

Constitution of the Muslim Students' Association

Working Copy

University of Toronto, St. George Campus

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**In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful**  
**The Constitution of the Muslim Students' Association**

University of Toronto, St. George Campus

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## **Article 1 – Definition and Aims and Purposes**

### **Section 1**

The Muslim Students' Association ("MSA") shall be a recognized student group at the University of Toronto, St. George Campus ("U. of T."). The Aim and Purpose of MSA shall be to serve as a representative body of Muslims on campus which caters to their needs, while striving to be a vibrant, integrated and contributing body within the campus community.

The objectives of MSA are:

1. To serve as the representative voice of Muslims at the University of Toronto;
2. To cater to and accommodate the intellectual, spiritual and social needs of Muslim students;
3. To build a cohesive and unified community of Muslims on campus;
4. To expand MSA's scope of work and influence within the larger campus community;
5. To provide opportunities for leadership development within MSA's student body; and
6. To participate in community initiatives that complement MSA's mission.

### **Section 2**

MSA shall be a non-profit, student organization.

## **Article 2 – Affiliation**

### **Section 1**

MSA shall be affiliated with the Muslim Students' Association of the United States and Canada ("MSA National").

## **Article 3 – Membership**

### **Section 1**

The General Membership of the MSA shall be constituted as inclusion on the MSA Listserv. General Membership shall be regulated and recorded by MSA with the full name and email addresses of members.

Members who are current undergraduate or graduate students are requested to submit their full name and Student Identification Number for the MSA to submit this information to the University of Toronto Students' Union (U.T.S.U.).

Voting privileges in elections and constitutional amendments, as well as eligibility to be nominated for an Executive position, are given only to U. of T. members (i.e. students, staff, faculty and alumni).

## **Article 4 – Office Bearers**

### **Section 1**

To run for an Executive position, a person must be U. of T. member (i.e. student, staff, faculty, or alumni). It is preferred that a nominee for Executive office have Director experience in the MSA for one year. It is preferred that presidential nominees have held an Executive position in the MSA for one year.

### **Section 2**

The term of office for Office Bearers shall be June 1<sup>st</sup> of one year to May 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year.

### **Section 3**

The elected officers shall be seven (8) in number. Executives shall be primarily responsible for the overall administration of the MSA.

The Executive of the MSA shall consist of:

President

Secretary

Vice-President Communications

Vice-President Internal

Vice-President External

Vice-President Finance

Vice-President Student Life

Vice-President Social Advancement

The Executive shall oversee the work of the MSA, taking responsibility for the leadership and management of the Directorships. The Executive shall approve of all plans which are executed under the MSA name.

## **Article 5 – Duties of Office Bearers**

### **Section 1**

The President shall be responsible for:

The general management of all the activities of the MSA;

Being the public face for the MSA and acting as the representative of the MSA Executive;

Presiding over meetings of the MSA Executive;

Administering the overall strategic development of the MSA;

Ensuring that MSA activities remain within the boundaries of Islam.

### **Section 2**

The Secretary shall be responsible for:

Calling meetings of the MSA Executive;

Preparing and circulating the minutes of all MSA Executive and General Body meetings;

Presenting at the beginning of every MSA Executive meeting the minutes of the previous meeting for approval by the MSA Executive;

Preparing the agenda for the MSA Executive and General Body meetings and notifying the members of the MSA Executive and the General Body of it;

Developing and implementing new strategies to improve organizational efficiency;

Maintaining the list of members of the MSA;

Booking facilities for MSA meetings and events;

Maintaining liaison with the University administration, U.T.S.U. and other bodies on any secretarial matters, with the cooperation of the Vice-President External;

At the end of the MSA term, facilitating the process of handing relevant MSA documents to the next Executive;

Performing general administrative duties of the MSA.

### **Section 3**

The Vice-President Communications shall be responsible for:

Assisting the President in accomplishing the purpose of the MSA and implementing MSA policies;

Supervising website management and development;

Approving of and monitoring notices from the Executive to the community, including the list-serv, Facebook and other web-based forums;

Overseeing and coordinating the work and activities of MSA Directors associated with advertising, website management and MSA publications;

Presiding over meetings between the MSA Executive and Directors, and ensuring that a proper agenda and minutes are completed for Directors' meetings;

Approving all press releases and advertisements;

Drafting Policies on behalf of the MSA and assisting in implementing MSA policies;

Acknowledging receipt of inquiries to the MSA and forwarding to appropriate parties within 48 hours.

