

NPSIA Student Association Constitution (2016)

Preamble

Recognizing the transient nature of the membership of the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs Students' Association, this Constitution aims to provide an operational framework that improves the effectiveness and efficiency in fulfilling the Student Association's Mandate, especially during the transition phase that accompanies every new academic year.

Purpose

The NPSIA Students' Association is committed to serving students of the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs by helping to foster an environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and professionally. In working to enrich and support the NPSIA community, the Students' Association functions to help ensure a memorable graduate student experience. These include but are not limited to:

- a) Providing students with a democratic organization through which the student body's interests can be recognized and advanced;
- b) Providing an institution that creates a communication infrastructure between students, faculty, administration, and the larger university community;
- c) Coordinating student activities in academic, social, and professional spheres; and
- d) Ensuring the rights and duties of the student body are protected and preserved.

Article I. Name

Section 1: The name of the organization shall be "Norman Paterson School of International Affairs Students' Association", hereafter referred to as "NSA" or "NPSIA Students' Association".

Article II. Mandate

Section 1: The mandate of the NSA shall be to serve students of the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs by fostering an environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and professionally.

Section 2: The Executive Council shall fulfil the mandate as set out in Article II (1) by liaising with NPSIA students, faculty, and administration, and through the planning and implementation of academic, social, and professional events.

Section 3: The NSA shall ensure all General Members are equal and have the right to equal protection, respect and accommodation among their peers without discrimination, and in particular, without discrimination based on all protected groups under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Article III. Interpretation

Section 1: Interpretation of this Constitution shall be the responsibility of the Executive Council to be determined by a two-thirds majority vote.

Section 2: Any immediately required interpretation of the Constitution at any meeting shall be at the discretion of the member chairing that meeting. All such interpretations must be reported to the Executive Council at the next Executive Council meeting. This interpretation shall stand unless it is overturned by a two-thirds majority decision by the Executive Council.

Section 3: Any interpretation of the Constitution by the Executive Council or the chair of any meeting can be overturned by a two-thirds majority vote at a General Meeting, as convened per Article VII (2)(c).

Article IV. Membership

Section 1: All NPSIA students at the Masters and PhD levels are General Members of the NSA by virtue of admission to NPSIA.

Section 2: Any General Member may opt out of membership in any committee or executive role in the NSA by submitting the decision to the Executive Council in writing.

Section 3: The officers, as delineated in Article V, shall make up the Executive Council. Officers must be General Members, and shall also be considered as General Members.

Section 4: Membership shall therefore consist of the Officers of the Executive Council, Committee Members, and General Members.

Article V. Officers

Section 1: All officers of the NSA shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the mandate as set out in Article II.

Section 2: The NSA shall have the following officers in the following quantities: two Co-presidents, one Vice President Academic, one Vice President Public Relations, one Vice President Social, two Carleton University Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Representatives, one Treasurer, and one Secretary. The NSA may, per Article VI (9), have as many committee members as determined at the General Election.

Section 3: The addition or removal of officer positions shall be done by Constitutional amendment, as per Article VIII.

Section 4: Officers shall collectively be responsible for ensuring that the mandate of the NSA, as set out in Article III, is fulfilled. Each officer shall be responsible for creating a transition report to be provided to the relevant incoming officer of the following year at the start of the new term. Each year's transition report shall be digitally archived and available on demand for future officers. The specific duties of each officer shall be as follows:

a. The Co-presidents shall have co-signing authority on behalf of the NSA, and shall be responsible for:

- i. Determining the NSA's direction for the ensuing term;
- ii. Calling Executive Council meetings;
- iii. Chairing Executive Council meetings;
- iv. Determining frequency, structure, and general organization of Executive Council meetings;
- v. Monitoring attendance, participation, and conduct of officers of the Executive Council;
- vi. Attending faculty meetings and Graduate Academic Caucus meetings;
- vii. Liaising with the Director of NPSIA;
- viii. Working with the Treasurer to monitor, raise, and distribute financial assets;
- ix. Coordinating with other officers, notably Vice Presidents, on the activities of their respective committees;
- x. Voting, assessing and implementing suitable projects submitted by any committee Vice President;
- xi. Providing feedback and course of actions for those projects deemed worthy of

review by the Executive Council; and,
xi. Assisting with the general administration of the NSA.

