



Vision Statement

The purpose of the UNICORN Castle is, above all else, to serve as a place for creative learning about the world as it existed between 500 and 1500 CE. We also strive to combat misrepresentation and abuse of what facts we have about various parts of our world during this period.

Mission Statement and Goals

The mission of the UNICORN Castle is to support innovative and inclusive interdisciplinary scholarship in the study of and serious and pedagogical play with both factual and fictional elements representing the world as it existed (or didn't exist) between 500 and 1500 CE, and beyond. We encourage a broad investigation into this expansive range of phenomena, discourses, and media across diverse geographies. We encourage open and inclusive dialogue on these subjects. We encourage conversations about the function of studies of and playing with the varied comprehensions of the works and history of this period all over the world. This is both a place of active research and learning (a museum) as well as of play (a video game). The creators and other contributors are activists in support of voices that have not always been heard, valued, or amplified.

The UNICORN Castle strives to:

- Promote the highest level of scholarship about particular events and works that existed between 500 and 1500 CE.
- Encourage students, teachers, and scholars to engage creatively with these events and works.
- Counter the appropriation of the period for oppressive philosophies and politics.
- Be collaborative, accessible and inclusive of diverse populations in our contemporary creative or scholarly representations and engagements.

Dates Adopted and Amended

Ratified and Adopted: August 21, 2026

Constitution of The UNICORN Castle

Article I: Name

The name of this organization is The UNICORN Castle.

Article II: Purpose

The purposes of this organization shall be:

1. To promote interest in medieval studies, medievalism(s), game theory and creation, and the pedagogical advancement of studies of these fields.
2. To make accessible to the general public various games and other tools that relay or teach information about medieval studies, medievalism(s), game theory and game creation.
3. To hold conference sessions, an annual student conference and game jam, and other gatherings for the purpose of exchanging ideas, creating tools for teaching/learning, and promoting works created by members of the Task Force or other members of the organization.
4. To sponsor long-range projects of importance to medieval studies, medievalism(s), game theory and creation, and the scholarship and pedagogical advancement of studies of these fields.
5. To operate and maintain The UNICORN Castle exclusively for educational purposes. None of its members shall enjoy any pecuniary profits from its operation.

Article III: Membership

- Individual Membership
 - Membership is open to any person who supports the vision, mission, and purpose of the UNICORN Castle.
 - Membership fees support the Annual Student Conference & Game Jam, and various projects and activities relevant to The UNICORN Castle's vision and mission.
 - Membership for undergraduate students, graduate students, adjunct instructors, and independent scholars is free.
 - Annual membership fees are based upon a sliding scale:
 - i. Salary up to \$60,000: \$40.00
 - ii. Salary \$60,001 - \$90,000: \$60.00
 - iii. Salary \$90,001 - \$130,000: \$80.00
 - iv. Salary \$130,001 - \$170,000: \$115.00
 - v. Salary greater than \$170,000: \$135.00
 - Annual membership fees for the following year are always due on June 1st. Members can join at any time.
 - Individual membership information will be kept confidential.

- Agency Membership
 - Membership is open to any agency that supports the vision, mission, and purpose of the UNICORN Castle.
 - Agency memberships are open to institutions, libraries, foundations, and similar organizations.
 - Membership fees support the Annual Student Conference & Game Jam, and various projects and activities relevant to The UNICORN Castle's vision and mission.
 - Annual institutional membership is automatic with a donation of \$250.00 or more.
 - Annual membership fees for the following year are always due on June 1st. Members can join at any time.
 - Agency membership will be made publicly available in appreciation for their support.

Article IV: Board of Directors

1. The UNICORN Castle will be governed and managed by a Board of Directors composed of three elected executive officers, other elected officers, and ex-officio (non-voting) members.
 - **Executive Officers**
 - Communications, Events, and Promotions
 - Task Force Coordinations
 - Treasurer
 - **Other Officers**
 - Conference Organizer
 - Game Jam Organizer
 - Fundraising Coordinator
 - **Ex-officio (Voting) Member:** The Current Webmaster
 - **Ex-officio (Non-Voting) Members:** The Immediate Past Members of the Board of Directors
2. All members of the Board of Directors must be elected to their respective positions according to the Bylaws.
3. All members of the Board of Directors are responsible for their duties as explained in the Bylaws.
4. No member of the Board of Directors may simultaneously serve on the Board of Advisors.
5. In addition to other duties specified in the bylaws, the Board of Directors' responsibilities include heading and forming review committees for created works, such as the student presentation competition and games created for the annual UNICORN Student Conference and Game Jam.

