

# **Area III FFA Association**



## **FFA Member Policy**

## **Table of Contents**

### Section 1: Active Membership Eligibility

- 1.1 Operational Premises
- 1.2 Constitutional Authority
- 1.3 Membership Eligibility

### Section 2: Officer Selection

- 2.1 Constitutional Authority

### Section 3: The Nominating Committee and Adult Consultants

- 3.1 Student Nominating Committee
- 3.2 Committee Responsibilities
- 3.3 Committee Preparation
- 3.4 Role in the Interview Process

### Section 4: Area Officer Selection Procedures

- 4.1 Administration
- 4.2 Candidate Evaluations
- 4.3 Area Officer Campaign Rules Prior to Area Convention
- 4.4 Area Officer Campaign Guidelines for Area Convention
- 4.5 Candidate Officer Convention Speeches
- 4.6 Candidate Testing Procedures
- 4.7 Questioning Procedures

### Section 5: Student Officer Responsibilities

- 5.1 Area Officer Job Description
- 5.2 Area Officer Discipline Policy
- 5.3 Area Officer Physical Duties
- 5.4 Area Officer Commitment for Year of Service
- 5.5 Area III Office Contract

### Section 6: Student Officers: Hazing and Sexual Harassment

- 6.1 Hazing
- 6.2 Sexual Harassment
- 6.3 Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations

### Section 7: Competitions

- 7.1 Leadership Career Development Events
- 7.2 Career Development Events
- 7.3 Speaking Development Events
- 7.4 Talent

## Area III FFA Association - Member Policy Handbook

### **Section 1: Active Membership Eligibility**

#### **1.1 Operational Premises**

(a) The FFA Organization is an integral part of agricultural education, a leadership development program for students of agriculture, food and natural resources programs. FFA programs are intended to be applied activities related to the classroom and laboratory instructional programs, individual supervised agricultural experience programs and the leadership, personal and career development component of the agricultural education delivery model. Thus, membership guidelines should reflect this philosophy and support enrollment in agriculture, food and natural resources courses.

#### **1.2 Constitutional Authority**

National FFA Constitution, Section C. To be eligible for active membership in a chartered FFA chapter, a student must be enrolled in a secondary Agricultural Science and Technology program. To retain membership, a student must:

1. Be enrolled in at least one Agricultural Science and Technology course during the school year and/or follow a planned course of study; either course must include a supervised agricultural experience program, the objective of which is to gain experience in agriculture related careers.
2. Show an interest in the affairs of the Association by attending meetings, striving for degrees of membership, and participating in other organized activities of the chapter.
3. Pay all current District, Area, State and National dues by the date determined by the chapter.
4. Display conduct consistent with the ideals and purposes of the Area III FFA Association.

#### **1.3 Membership Eligibility**

(a) A student may establish initial membership by enrolling in an approved agriculture, food and natural resources course. An approved agriculture, food and natural resources course shall be any course in the agriculture food and natural resources cluster, approved innovative course taught by the agriculture, food and natural resources instructor or any career and technical education courses approved by the State Board of Education to be taught by an agriculture, food and natural resources instructor. A course not considered part of the agriculture, food or natural resources cluster or one of the courses approved by the State Board of Education for delivery by agriculture, food and natural resources instructors, but part of a recognized agriculture, food and natural resources pathway shall be considered a qualified course for membership and participation provided that the pathway has been declared by the teacher upon the student's entry into the program and filed at that time via the state roster management system.

(b) After completing two consecutive semesters for high school credit, a student may maintain continuous membership for a maximum of one membership year while not enrolled in a course provided they maintain an approved supervised experience program which is documented in an approved agriculture, food and natural resources record book. Pursuant to state and national constitutions, the membership year shall begin August 1 and conclude the following July 31. For the purposes of this policy, two one-semester classes taken

concurrently count as two consecutive classes semesters. After re-enrolling and completing one agriculture, food and natural resources course, a student will be eligible to maintain one more year of membership without re-enrollment provided an approved, documented SAE is in place.

(c) Local departments may establish more stringent membership requirements.

(d) More rigorous enrollment standards, which apply to competitive events, supersede this policy and are enumerated in the respective handbooks.

## **Section 2: Officer Selection**

### **2.1 Constitutional Authority**

#### Area Officers and Procedures for Election

The elected officers of the Area III Association/Area III Association of the National FFA Organization shall be selected and nominated by each of the District Associations. Each of these officers has an opportunity to demonstrate FFA, agricultural education, parliamentary procedure and agricultural industry knowledge via a written exam with writing exercise, present their qualifications to an evaluation committee and appear before the area convention body delegates and deliver a campaign speech. A president shall be elected from the area officers by a combination of exam score, 20 percent, interview score, 40 percent, and a score derived from the vote of the delegates present, 40 percent. Results of all elections will be announced as seen fit by the Area Officer Election committee. No results will be posted concerning the election, and any questions concerning the election shall be taken up with the chairman of the Election committee. The winner of the final election shall be declared President of the Area Association and will serve as an at large position. The candidate receiving the second highest score total in the final runoff election shall be declared as the 1<sup>st</sup> vice-president. The remaining officers shall be called vice presidents, and shall assume the stations of the various other FFA offices for ceremonial purposes at the annual convention and other meetings throughout the year.