- b. Vice President Academic shall be responsible for:
 - i. Reporting to the Executive Council on activities for which their committee is responsible;
 - ii. Coordinating projects on behalf of the Executive Council within Academic committee;
 - iii. Relaying information from the Executive Council to the Academic Committee to its members; and,
 - iv. Creating and distributing the Academic committee's agenda to its members.

- c. Vice President Public Relations shall be responsible for:
 - i. Reporting to the Executive Council on activities for which their committee is responsible;
 - ii. Coordinating projects on behalf of the Executive Council within Public Relations committee;
 - iii. Relaying information from the Executive Council to the Public Relations committee; and,
 - iv. Creating and distributing the Public Relations committee's agenda to its members.

- d. Vice President Social shall be responsible for:
 - i. Reporting to the Executive Council on activities for which their committee is responsible;
 - ii. Coordinating projects on behalf of the Executive Council within the Social committee;
 - iii. Relaying information from the Executive Council to the Social Committee; and,
 - iv. Creating and distributing the Social committee's agenda to its members.

- e. The Secretary shall be responsible for:
 - i. Calling Executive Council meetings;
 - ii. Calling General Meetings;
 - iii. Creating and distributing the agenda for Executive Council meetings;
 - iv. Creating and distributing the agenda for General Meetings;
 - v. Taking minutes at Executive Council meetings and sharing with Executive Council officers at the earliest convenience;
 - vi. Taking minutes at General Meetings and sharing them with General Members at the earliest convenience;
 - vii. Facilitating internal NSA communications;
 - viii. Communicating with the General Membership; and,
 - ix. Performing administrative tasks as needed.

- f. The Treasurer shall have co-signing authority on behalf of the NSA, and be responsible

for:

- i. Tracking all NSA revenue streams and financial assets;
 - ii. Maintaining and reporting a monthly budget on behalf of the Executive Council; and
 - iii. Distributing financial assets in tandem with the Co-presidents.

- g. The GSA Representatives shall be responsible for:
 - i. Attending GSA Council meetings;
 - ii. Attending faculty meetings and Graduate Academic Caucus meetings;
 - iii. Reporting the activities and decisions of the GSA Council to the Executive Council;
 - iv. Representing the views of the NPSIA student population at GSA Council meetings; and,
 - v. Making voting decisions that are consistent with the views of the Executive Council.

- h. Upper year Representative shall be responsible for:
 - i. Reporting to the executive council on issues and interests relevant to upper year students;
 - ii. Providing guidance and assistance to first year executive from perspective of upper year student;
 - iii. Relying information from executive council to upper year students; and,
 - iv. Creating and distributing information and events to upper year students.

- i. Committee Members shall be responsible for:
 - i. Facilitating activities relating to each respective committee affiliation;
 - ii. Reporting to the Executive Council on activities for which their committee is responsible; and,
 - iii. Assisting in NSA activities as needed.

Section 5: Nothing in this Constitution precludes the Executive Council from assigning additional duties, or reassigning existing duties, to officers of the Executive Council. Officers of the Executive Council may also delegate their powers to any committee members.

Section 6: All duties not expressly enumerated in Article V (4) shall be the responsibility of the Co-presidents, unless otherwise delegated.

Section 7: Executive Council officers shall serve from their election at the General Election until the next General Elections results are proclaimed. This period of time will hereafter be referred to as a “full term”.

Article VI. Electing, Self-Appointing, and Removing Officers

Section 1: All General Members are eligible to serve on the Executive Council. Only General Members in their first year of the NPSIA MA programs may serve as elected officers (with the exception of the upper year representative).