Article V: UNICORN Castle Task Force

1. The Task Force will drive UNICORN Castle initiatives—from designing and building games and providing gaming information to organizing conference sessions and presentations.
2. Members of the UC Task Force will assist with managing UC membership and organizing events.
3. The Task Force consists of members who volunteer to assist the Executive Committee.

Article VI: Board of Advisors

1. The primary duty of a member of the Board of Advisors is to provide guidance to the Board of Directors.
 - a. Members must hold some level of expertise that is useful to the mission and goals of The UNICORN Castle.
 - b. Nominees or nominators should provide a short description of the members' area(s) of expertise and how they might contribute to current/future UNICORN endeavors.
2. No member of the Board of Advisors may simultaneously serve on the Board of Directors.
3. Currently, there is no limit as to how long one may serve on the Board of Advisors, and no limit on the number of Advisors.

Article VII: Outreach

Meetings

1. The UNICORN Castle Student Conference on Medieval Studies and Medievalism & Game Jam will be hosted by The UNICORN Castle as a 100% online and asynchronous gathering that lasts several weeks.
 - The Board of Directors determines the specific topic or theme, dates, and fees.
 - The conference is limited to student presentation, but anyone may attend. Which students can present may be defined by the conference organizers (grade school, high school, undergraduate college, or graduate).
2. The UNICORN Castle shall sponsor sessions in other conferences or congresses. Members of the Board of Directors will organize or authorize sponsored sessions.
3. An all-member business meeting of The UNICORN Castle shall occur, via video conferencing, at least once a year.
 - Agenda items will be organized by the Board of Directors.
 - Members will vote on issues via remote methods.

Engagement

The UNICORN Castle maintains a website, mailing list, and social media accounts to promote engagement with its mission and goals.

Article VIII: Amendments

1. Amendments to the Constitution may be initiated by the Executive Committee or other members of the Board of Directors upon the petition of a majority of the Board members to the Executive Committee.
2. Amendments to the Constitution requested by petition and declined by the Executive Committee or Board of Directors may be appealed to The UNICORN Castle Members. If a majority of Members support the appeal, a digital vote will be conducted.
3. Proposed amendments should be submitted to the Members at least twenty-one days (three weeks) in advance.
4. The Executive Committee or authorized election representative will count votes within 30 days of digital polling. They will publicly announce results via the mailing list, website, and social media channels.
5. Amendments to the Constitution shall be adopted by a two-thirds vote of The UNICORN Castle Membership, who are voting on the proposed amendment(s).
6. Amendments to the Constitution shall take effect immediately following their adoption.

Bylaws

Elections

Elections will be announced via the Member mailing list and will include candidate introductions.

Candidates for open positions will be solicited every **September 15th**, with an announcement to the membership. Candidates will submit their names, information, and chosen position to an online form, created by the Board of Directors Secretary, by **October 15th**.

An anonymous Electronic Ballot will be sent to the Membership by **October 20th** and will be returned within two weeks of that date (**November 3rd**). The results will be counted and distributed by the Executive Officers who are not standing for reelection. The current Executive Officers will abstain from voting, except in the case of a tie. In the case of a tie, the current Executive Officers will cast deciding votes.

Results will be announced to the Membership within one week of the election returns (**November 10th**). The Executive Committee will then convene a first meeting of the new Board of Directors within two months of the election.

Election Schedule

Elections will run on a cycle delineated below. In the first year of this reconstitution (2026), the whole Board will be elected. Members who served on the Interim Board of Directors may run for the same (or other) positions. With the exception of the Treasurer, Conference Coordinator and the Game Jam Coordinator, these officers will be elected every two years on alternating years:

Executive Officers

Communications, Events, and Promotions: Year A

Task Force Coordinations: Year B

Treasurer: Every Three Years

Other Officers

Conference Organizer: Yearly

Game Jam Organizer: Yearly

Fundraising Coordinator: Year A

Ex-Officio Members

The following members of the Board of Directors will serve on the Board as Ex-Officio Members:

- The Immediate Past Members of the Board of Directors
- The UNICORN Castle Webmaster

They will have consulting responsibilities but will not have official votes, although they may be asked to participate in straw polls for the benefit of information. They may attend any relevant meetings at their discretion or the Board's request.

