board of Directors, or (b) upon the written petition of twenty-five percent (25%) of the Voting Membership. A special meeting shall be confined to the principal business for which a special meeting was called. A quorum of Voting Members, as prescribed by the parliamentary authority of Article X, shall be required for any action so taken at a special meeting.



## ARTICLE VIII

### COMMITTEES

Section 1. Creation of Committees. In addition to the committees established in these Bylaws, other committees may be created or disbanded by the Board of Directors when it is determined that the establishment or termination of such committees is in the best interests of the Council.

Section 2. Composition of Committees. The Board of Directors shall have the power to appoint persons from any class of membership to any committee that shall be established under Article VIII, Section 1. The terms of such appointments, including voting privileges and the duration of such appointments, shall be at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

Section 3. Audit Committee. There shall be an Audit Committee of the Board of Directors composed of one Director at Large (who shall serve as chair), the Treasurer, and three additional Director at Large members. The Chair and the three Director at Large members shall be elected by the Board. The Chair shall serve one two year term, so long as he/she continues to be a Director at Large. The term for two of the Director at Large members shall be for one year and one for two years, so long as the Audit Committee member continues to be a Director at Large. The Audit Committee shall meet, either in person or by conference call, at least two times a year. The chair of the Audit Committee may convene additional meetings as necessary. The Audit Committee shall assist the Board of Directors in its oversight responsibilities regarding financial reporting, financial risk, internal controls, audit processes, standards of conduct, conflict of interest, and compliance with laws and regulations. The Audit Committee shall advise and make recommendations to the Board of Directors and shall have authority to: (a) meet with staff of the Council, external auditors, and legal counsel; (b) direct the selection and retention of outside auditors, after consultation with the Board of Directors and staff of the Council; (c) obtain such information as it deems necessary with respect to financial oversight and internal controls of the Council; and (d) perform such other duties as directed by the Board. The Audit Committee shall review all audit reports pertaining to the Council and shall report to the Board of Directors on the reports and the resolution of any audit findings.

## ARTICLE IX

### CAUCUSES

Section 1. Legacy Caucuses. There are two legacy caucuses of the Council, each composed of Voting Member organizations: the Guaranty Agency Caucus and the Not-for-Profit

Lender Caucus. Legacy Caucuses may apply for Board Recognition under the legacy name or under a revised name.

Section 2. Member, School Member, and Affiliate Member Caucuses. The Board may recognize caucuses composed of members, School Members, and /or Affiliate Members, such as a Collection Agency Caucus.

Section 3. Board Recognition of a Caucus. If a Legacy Caucus or a newly formed caucus of Voting Members, School Members, or Affiliate Members desires to seek formal Board Recognition, such caucus shall submit to the Board a copy of the caucus' rules which shall define the basis for membership in a caucus and how the caucus shall operate along with a purpose and objectives statement from the caucus. The Board shall then determine, based upon the provided information or subsequent information so requested by the Board, whether to provide Board Recognition to the caucus. If such Board Recognition is conferred by a majority vote of the Board, then such caucus shall be granted one non-voting liaison seat on the Board. In considering whether to grant Board Recognition or not, the Board shall consider the purpose and objectives of the caucus and whether or not the purpose and objectives of the caucus are consistent with the mission, goals, and objectives of the Council. Further, the Board shall determine as part of its consideration for granting Board Recognition whether or not the applicant caucus represents a distinct group of members who do not otherwise have adequate representation on the Board.

## ARTICLE X

### RULES OF ORDER

Section 1. Rules of Order. The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern the Council in all applicable cases not inconsistent with the Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws and any special rules which may from time to time be adopted by the Council.

Section 2. Parliamentarian. For membership meetings, the Chair shall appoint a Parliamentarian whose duties shall be to advise the Chair on matters of orderly procedure as provided in Section 1 of this Article. The Parliamentarian may be a permanent or temporary appointee at the discretion of the Chair.

## ARTICLE XI

### FINANCIAL MATTERS

Section 1. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Council shall run from July 1 through June 30.

Section 2. Restriction on Activities. In no event shall the Council engage in any activity which may jeopardize its ability to obtain and retain an exemption from federal taxation as a charitable, educational, or scientific organization under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, or successor provisions.

## ARTICLE XII

### AMENDMENT OF CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION AND BYLAWS

Section 1. Amendment of Bylaws. The Bylaws may be amended by a two thirds vote of the Voting Membership. Any Voting Member may offer an amendment to the Bylaws. Any such proposed Bylaw change must be submitted to the Board prior to its presentation to the membership. The Board, upon its consideration and review, may do any of the following: (1) recommend the proposed Bylaw amendment to the membership; (2) recommend an amended version of the proposed Bylaw amendment to the membership; or (3) recommend disapproval of the proposed Bylaw amendment. The Board's recommendation and accompanying amendment must be provided in writing to the membership for consideration. The member who originally proposed such amendment shall have the right to provide comments to the membership regarding their proposed amendment with such comments to accompany the Board's recommendation. Members shall have, at a minimum, 30 calendar days to consider and vote on such proposed amendment. Votes cast shall be returned to the Chair who will report the results of the vote within seven days following the end of the 30 day voting period.

Section 2. Emergency Bylaw Amendments. In the event that the Board determines that voting on a proposed amendment constitutes an emergency, the Board can by a three-fourths affirmative vote of the members of the Board provide for a seven day voting period under the amendment process otherwise outlined in Section 1 of this part.

Section 3. Amendment of Certificate of Incorporation. The Certificate of Incorporation may be amended in the same manner as that prescribed for amending the Bylaws, provided that such amendment of the Certificate of Incorporation shall become

effective only upon the filing of such amendment in accordance with the General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware.

## ARTICLE XIII

### SUSPENSION AND/OR REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Section 1. General. Disciplinary procedures against members, officers, or Directors are conditioned by the provisions of the parliamentary authority named in Article X, Section 1, except as expressly provided in Section 2 of this Article.

Section 2. Suspension and/or Removal from Office. An officer or Director elected by the entire Voting Membership may be suspended or removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the Voting Members present at a regular membership meeting or a special membership meeting of the Council called for that purpose. The Board of Directors may for cause suspend from office any officer or Director pending a review of such action by the Voting Membership at the earliest date possible following such suspension.