A. If for any reason the office of President should become vacant, the student officer who received the next highest score in the election for President shall become President.

The officers of the area will be President, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and all other remaining officers will be called Vice Presidents. All of these officers must be active FFA members and be enrolled in high school throughout the duration of their term.

B. The elected officers shall constitute the Board of Area III FFA Officers. It shall be the duty of this Board to advise and make recommendations to the Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board with respect to the activities and business of the Area III FFA Association.

C. Each district Association MUST nominate two candidates to pursue an Area Office Position. At the end of the election process each district will have a maximum of two candidates.

D. Each District Association may nominate two area officers each year. The Area officer nominee shall be elected by a combination of exam score; 20 percent, interview score; 40 percent and a score derived from the vote of the delegates present: 40 percent and in accordance to policies adopted by the Area III FFA Association.

- E. Each candidate must submit an online application by seven days prior to Area Scholarship Check, which will be used to create interview questions, but will not have any implication on scoring.
- F. The Area officers shall hold the Chapter FFA Degree at the time of their election at the area convention, must be active members for the duration of their term in office, and must be concluding their junior year of high school. Officer candidates must achieve a high school record of "C" or better and has a satisfactory record of scholarship and participation in school activities. Officers must be currently enrolled in an approved course during the duration of the time they hold office.
- G. Area FFA Officers shall serve from one area convention through the next succeeding area convention and shall not be reelected, nor eligible for election to another area office. In the event an area convention is not held in any given year, the Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board shall make provisions for the appointment of area officers for the next succeeding year. The Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board shall have the power to appoint a qualified member to fill any office, which becomes vacant between area conventions.
- H. For more information about the Area Officer election process, please consult the Area III Officer Selection Procedure Policy.

### **Section 3: The Nominating Committee and Adult Consultants**

Facilitating the process outlined in the previous sections requires a talented and dedicated group of individuals. A committee of five individuals and Ag Teachers from the Area are used to carry out the responsibility of interviewing and evaluating the area FFA officer candidates.

#### **3.1 Student Nominating Committee**

This committee will be composed of the five applicants (one from each district) who are not a candidate for the upcoming officer selection. Applicants must be a junior or senior and complete an application. Applicants will be selected by the election committee. The current state officer will be a non-voting member and serve in a facilitation capacity.

#### **3.2 Committee Responsibilities**

As a student committee, the five members of the nominating committee have the responsibility to interview and evaluate the Area FFA officer candidates. The nominating committee members are responsible for mentally and physically preparing for the selection process. A zoom meeting with the nominating committee will occur prior to the selection process where individuals will be trained on competencies and how to effectively score each candidate.

#### **3.3 Committee Preparation**

##### ***Prior to the Area III FFA Convention***

Nominating Committee work begins almost immediately, Area officer candidate applications

are sent to each nominating committee members, and they are responsible for reviewing all of them prior to the convention.

Committee members are also to complete a study of issues related to the area officer selection process. A study guide is provided to the Nominated Committee members prior to the convention and competencies of traits and reflective question examples.

Nominating Committee members also develop an initial list of questions to use in the interviews. These questions are submitted to Election Superintendent for review and feedback prior to the convention. These may not be the actual questions used; however, it provides an experience in developing quality questions that will be valuable during the convention experience.

### ***During the Area III FFA Convention***

The majority of the committee's time is spent in training and preparation of the actual interview questions for each round. The training includes instruction on behavioral question writing and interviewing, understanding the effective officer characteristics and use of rubrics to evaluate them, accepting commonalities (diversity).

Committee members will participate in guided practice on recognizing each of the seven competencies. Practice scenarios using the rubrics provided for each competency builder will help the committee to better evaluate those during interviews. In addition, the nominating committee spends time practicing their interview techniques as well as determining the layout of the interview room(s).

### **3.4 Role in the Interview Process**

Due to the time constraints, the Nominating Committee is not involved with the administration of scoring of the written exam and writing exercise. The implementation and scoring of these rounds is administered by the elected Adult Consultants to the Area Officer Selection Process. The final scores will be provided to the Tabulations Supervisor to be included in the final score tally.

The interview process begins the day before Area III Convention. At the conclusion of an interview round, each Nominating Committee member will mark their scorecards independently and without consultation with the other committee members. An adult consultant will verify that the card has been marked correctly and will be readable by the data entry person collecting the completed scorecards. The adult consultants also supervise the data entry process.

## **Section 4: Area Officer Selection Procedures**

### **4.1 Administration**

- A. The Area Officer Election Adult Consultants will review policy and procedure related to the area officer selection process and make policy recommendations to the board and management who then share recommendations with the Area Coordinator.

- B. The Election Superintendent will chair the area officer selection procedures. The said supervisor shall coordinate the efforts of the exam writers, interview committee, balloting committee and officer candidate committee in accordance with all relevant policies.