#### **Section 4**

The Vice-President Internal shall be responsible for:

Assisting the President in accomplishing the purpose of the MSA and implementing MSA policies;

Generating feedback from Muslim students on their religious and academic needs; developing, in coordination with Directors, strategies to meet students' needs;

Overseeing and coordinating the work and activities of MSA Directorships which offer services to the Muslim community on campus, such as religious and academic services;

With the cooperation of the Secretary, maintaining an MSA Volunteer Database, and overseeing activities related to volunteerism, such as volunteer recognition; assisting committees with the recruitment and deployment of MSA volunteers;

Presiding over meetings between the MSA Executive and Directors, and ensuring that a proper agenda and minutes are completed for Directors' meetings.

#### **Section 5**

The Vice-President External is an official spokesperson of the MSA and shall be responsible for:

Assisting the President in accomplishing the purpose of the MSA and implementing MSA policies;

Liaising and strengthening relationships with other student clubs, the University Administration, and the wider community;

Representing the MSA at functions held by external parties, including meetings called by the University Administration, MSA National and other MSA-affiliates;

Overseeing and coordinating the work and activities of MSA Directors associated with external communication, such as outreach to the wider community; ensuring that any formal agreements and collaborations between MSA and external groups be agreed upon and documented by MSA;

Presiding over meetings between the MSA Executive and Directors, and ensuring that a proper agenda and minutes are completed for Directors' meetings;

Overseeing and approving of the works and activities of the MSA Alumni Society.

## **Section 6**

The Vice-President Finance shall be responsible for:

Assisting the President in accomplishing the purpose of the MSA and implementing MSA policies;

Maintaining the record of all the financial transactions of the MSA;

Systematic bookkeeping for the MSA;

Collecting and depositing of all funds on behalf of MSA;

Preparing the annual budget of the MSA for the upcoming year in consultation with the Executive;

Presenting, before the Executive, bimonthly reports on the status of the financial affairs of the MSA;

Managing MSA finances and overseeing fundraising initiatives;

Approving and reimbursing properly documented expenses.

## **Section 7**

The Vice-President Student Life shall be responsible for:

Assisting the President in accomplishing the purpose of the MSA and implementing MSA policies;

Generating feedback from Muslim students on their social needs; developing, in coordination with Directors, strategies to meet students' needs;

Overseeing and coordinating the work and activities of MSA Directorships which advance student life on campus, such as special events, sports and social activities;

Presiding over meetings between the Executive and Directors, and ensuring that a proper agenda and minutes are completed for Directors' meetings.

## **Section 8**

The Vice-President Social Advancement shall be responsible for:

Assisting the President in accomplishing the purpose of the MSA and implementing MSA policies;

Offering guidance to MSA Directors on various opportunities and challenges in social advancement;

Overseeing and coordinating the work and activities of MSA Directorships which are associated with social advancement, such as community development and social justice activism;

Presiding over meetings between the Executive and Directors, and ensuring that a proper agenda and minutes are completed for Directors' meetings.

## **Article 6 – Non-Executive Directorship Positions**

### **Section 1**

**Definition:** Each Directorship shall be responsible for carrying out projects and events of the MSA in accordance with MSA policies and the MSA Constitution. The duties and responsibilities of each Director will be found in the MSA-UTSG handbook. Directors shall adhere to responsibilities detailed in the handbook.

### **Section 2**

All Directors must be U. of T. members, as specified in Article 3. The Advisor Directorship may only be held by a person who has been an MSA Executive member for one year.

### **Section 3**

Descriptions and duties of all Directorship positions will be found in the MSA-UTSG Handbook and be available on the MSA website for reference. Following the Appointment Period, the Executive may change the duties and description of each Director, as they see fit for the current MSA term. A change in the duties and description of a Directorship may take place if ratified by at least two-thirds of the Executive.

### **Section 4**

Any changes in the duties, the description, the addition and/or deletion of Directorships must be announced to the members of the Association via regular mail or email. The opening of the application process for a new Directorship shall occur as defined in Article 14, Sections 6-10.

### **Section 5**

Each of the MSA Executives shall be responsible for overseeing and ensuring the success of up to four (4) Directorships. The Executives shall report to the Executive Committee on the Directorships which they are responsible for. Directors shall submit all plans to the MSA Executive for approval by the MSA Executive.

## **Article 7 – MSA-UTSG Handbook**

### **Section 1**

The MSA Constitution is the operating document of the MSA. The MSA-UTSG Handbook shall expound descriptions of Directorships and other MSA policies. Nothing in the MSA-UTSG Handbook shall contravene the MSA Constitution.

### **Section 2**

Wherever there is an ambiguity within the MSA-UTSG Handbook or a discrepancy between the MSA Constitution and the MSA-UTSG Handbook, the MSA Constitution will take precedence.

## **Article 8 – Finances**

### **Section 1**

Membership fees, if any, shall be determined by the MSA Executive.

### **Section 2**

The MSA may accept contributions in any form from any source consistent with the purposes of the MSA.