Section 2: The NSA General Election must take place once every calendar year, at the beginning of the fall term.

Section 3: Officers are lifetime-limited to serving one full term, as defined in Article V (7).

Section 4: The following officer positions shall be elected in the quantities set out in Article V

(2): Co-presidents, Vice President Academic, Vice President Public Relations, Vice President Social, Treasurer, Secretary, GSA Representatives and Upper year Representative.

Section 5: The General Election shall be conducted by at least one elected member of the outgoing Executive Council. A call for all elections must be made to the General Membership at least one week in advance of the election date.

Section 6: All General Members are eligible to vote in NSA elections. Voting shall be done by secret ballot.

Section 7: All General Members standing for election shall be given an equal amount of time in which to speak to the assembled General Membership before the balloting for the respective positions begins.

Section 8: Officers requiring election shall be proclaimed elected by a simple majority of 50 percent plus one of assembled General Members. In the case of a tie, a runoff vote shall be held between the tied parties. If after a second ballot there is still a tie, tied candidates will each have an equal amount of time to readdress the assembled membership before the third round of voting. The process of speeches before further rounds of voting shall continue until a candidate achieves the required 50 percent plus one simple majority.

Section 9: Committee Members not requiring election, as set out in Article V (4), shall be self-appointed by interested General Members. There are no limits to the number of people who may self-appoint themselves Committee Members of any of the set committees.

Section 10: An officer of an elected position shall be automatically removed from their seat in the event that said elected member no longer satisfies the requirements as set out in Article V (1).

Section 11: In the event of a vacancy, the Co-presidents, or remaining Co-president, shall assume the duties of the vacated officer until, in accordance with Article VI (12), until such time as a by-election is held and a new officer is proclaimed. In the event that both Co-president positions are vacated, the duties of that office shall fall collectively to the Executive Council until such time as the two vacancies are filled through by-election.

Section 12: Vacancies must be filled within one calendar month by holding a by-election. By-elections shall be held in a manner consistent with General Elections, as defined in Article VI (1-8).

Section 13: All officers may be impeached. Officers eligible for impeachment are those officers who are guilty of any of the following transgressions:

a. Conduct unbecoming of an officer, as defined by behaviour in contravention of Article V (1);

b. Continuous unexplained absences from Executive Council meetings;

c. Failure to meet the academic standards expected of all NPSIA students;

or,

d. Failure to fulfill the duties of the office as outlined in Article V (4).

Section 14: Officers may be subject to a motion of impeachment in one of two ways:

a. By unanimous nomination of the Co-presidents;

or,

b. By a petition endorsed by at least five General Members, and brought to the attention of the Executive Council.

Section 15: In the event of a motion for impeachment triggered by either method described in Article VI (14), the following actions shall occur:

a. A notice of motion of impeachment shall be served, by either the Co-presidents or the Secretary, in writing to the member(s) so nominated;

- b. A date shall be set by the Executive Council for an impeachment hearing within two weeks, which may coincide with a regular Executive Council meeting or General Meeting, and which may be rescheduled once at the request of the subject of the motion;
- c. At the impeachment hearing, one General Member shall present the case for impeachment to the Executive Council;
- d. At the impeachment hearing, the nominee, or a person chosen to speak on behalf of the nominee, may present a defense against the motion; and,
- e. General Members shall vote on the motion of impeachment.

Section 16: A motion for impeachment shall be carried when:

- a. A two-thirds majority of present General Members votes in favour of impeachment; and,
- b. At least one member of each of the standing committees, as defined in Article VII (1), is present for the vote.

Article VII. Committees and Meetings

Section 1: The standing committees of the NSA shall be:

- a. Academic Committee;
- b. Public Relations Committee;
- c. Social Committee.