#### 4.2 Candidate Evaluation

- A. Candidates shall be evaluated and scored on a 100-point scale, which includes a written exam score, an interview committee score and a popular vote score. Test and interview scores shall be applied to all election rounds. Should a district's officer become unable to fulfill his/her responsibilities or deemed unfit for office pursuant to relevant Area III FFA Association policies the district will relinquish their officer position. The top scoring candidate in the Area Election final run-off round shall be the area president; the second-place finisher shall be designated as the first vice president.
- B. Candidates for area office shall have the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of agricultural education, FFA, parliamentary procedure and the agricultural industry via an exam administered in accordance with the provisions of this policy and a writing exercise to measure written communication skills using a prompt relevant to duties of an area officer.
  - 1. The exam shall comprise 20% of the candidate's score. The test, composed of 150 questions, shall comprise 85% of the exam section.
  - 2. All candidates will complete a written narrative on a topic relevant to agriculture, FFA or the American education system. The purpose of the narrative is focused on student's ability to convey knowledge and understanding in a different way than allowed through multiple-choice questions. Each year a theme will be identified (agriculture, FFA or American education). The theme and a list of potential topics will be published for all candidates. Candidates are encouraged to understand each topic very well. However, the essay will also require candidates to also demonstrate an understanding of how that particular topic relates to the other themes, not reflected in that particular year (i.e., if agriculture is the theme during the current year then the essay question will require students to demonstrate understanding of the topic as well as the relationship that topic shares with FFA and/or the American education system). This writing exercise shall comprise 15% of the exam section.
  - 3. The composite of which shall be scaled to a factor of 0.2. The numerical value that is the difference between the top indexed score and the number 20 shall be added to all scores. The exam score shall be applied in each of the election rounds.
- C. This committee will be composed of the five applicants (one from each district) who are not a candidate for the upcoming officer selection. Applicants must be a junior or senior and complete an application. Applicants will be selected by the election committee. The interview score shall comprise 40% of the candidate's score and shall

be applied in each of the election round. The interview process shall be conducted in conjunction with the annual area FFA convention.

1. Area officer candidates will be evaluated based on seven competencies, the builders and indicators required for fulfilling the job description of an area FFA officer. A competency is a defined behavior, in combination with skills and knowledge that enables evaluation of the candidates. Example: competency #1 – Communication. A competency builder identifies specific attributes or skills to further define the behaviors of that competency. Example: 1.1 – Demonstrates non-verbal skills. Finally, indicators are a description of how someone might demonstrate the competency builder. Example: Uses appropriate tone gives full attention (eye contact); refrains from distracting mannerisms; uses effective and purposeful gestures (hand signals, facial expressions, body language).
  2. The competencies by which area FFA officer candidates will be evaluated are as follows: (i) Communication, (ii) Team Player, (iii) Areas of Knowledge, (iv) Organization, (v) Character, (vi) Passion for Success, (vii) Influence. A complete list of competency, builder and indicator descriptions can be found in the Area Officer Selection Policy.
  3. 100% of each candidate's interview score shall be derived through scores received by the nominating committee during each round of the interview process. No points will be awarded for the written application, resume and references; however, the nominating committee to develop questions for each candidate's personal rounds will use these materials. The interview section is scored on a 100-point scale and multiplied by a factor of 0.3.
- D. Each candidate shall be required to present a campaign speech in accordance with the provisions of this policy and give an impromptu response to a thought question developed and asked in accordance with the provisions of this policy. The popular vote of the delegate body shall comprise 40% of the candidate's score.
1. Each delegate shall cast a vote for four candidates.
  2. The candidate who receives the highest combined exam, interview and vote score shall be deemed the Area President, then the second highest scoring candidate shall be deemed the Area First Vice- President.
- E. In the event of a tie, the tie shall be broken by the following means. If the tie is unbroken by a tiebreaker, the committee shall consider the next tiebreaker until all means are exhausted.
1. Popular Vote. The candidate with the highest vote factor shall win the tie. Vote factors shall be carried out to the nearest one-thousandth of a point.
  2. Total Interview Section. In the event that the previous tiebreaker fails to break the tie, the candidate with the highest total interview factor shall win the tie. Interview factors shall be rounded to the nearest one-hundredth of a



point.

3. Exam Score. In the event that the previous tiebreaker fails to break the tie, the candidate with the highest exam score factor shall win the tie. Exam factors shall be rounded to the nearest one-hundredth of a point.
4. Writing Exercise. In the event that the previous tiebreaker fails to break the tie, the candidate with the highest writing exercise score shall win the tie.
5. Run-Off Speech and Vote. Should the above tie breaks fail to break the tie, each of the tied candidates shall present a one-minute run-off speech and the delegates shall cast ballots. The winner of said run-off election shall win the tie.

#### 4.3 Area Officer Campaign Rules Prior to Area Convention

- A. Area wide mail outs or publicity by any person or entity-mentioning candidacy outside of a candidate's home district prior to the convention is not permitted. Candidates should be aware that many districts and areas have the same rule. Any media, electronic or hard copy, which solicits support for or promotes a candidacy, is prohibited by this policy. Candidates may not create any new, or utilize any pre-existing, groups, fan pages, networks or any other form of mass communication through social networking sites such as, but not limited to, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Instagram, blogs or mass email services to promote their candidacy or have someone else conduct this form of campaigning on their behalf. Candidates may not, or knowingly have someone else, post status updates on Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, or any other social networking site that may be deemed as a solicitation for votes.
- B. Business cards will not be allowed before Area convention promoting a district candidate.
- C. Officer candidates may not attend district conventions or degree checks other than their own district, in fairness to all candidates.
- D. Officer candidates may not attend any district leadership camps or conferences other than those events held in their own district prior to elections.
- E. Violation of any campaign rule may result in the disqualification of a candidate from the area officer election. The Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board under the provisions of the officer discipline policy may address serious violations, which constitute issues of integrity or ethics.