Resignations

If a Board Member resigns their position before the end of their term, an election will be held to replace that person four weeks after the official resignation date. Any immediate work needed to be completed will be shared among the remaining Board Members. The newly-elected member then will complete the resignee's term. At the end of that term, the new member may run again for the same (or a different) position.

Removal of Committee Members

In the event that a Board of Directors Member engages in unacceptable behavior, the rest of the Board will undertake an anonymous electronic election which will determine whether that person remains on the Board. Unacceptable behavior may include criminal activities, dereliction of duties, unprofessional behavior, among others (*See Appendix A Community Standards*).

The process begins by a formal written complaint (found on the organization's website) by any Member of The UNICORN Castle General Membership that is communicated to all the Members of the Board of Directors via email; the complaint may be sent through a Representative, who does not need to be a member of the Board of Directors.

The results of the complaint will be addressed by Board of Directors Members in good standing, who will agree upon the three Board of Directors Members who will address the complaint and responses. They will recommend a final resolution.

If that Board Member is removed, an election will be held to replace that person four weeks after the official resignation date. Any immediate work needed to be completed will be shared among the remaining Board Members. The newly-elected member then will complete the resignee's term. At the end of that term, the new member may run again for the same (or a different) position.

Election Proceedings

All election proceedings (including evaluation of existing Board Members and removal procedures, nominations, and electoral procedures) will be made accessible to the General Membership.

Voting

Voting on all matters should be electronic, to ensure a record is created. Members must sign in, in order to cast their votes. Votes will be cast anonymously.

Minutes

Minutes will be taken on rotation among the Board of Directors (elected or ex-officio) and among the Board of Advisors and then distributed to The UNICORN Castle General Membership.

Elected Officers

Executive Officers: The Executive Officers will share general oversight and administration of The UNICORN Castle. Each Executive Officer has primary responsibility for a central portfolio of business: Task Force Coordinations, Finance, and Communications. The Executive Officers, by agreement of at least two of its members, may also create subcommittees to address new matters of The UNICORN Castle business. Distribution of Executive Officer oversight is as follows, understanding that all Executives are tasked with general duties, and also understanding that flexibility and crossover of roles may occur:

Executive Officer of Communications, Events and Promotions (2 Years)

- Runs all Elections (see Elections sections for further guidance).
- Assisting the organizers of the official Conference and Game Jam, including development of the conference themes, Call for Papers, panel organization and selection, program flow, etc..
- Routinely sponsoring sessions on behalf of The UNICORN Castle at conferences including but not limited to (list will be routinely updated):
 - International Congress on Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo)
 - International Medieval Congress (Leeds)
 - Modern Languages Association (MLA) and / or Regional MLA
 - Popular Culture Association PCA/ACA
 - Australia and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Early Modern Studies
 - International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts
 - Society for the Study of Cinema and Media Studies
- Developing and maintaining lists of potential conferences where The UNICORN Castle can sponsor sessions, including deadlines, proposal requirements, etc.
- Administration and organization of digital media outreach, including oversight of social media administration and moderation, as well as management of The UNICORN Castle websites and similar media.

Executive Officer of Task Force Coordinations (2 Years)

- General Membership management
 - Collect data of identity (i.e., precariat, graduate, junior faculty, etc.)
 - Collect data of interests
 - Manage Membership login to change identity.
 - Online communications:
 - Develop online meeting venue accounts or set meetings for the organization (i.e., <https://www.wonder.me/> or establishing a video conference meeting)
 - Oversight of social media accounts including posting and recruitment / coordination of moderation teams.
 - Oversight of list-serves/ mailing and discussion lists
 - Developing and maintaining resources for General Membership seeking to place their work (articles, video games, and other media) with relevant and interested publishers.