Section 2: The types of meetings are:

- a. Executive Council Meetings:
 - i. Attended by any elected officer;
 - ii. Shall vote on committee decisions and project implementation;
 - iii. Require a quorum of a majority of members.
- b. Committee Meetings:
 - i. Attended by the Committee Vice President and any or all Committee Members;
 - ii. Shall vote on committee specific projects;
 - iii. Shall make decisions on and create committee specific projects;
 - iv. All committee decisions shall be decided by a simple majority vote.
- c. General Meetings:
 - i. The Executive Council must call at least one General Meeting per semester;
 - ii. Additional General Meetings may be called by the Executive Council or by a petition presented to the Executive Council signed by a minimum of 10 percent of the NSA's General Members;
 - ii. Attended by any and all members of the NSA;
 - ii. Shall vote on projects as deemed necessary in Article VII (4)(d)(v);
 - iii. Shall vote on impeachment and elections;
 - iv. Notice of General Meetings shall be made public one week prior to the date of all General Meetings;
 - v. General Meetings require a quorum of 10 percent of the General Members, unless Constitutional amendments or disputes are at issue, in which case the quorum shall be 20 percent of the General Members.

Section 3: Nothing in this Constitution precludes the Executive Council from creating new ad-hoc committees to serve the needs of the NSA. Standing committees may only be created or dissolved through Constitutional amendments.

Section 4: The duties of each of these standing committees shall be as follows:

- a. The Academic Committee shall:
 - i. Plan activities which fulfill the academic and professional portions of the NSA's mandate, as set out in Article III.
- b. The Social Committee shall:
 - i. Plan activities which fulfill the social portion of the NSA's mandate, as set out in Article II;
 - ii. Organize official NPSIA sporting events, including the administration of NPSIA intramural sports teams; and,
 - iii. Liaise with the NPSIA Benefit Soirée Committee to keep the Executive Council apprised of that committee's activities.
- c. The Public Relations Committee shall:
 - i. Communicate to the General Membership, and the general public, the activities of the NSA;
 - ii. Maintain General Membership contact information in coordination with the Secretary; and,
 - iii. Curate and administer all official NSA social media, including but not limited to the official Facebook page and the official blog.
- d. All general committee operations will be conducted
 - i. Under the coordination of each respective committee Vice President;
 - ii. Any project, either those proposed by the committee or relayed from the Executive Council will be evaluated and assessed, following either;
 - iii. The project is approved by the Executive Council and its timeline for execution, costs, and general administration falls to the respective Vice President and any assigned Project Leads,
 - or,
 - iv. The project is determined to require further evaluation by the committee during its assessment at the Executive Council, it is returned to the committee along with a verbal assessment given to the Vice President, and a written assessment of issues raised by the Executive Council,
 - v. If the Committee rejects the Executive Council's assessment it can resubmit the project, unchanged to the Executive Council, after which it goes to a General Meeting vote.

Section 5: Individual projects undertaken by each of the standing committees shall have a Project Manager. This person shall be in charge of all details related to the individual project, and must consult with their respective Vice Presidents, and/or the Executive Council on final decisions.

Article VIII. Amendments to the Constitution

Section 1: All amendments to the Constitution shall require a two-thirds majority vote at a General Meeting.

Section 2: Amendments to the Constitution shall be carried out according to the following steps:

- a. A special Constitutional Review Committee shall be convened and chaired by the Co-presidents, and must include at least one member from each standing committee and at least two General Members appointed by the Executive Council following expressions of interest to review the Constitution. This committee will advise the Executive Council of any requests for amendments arising out of the review process;
- or,

- b. A petition is received by the Executive Council signed by at least 10 percent of the General Members requesting a Constitutional amendment.
- c. The Executive Council shall promulgate the requested amendment(s) to the General Membership at least one week prior to holding a General Meeting to vote on the requested amendment(s). This General Meeting shall take place no longer than three weeks after the amendment request is first presented to the Executive Council.
- d. Amendments must be ratified by the process set out in Article VIII (1).