#### 4.4 Area Officer Campaign Guidelines for Area Convention

- A. The candidates will host no parties during the convention.
- B. Candidates may not create any new, or utilize any pre-existing, groups, fan pages, networks or any other form of mass communication through social networking sites such as, but not limited to, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, blogs or mass email services to promote their candidacy or have someone else conduct this form of campaigning on their behalf. Candidates may not, or knowingly have someone else, post status updates on Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, or any other social networking site that may be deemed as a

solicitation for votes. During the election process, members will be directed not to post anything campaign-related to the web.

- C. Violation of any campaign rule may result in the disqualification of a candidate from the area officer election. The election superintendent under the provisions of the officer election policy may address serious violations, which constitute issues of integrity or ethics.

#### 4.5 Candidate Officer Convention Speeches

- A. Initial speeches will be a maximum of two minutes and thirty seconds in length. Time will be called at the end of two minutes and thirty seconds and microphones will be turned off at the end of the time allotted.
- B. Run-off speeches will be a maximum of one minute in length. Time will be called and microphones will be turned off at the end of the time allotted.
- C. Candidates will not use any props or other materials. Audience participation by the general corporate audience without reference to any individual is not considered use of a prop. Having a specific member or group of members identified by proper name participate is considered to be use of a prop.
- D. Candidates will use the style of microphone provided for their candidate speech at the designated stage practice and will be given an opportunity to test the microphones.
- E. Candidates may use a podium or walk the stage area but may not kneel, squat, or be seated on stage, or leave the stage during their candidate speech. The entire presentation must begin and end on stage.

#### 4.6 Candidate Testing Procedures

- A. The test shall follow the same format as the current senior division FFA quiz leadership development event. The exam shall be proctored at a time set by the adult consultants appointed to the area officer selection process. The exam will be conducted before the interview process begins.
- B. Questions may be multiple choice and/or true/false and may be administered on hard copy or electronically.
- C. The exam shall be formulated by the Election Superintendent's designee and shall be a party with no vested interest in the outcome of the election. No party with an interest in the outcome of the election shall have access to the exam.
- D. Candidates will have 150 minutes to complete the exam.
- E. The number of questions will be based on percentages of emphasis placed on certain areas listed above. Scores will be reported on a percentage basis and entered into the officer selection scoring formula.
- F. Candidates shall complete a writing exercise during the area-level selection processes to

demonstrate written communication skills. The same area-approved writing prompt shall be given all candidates competing in a given process. Responses shall be handwritten unless a candidate has a condition, which precludes a handwritten response. The area officer selection chairperson must approve all exceptions at the area level.

#### 4.7 Questioning Procedures

- A. Thought questions are important to allow the delegates see the officer candidate's ability to speak extemporaneously. One thought question will be asked on stage after each campaign speech.
- B. Questions should be straightforward, unambiguous, challenging, thorough, and test the candidate's knowledge of principles and procedures (especially those that may arise during the course of the year's duties). Questions should allow the candidates to respond in a positive atmosphere.
- C. The selected question will be placed in an envelope and sealed by the candidate committee chairperson until immediately prior to the election.
- D. The officers conducting the election will open the envelope on stage and read the question to the delegate body immediately prior to the election.
- E. The question will be read to the candidates in the same manner, exactly as written, and may be repeated, if requested by the candidates.
- F. Scores from the Student Nominating Committee and Teacher Nominating Committee during the Personal Round will be averaged to obtain an individual score.

### **Section 5: Student Officer Responsibilities**

#### 5.1 Area Officer Job Description

(a) The primary responsibility of an area officer is to serve the Area III FFA Association in local, district, area and state activities in a way that will inform, motivate and inspire FFA members, advisors, teachers and others to achieve the mission, strategies and core goals of the organization and to represent the state association in state meetings according to board policy and at the direction of the Area Advisor and Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board.

(b) Area officers serve under the supervision of the Area III Advisor and staff in accordance with official policy and budget limits. More specific responsibilities include:

- (1) Participate in training, orientation, continual self-improvement and evaluation of activities as directed by the area advisor.
- (2) Represent the Area III FFA Association at chapter, district, area and state activities as requested by local advisors and Area Advisor within the scope Area III FFA Association officer and travel policies.
- (3) Participate in the planning and conducting of the Area Leadership Conference and other student conferences, working under the direction of the Area Advisor and in

cooperation with host coordinators.

(4) Participate in the planning and conducting of annual district leadership conferences in his/her respective district working under the direction of the district advisor or his/her designee. Officers may participate in conferences and workshops in other districts at the request of the district advisor and upon approval of the Area Advisor.