Treasurer (3 years)

- Oversight and management of funds raised to support The UNICORN Castle Website, Conference, Game Jam and other activities, such as developments by members of the Task Force.
- Will work with the Officer of Task Force Coordinations and the Officer of Communications, Events and Promotions to determine needs.
- Development and/or maintenance of account structures, non-profit status, and methods to transfer control to the next Treasurer.
- Development and distribution of budgets to the Board of Directors.
- Presentation of budgets to the Board of Advisors, Task Force, and General Membership.
- Development of fundraising methods, including grant applications.

Other Elected Officers

Conference Organizer (Yearly)

The Conference Organizer will provide support to the Executive Officer of Task Force Coordinations. The Conference Organizer:

- Liaison and coordinate with the Game Jam Organizer and the Executive Officer of Task Force Coordinations.
- Work with the Executive Officer of Communications, Events, and Promotions and the Webmaster to update the conference websites and other associated publicity outlets.
- Work with the Treasurer and the Webmaster to ensure that the Conference is always online, always asynchronous/hybrid, and always free to student presenters and student participants.

Game Jam Organizer (Yearly)

The Game Jam Organizer will provide support to the Executive Officer of Task Force Coordinations. The Game Jam Organizer:

- Liaison and coordinate with the Conference Organizer and the Executive Officer of Task Force Coordinations.
- Work with the Executive Officer of Communications, Events, and Promotions and the Webmaster to update the Game Jam websites and other associated publicity outlets.
- Work with the Treasurer and the Webmaster to ensure that the Game Jam is always online, always asynchronous/hybrid, and always free to student presenters and student participants.

Fundraising Coordinator (2 Years)

The Fundraising Coordinator will provide fundraising support to the Treasurer. The Fundraising Coordinator:

- Assist in researching possible fundraising venues.
- Assist in keeping track of applications for funds.
 - Assist in keeping track of applications awarded and received.
 - Assist in keeping track of applications rejected (and why).
- Help the Treasurer with liaison efforts:
 - With the Conference Organizer
 - With the Game Jam Organizer
 - With the Executive Officer of Task Force Coordinations

Appendix A: Community Standards

These ground rules were created and approved by the ISSM leadership as a guide to discussions in online forums. They are meant to liberate, rather than restrict. Our hope is that by following a set of basic rules for discussion, members will feel free to express themselves in ISSM forums without fear that an exchange of views will result in personal attacks or insults. The goal is not that the discussion will always be comfortable. Difficult discussions often involve discomfort. Rather, the goal is that the discussion always remains civil and professional.

- Keep in mind that the goal of discussion is not to agree but to gain deeper understanding.
- Criticize ideas or actions, not individuals or groups.
- Avoid name calling, personal attacks, and sarcasm.
- Use respectful language.
- Write in full sentences and refrain from using all caps, emoticons, asterisks, or other intensifiers.
- Put statements in a factual and non-accusatory form.
- Maintain confidentiality. Do not share discussions outside the group involved without the permission of all participants.
- Assume good intentions. Never attribute to malice what can be attributed to ignorance. Likewise, never attribute to amateurism what can be attributed to writing-to-audience.
- Do not engage in interpersonal, back and forth arguments about past events or encounters. Take these kinds of interpersonal discussions into a private forum.
- Do not police tone. Members should respond to the ideas and evidence presented by fellow discussants, not their tone (i.e. avoid responses such as “I resent your patronizing tone.”).
- Bullying is not permitted but please be aware of the distinction between critique and bullying. Bullying involves the exploitation of an imbalance of power with the intent to harm. Strongly-worded critiques or responses are not bullying.
- Be aware of the distinction between name-calling and analysis. A member who calls a particular action or idea racist or sexist or homophobic is engaging in analysis, not name-calling.
- Mistakes: everyone makes them. Own up to yours without defensiveness; be forgiving of those made by others.
- Be aware that racism, sexism, and discrimination based on religious, ethnic, or sexual identity operates unconsciously as well as consciously. Even those dedicated to equality can have responses rooted in unconscious racism, sexism, or other forms of discrimination. Be aware that a stance that is direct and assertive in a member of a marginalized group can often appear like rudeness or arrogance in a culture that expects deference from this group.