(5) Participate in the planning and conducting of sessions and other activities at the area FFA convention as assigned by the Area Advisor.

(6) Serve as a National FFA Convention delegate, if selected, on behalf of the Texas FFA Association and fulfill all responsibilities therewith in accordance to the directives of the National FFA Organization and its staff and/or volunteers.

- Selection of National FFA Convention delegates will be as follows: Area President, First Vice President, and three other area officers, selected at random.
- If selected as a National FFA Convention delegate, Area Officers are under the direction of the Texas FFA and must abide by the directives of the state staff and/or volunteers. Failure to do so will result in the removal from office.
  - If removed from office, the Area Officer will be required to refund the Area Association for the following items: Area Officer jacket, Travel to and from National FFA Convention, and any other documented expenses the Area has incurred. Failure of an Area Officer repaying the Texas FFA Foundation it will fall on the student's home chapter.
  - If removed from office, the Area Officer will be required to refund the Texas FFA Foundation all funds gifted to National Convention delegates. Failure of an Area Officer repaying the Texas FFA Foundation it will fall on the student's home chapter.

(7) Prepare and submit expense vouchers and other reports in accordance to board policy and as required by the Area Advisor and the Area Treasurer.

(8) Keep up to date with all correspondence.

(9) Plan, prepare, read, study, listen, review and practice to continue improving public speaking and teaching skills.

(10) Stay up to date on agriculture, agribusiness and agricultural education facts and issues.

(11) Develop positive relationships with FFA members, advisors, staff, sponsors and the general public.

(12) Develop and exercise an awareness and sensitivity for the diverse geographic, ethnic and cultural groups represented in FFA membership and the general student population.

(13) Maintain a positive attitude and enjoy your year of service with members, advisors, staff, sponsors and others.

(14) Follow the Area III Officer Commitment Form and Officer Contract.

(15) Perform other duties as instructed by the Area Advisor and in complete accordance to Area III FFA Association Board Policy.

## 5.2 Area Officer Discipline Policy

(a) The Area III Association seeks to establish and maintain standards of officer conduct and supervisory practices which will promote effective operations of the Area III FFA Association and the agricultural education family and further the interests of the program and its affiliates. These practices include the administration of fair, consistent, and constructive officer discipline.

(b) A consistent officer discipline process will be used which includes, but is not limited to:

- (1) Constructive efforts by the Area Advisor to help officers achieve fully satisfactory standards of conduct and performance.
  - (2) Correction of an officer's unsatisfactory performance or negative behavior.
  - (3) Sufficient notice to officers that suspension or discharge will result from gross or continued violation of officer standards of conduct or unsatisfactory job performance.
- Written documentation of problems and disciplinary warnings given with corrective measures to be taken by the officer.

(c) The Area III FFA Association generally recognizes four steps or levels of discipline: verbal warnings, written warnings, suspension, and discharge. Disciplinary action may begin at any step or level of severity and does not have to include each level.

(d) The Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board must approve any disciplinary action for a gross or severe violation, as well as any suspension or discharge of an officer, prior to any action.

(e) Disciplinary situations involving student officers should be dealt with by progressive discipline, if appropriate, to assure equitable treatment and acceptable conduct.

(f) In applying disciplinary procedures or action, these factors will be considered: the seriousness of the violation or offense, the officer's past record and the circumstances surrounding this particular incident. These factors are listed as a guide only and may vary as appropriate. The policies and procedures for officer discipline will be reviewed and revised as necessary.

(g) Depending upon the facts and circumstances involved in each situation, management may choose to begin disciplinary action at any step. In general, discipline should follow this pattern.

(1) **VERBAL WARNING** - should be used for minor violations. If the situation does not improve within a reasonable time frame set by the Area Advisor, the verbal warning may be repeated or the next step used. A written record should be kept to document the verbal warning, its content, and time frame for improvement, as well as date of warning.

(2) **WRITTEN WARNING** - should be used for repeated violations or for a more substantial violation. A time frame for improvement should be set by the Area Advisor designee with the full knowledge of the Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board. A copy of the written warning will be kept on file. If the situation does not improve, the Area Advisor may repeat the step or use the next step. The written warning notice will be discussed with the officer by the Area Advisor and the said officer will be asked to sign the notice to acknowledge receipt.

(3) **SUSPENSION** - will be utilized for serious violations when immediate action is required while an investigation is being conducted to determine if the officer should be

discharged. The length of the suspension depends upon the time necessary to investigate the violation. Suspension may also be used when the officer fails to respond to previous attempts of discipline. The Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board must approve all suspensions. A written notice of suspension and documenting the reasons for the suspension will be provided to the officer, in person or by telephone with written notice to follow in the mail. Suspended officers may not wear the Area III FFA Association jacket or represent the area association as an area officer in any manner.

- (4) DISCHARGE - will be utilized for serious violations, for first offense, with or without the previous use of any of the lesser disciplinary steps. Discharge may also be used for continued failure to respond appropriately to prior disciplinary action and may be deemed appropriate regardless of prior disciplinary actions. The Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board must approve all discharges of student officers. If an alleged violation or continued failure to respond to disciplinary action for other violations is reported to or discovered by the Area Advisor, upon completion of the investigation and adequate due process, the Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board may discharge the officer with written documentation to explain the reasons for the discharge. This written notice will become part of the permanent operational record of the Area III FFA Association. The officer will be notified, in person if appropriate, or by telephone and/or registered mail. Officers discharged by the Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board shall return Area III FFA Association official jackets and all other materials purchased by the organization and termed as area officer supplies. Should an Area Officer be discharged, the student will repay any expenses the Area has incurred throughout their time of service. If a student fails to repay the Area III Association, expenses will fall on the student's home chapter.

(h) The Area III FFA Association shall have grounds for suspending or dismissing a student officer who engages in illegal activities at any time.

(i) Student officers who are arrested for any reason must report such arrest promptly by the following business day. The Area III FFA Association shall have grounds for suspending an officer if arrested for any reason and grounds for discharge if the officer does not report an arrest in a timely manner. Given the nature of the circumstances surrounding an arrest and the alleged offense, the Area III FFA Association, in its sole discretion, may decide the duration of the suspension as well as impose lesser or greater disciplinary action.

(j) A student officer who is convicted of a crime must report such a conviction to the Area III FFA Association no later than the following business day. The Area III FFA shall have grounds for discharging a student officer should he or she be convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude or should the officer fail to report the conviction in a timely manner. For purposes herein, a crime involving moral turpitude shall mean anything done knowingly contrary to justice, honesty, principle or good morals, specifically including a minor in possession of a controlled substance including alcohol or operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance. Given the nature of the circumstances surrounding the conviction, the Area III FFA Association may impose lesser disciplinary action.

(k) A student officer who is suspended or discharged may appeal such disciplinary action within ten (10) business days from his or her receipt of notice of such action. Such appeals must be submitted in writing to the Area III Advisor and state all grounds the student officer

contends should be considered in the review of disciplinary action. Within ten (10) business days of the Area III FFA Association's receipt of such appeal, the officer and his or her representative shall be granted a hearing before the Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board. Within three (3) days of the hearing, the Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board shall inform the student officer of its final decision. Timelines may be extended by mutual consent. The student officer shall remain suspended pending a final decision.

### 5.3 Area Officer Physical Duties

The Area officer will:

Be required to attend the following meetings, or any other meetings that may be set by Area Advisor. Officers are required to stay for the entire time of the event and arrive early and leave once Area Co-Advisor has given permission to leave.

- State FFA Convention
  - i. Every session where delegates are signed in
  - ii. Area officer breakfast
- Area III FFA Convention State FFA Leadership Conference
  - i. Officers will meet one day prior to conference to plan Area Leadership Camp
  - ii. Officers will be required to stay for the duration of the conference.
- Area III FFA Leadership Camp
  - i. Officers will be required to meet at a designated time before camp begins to set up for campers.
  - ii. Officers will be required to stay for the duration of Camp.
- Serve as a National FFA Convention delegate, if selected, on behalf of the Texas FFA Association and fulfill all responsibilities therewith in accordance to the directives of the National FFA Organization and its staff and/or volunteers.
  - i. Selection of National FFA Convention delegates will be as follows: Area President, First Vice President, and three other area officers, selected at random.
  - ii. If selected as a National FFA Convention delegate, Area Officers are under the direction of the Texas FFA and must abide by the directives of the state staff and/or volunteers. Failure to do so will result in the removal from office.
    - If removed from office, the Area Officer will be required to refund the Area Association for the following items: Area Officer jacket, Travel to and from National FFA Convention, and any other documented expenses the Area has incurred. Failure of an Area Officer repaying the Texas FFA Foundation it will fall on the student's home chapter.
    - If removed from office, the Area Officer will be required to refund the Texas FFA Foundation all funds gifted to National Convention delegates. Failure of an Area Officer repaying the Texas FFA Foundation it will fall on the student's home chapter.
- Area III FFA Leadership Development Events

- Area III FFA Career Development Events
  - Area III FFA Greenhand Camp
- The Area officers will be required to attend the National FFA Convention as needed to represent the Texas FFA Area 3 FFA Association as voting delegates. The Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board will select the delegates with President and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President receiving preference. The number of officers selected will be depending on the number of delegate positions allocated by the State Association.
  - Limit expenditures for the Area Leadership Camp to \$1.50 per camper. Area officers will absorb any additional expenditure.
  - Follow any and all rules and guidelines as set forth in the Area III FFA Policy and constitution.
  - Have all written correspondence outside their district with Area III schools (letter or email) sent out by Area Advisor.
- If the Area officer fails to complete any of the duties of the office to which they are elected or fails to attend any of the required events, the Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board can remove the officer from office. If an officer is removed from office at any time during the year, the chapter and student are responsible for reimbursing the Area III Association for any cost incurred on behalf of the area officer during their time of office.

#### 5.4 Area Officer Commitment for Year of Service

<b>Date</b>	<b>Responsibility/Activity/Due Date</b>	<b>Responsible Group</b>
State Leadership Conference	All area officers will be required to attend the entire length of SLC, with the exception of medical conditions, and the team will leave for conference the day before the official start date.	Area Officers Area Advisor Area Co-Advisor
Mid June	Area Leadership Conference	Area Officers Area Advisor Advisors of ALL Area Officers
Mid- End of June	Area officers will attend their own district camp and other camps that they are invited to attend.	Area Officers
	<b>STATE CONVENTION</b>	
Tuesday	Area officers will attend Area officer breakfast; Area officers will attend and coordinate delegates for the opening session, they must arrive before delegate check in begins.	Area officers Area Advisor All Officer's Advisors
Wednesday	Area officers must attend and coordinate delegates for 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> sessions, they must arrive before delegate check in begins.	Area Officers Area Advisor All Officer's Advisors



Thursday	Area officers must attend and coordinate delegates for 5 <sup>th</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> , and 7 <sup>th</sup> sessions, they must arrive before delegate check in begins.	Area officers Area Advisor All Officer's Advisors
Friday	Area officers must attend and coordinate delegates for 8 <sup>th</sup> session, they must arrive before delegate check in begins.	Area officers Area Advisor All Officer's Advisors
	<b>FALL SEMESTER</b>	
		Area Officers
October – November	Area Officers will facilitate Area Greenhand Camp	Area Advisor All Officer's Advisors
End of October – beginning of November	Chosen area officers will attend National FFA Convention as a voting delegate representing Texas	Chosen Area Officers
November	Area LDE - Results	Area Officers Area Advisor
December	Meet and plan for the Elite Conference	Area Officers Area Advisor
January	Facilitate the Elite Conference	Area Officers Area Advisor
March	Begin preparations for Area Convention	Area Officers Area Advisor All Officer's Advisors
April	Area CDE Results	Area Officers
Seven days prior to Area Scholarship Check	Area FFA Officer Applications due to Area, after being selected by District (Online submission)	Area Officer Candidates
Early May	Complete pre-convention tasks	Area Officers All Officer's Advisors Area Advisors
Area Scholarship Check	Test and Written Exercise	Adult Consultants and Area Officer Candidates
Day Prior to Area	Area Officer Candidate Interview Process	Selection Committee Add day of convention
	<b>Convention</b>	

Afternoon before Area Convention	Prepare convention site and run through convention	Area Officers Area Advisor
Area Convention	Facilitate Area Convention	Area Officers Area Advisor All Officers' Advisors

### 5.5 Area III Officer Contract

The following contract must be signed by Officer, Advisor and Parent and be on file with the Area Advisor. The advisor that signs the contract will serve as the "advisor" of the area officer and be a contact for the Area advisor and will need to fulfill the advisor requirements of the area officer.

As an Area III FFA Officer, I will:

6. Be dedicated and committed to FFA and the total agriculture education program.
7. Be willing to commit the entire year to Area officer activities.
8. Become knowledgeable of agriculture, agricultural education and the FFA.
9. Through preparation and practice, develop myself into an effective public speaker, and project a desirable image of the FFA at all times.
10. Regularly and on time write all letters, thank you notes, reports and other correspondence, which are necessary and desirable.
11. Accept and search out constructive criticism and evaluation of my total performance.
12. Be willing to take and follow instructions as directed by those responsible for me.
13. Follow all policies set forth in the Area III Officer Policy listed under Physical Duties.
14. Follow the State officer code of ethics (as adopted by the 1990-91 State Officer Team):
  - To forgo all alcohol and tobacco while involved in official and unofficial FFA activities.
  - To treat all FFA members equally by not favoring one over another.
  - To conduct myself in a manner that commands respect without display of superiority.
  - To maintain dignity while being personable, concerned and interested in my contacts with others.
  - To avoid places or activities which in anyway would raise questions as to my moral character or conduct.
  - To consider FFA officer activities and school as my primary responsibility.
  - To use wholesome language in all speeches and informal conversations.
  - To maintain proper dress and good grooming for all occasions.
  - Work in harmony with fellow FFA officers, and not knowingly engage in conversations detrimental to other FFA members, officers and adults.
  - To serve as a member of the Area officer team, always maintaining a cooperative attitude.
  - To keep myself up to date on current events.
  - Maintain and protect my health.

- To be a professional and be on time.

I have read, studied and understood the above points. If elected to Area office, I will carry out my responsibilities in accordance with these statements and understand that the Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board can remove me from office if I have not satisfactorily followed these established standards for Area officers.

## **Section 6: Student Officers: Hazing and Sexual Harassment**

### **6.1 Hazing**

- (a) Hazing is any intentional, knowing or reckless act, directed against a member by one person acting alone or by more than one person occurring on or off the premises that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a member for the purpose of pledging or associating, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, seeking and/or maintaining membership in any organization whose membership consists of students. Consent and/or acquiescence by a member or members subjected to hazing is not a reasonable defense in a disciplinary proceeding.
- (b) Hazing includes but is not limited to:
- (1) Any type of physical brutality, such as whipping, beating using a harmful substance on the body or similar activity.
  - (2) Any type of physical activity, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, or calisthenics that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of a student.
  - (3) Any activity involving consumption of a food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug or other substance which subjects a student to an unreasonable risk of harm or which adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of a member.
  - (4) Any activity that intimidates or threatens a member with ostracism, that subjects a member to extreme mental stress, shame or humiliation or that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of a member or that discourages a member from engaging or remaining engaged in the programs and/or activities of this association or that may reasonably be expected to cause a member to leave the organization rather than submit to acts described in this policies or any other acts of similar nature.
  - (5) Any activity which involves mock quizzes or oral examinations which are not sanctioned by policies and procedures related to an officer, award or other selection process.
  - (6) Any activity in which an imposed piece of clothing, outfit, item or something else worn by the member in a way that would bring negative attention to the wearer. Including, but not limited to gender cross-dressing, collars and/or leashes.
  - (7) Misuse of authority by virtue of one's class rank or leadership position.
  - (8) Taking of a member to an outlying area and dropping him/her off.
  - (9) Acts of personal servitude that has been required by a member.
  - (10) Addressing members by obscene phrases that imply inferior status.
  - (11) Requiring pledges to carry comfort items such as pens, matches, or coins.
  - (12) Throwing, applying, or pouring eggs, paint, honey, water, or any other substance onto the body of a member.

(13) The use of blindfolds unless they are a part of the initiation service prescribed by the ritual of the association approved by the Area Advisor (Area), district advisor (district) or agricultural science teacher (local program).

(14) Any activity in which hazing is either condoned or encouraged or any action by an officer or combination of members, associates or alumni of the organization of committing or assisting in the commission of hazing.

(15) Any activity in which a person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids or attempts to aid another in engaging in hazing; intentionally, knowingly or recklessly permits hazing to occur; has firsthand knowledge of the planning of a specific hazing incident which has occurred and knowingly fails to report the incident in to the appropriate governing authority.

(c) Advisory sessions may be held to constructively educate and critique the progress of new officers/new members, however, all such sessions must be monitored by the Area Advisor. Their duration must be of reasonable length and must conform to all of the standards of this policy.

## 6.2 Sexual Harassment

(a) Sexual harassment shall be defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature in the following context:

- (1) When submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's standing in the organization; or
- (2) When submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for organizational decisions affecting such individual, or
- (3) When such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment.

(b) Conduct prohibited by this policy may include, but is not limited to:

- (1) Unwelcome sexual flirtation, advances or propositions for sexual activity.
- (2) Continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature, such as suggestive comments and sexually explicit jokes.
- (3) Sexually degrading language to describe an individual.
- (4) Remarks of a sexual nature to describe a person's body or clothing.
- (5) Display of sexually demeaning objects or pictures.
- (6) Offensive physical contact, such as unwelcome touching, pinching, brushing the body.
- (7) Coerced sexual intercourse or statutory rape.
- (8) Rape, date or acquaintance rape, or other sex offenses, forcible or non-forcible.
- (9) Actions indicating that benefits will be gained or lost based on response to a sexual advance.

## 6.3 Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations

(a) Allegations of hazing/sexual harassment will be handled by the Area Advisor on the area level, unless such allegations involve the Area Advisor. In cases involving the Area Advisor, such allegations may be submitted to any adult member of the Area III Agriculture Teacher Executive Board.

(b) Charges of possible violation(s) may be brought forth to the appropriate authority by any person who observes, or has reasonable cause to suspect, inappropriate behavior and/or hazing. Such cases will be judged on their merits. Decisions will be based upon evidence, including statements and testimony.

(c) In cases where an individual reports being the victim of an act of hazing/sexual harassment, and where the circumstances warrant, the appropriate authorities will weigh the merits of the charge, degree of severity, and any appropriate corrective actions for code violations. In such cases it is not the intent of the act which matters, but the degree of discomfort, either mental or physical, which is reported that will be given substantial consideration. This principle acknowledges that human tolerances vary greatly from individual to individual. Enjoyment for some may cause pain in others. For purposes of complaint adjudication, it is hazing if the recipient of any act, no matter how well intended, substantially experiences the discomforts that are defined, clarified, and prohibited by this policy.

(d) All cases of alleged hazing/sexual harassment shall be acted upon using established disciplinary action. Where a violation is found, appropriate penalties will be administered in adherence to the Area III FFA disciplinary policies (member officer discipline or employee policies) or policies adopted by respective district associations.

(e) The Area III FFA Association and its administrative subdivisions shall cooperate in the any law enforcement or school district investigation concerning allegations of misconduct as described or similar to descriptions in this policy.

## **Section 7: Competitions**

### **7.1 Leadership Career Development Events**

FFA members must be in good standing with Area III Association to participate in Area III Leadership Development events. All members must adhere to standards and rules set forth by the Texas FFA and Area III Association.

### **7.2 Career Development Events**

FFA members must be in good standing with Area III Association to participate in Area III Career Development events. All members must adhere to standards and rules set forth by the Texas FFA and Area III Association.

### **7.3 Speaking Development Events**

FFA members must be in good standing with Area III Association to participate in Area III Speaking Development events. All members must adhere to standards and rules set forth by the Texas FFA and Area III Association. Area will send the top two winners from each category to state, but only one from any one chapter in a category. However, the same speaker may qualify in more than one speaking event.

### **7.4 Talent Contest**

FFA members must be in good standing with Area III Association to participate in Area III Talent Contest at the Area Convention. All members must adhere to standards and rules set forth by the Texas FFA and Area III Association.