### **Section 3**

All funds collected for a specific cause shall be used for that cause unless a 2/3 majority of the MSA Executive authorize its use for a different purpose consistent with the goals and objectives of the MSA.

### **Section 4**

All proposals for expenses shall be authorized by the Vice-President Finance or an Executive member appointed by the Vice-President Finance.

### **Section 5**

All check or cash withdrawals from the bank account shall be signed by no less than two of the members of the Executive.

## **Article 9 – Meetings**

### **Section 1**

The decision on all matters presented to the Executive shall at first be attempted to reach through consultation, with the aim of attaining consensus. If the issue at hand appears to be irresolvable via consensus, the chair can end the discussion and seek permission to resort to a vote. At least two-thirds of the Executive must be in favour of terminating discussion and passing decision via a majority vote. If less than two-thirds of the Executive are in favour of moving to a vote, attempt to attain consensus resumes. If at least two-thirds of the Executive are in favour of moving to a vote, the issue at hand will be resolved via a simple majority vote and the decision will come to pass.

### **Section 2**

Members of the Executive shall be deemed present if able to participate in discussions in the meeting.

### **Section 3**

The MSA shall have at least one General Body meeting during the academic year.

#### **Section 4**

The Executive shall meet at least biweekly at such a time and place as is most convenient and suitable to the majority of committee members.

#### **Section 5**

The President may call emergency Executive meetings in addition to the regular meetings, when considered necessary.

#### **Section 6**

The presence of at least five members of the Executive, including the President, shall constitute quorum for the Executive meeting and for the purposes of decision making.

#### **Section 7**

Each of the Executives responsible for overseeing a Directorship shall meet with the Directors whom they oversee at least bi-weekly. Executives must inform Directors of any decisions and new directions which may affect Directorships, and relay Directors' comments and concerns to the Executive in a timely fashion.

#### **Section 8**

The Executive and Directors shall meet at least once each month for the academic year, at a time and location which suits the President and suits as many members of both groups as possible. Directors shall be given the opportunity to raise concerns and issue comments to the President regarding the goals, direction and decisions of the Executive.

### **Article 10 – Amendments**

#### **Section 1**

Proposals for amendments to the MSA Constitution may be submitted by any MSA Member with a minimum of ten (10) signatures of other MSA Members who endorse the proposal(s).

#### **Section 2**

A voter turnout of five percent (5%) of the General MSA Membership or 75 MSA Members (whichever is less) must be present for referenda on constitutional amendments.

#### **Section 3**

For a proposed amendment to be passed, a minimum of two-thirds (2/3) of the voter turnout must vote in favour of the proposed amendment(s).

## **Article 11 – Elections**

### **Section 1**

Annual elections shall be held within the last month of the University of Toronto September to April Academic Term, in order to elect the Executive for the following academic year. The exact date and time of elections shall be announced by the Elections' Committee at least 2 (two) weeks prior to the date of the election.

### **Section 2**

The elections shall be conducted by an Elections' Committee appointed by the Executive. The Elections' Committee must be nominated at least 3 (three) weeks prior to the date of the election.

### **Section 3**

The Elections' Committee shall have one chairperson. The Elections' Committee shall comprise at least three persons, and it is preferred that it include at least 1/3 female persons. The Elections' Committee shall not include any candidate contesting the election.

### **Section 4**

The members of the Election Committee shall not campaign on behalf of or against any candidate standing for election or comment on, favorably or unfavorably, any of the candidates standing for election. The members of the Election Committee may not vote in the elections.

### **Section 5**

The period to nominate candidates for the Executive Committee must remain open for at least ten (10) days, and must be announced to the members of the Association via regular mail or email.

### **Section 6**

A candidate may be nominated for no more than two positions on the MSA Executive. All candidates must be U. of T. members (i.e. students, staff, faculty, alumni). It is preferred that a candidate nominated for President has served as a member of the MSA Executive for at least one year.

### **Section 7**

A candidate requires two nominators in order to be nominated to the Executive. The nominator and seconders of nominations must both be General Members of MSA. The Elections Committee must accept the nomination by a majority vote.

### **Section 8**

An MSA member who is not registered as a General Member (as per Article 3) within 1 (one) week prior to the date of the election shall have no right to vote nor the right to be a candidate in the election. An MSA member is eligible to vote and to run for office if he/she is a U. of T. member.

### **Section 9**

There shall no campaigning in favor of or against any candidate.

### **Section 10**

Each voting member shall vote for one candidate for every Executive position. On the ballot the selection of one single candidate must be clearly indicated or the ballot will be considered invalid. A person will be elected to office by a simple majority vote.

### **Section 11**

If a candidate is elected to more than one position he or she must select one position and withdraw from the other position. In that case the candidate attaining the second-highest number of votes in the withdrawn position is elected to that position.

### **Section 12**

The Elections Committee may censure publicly or disqualify any candidate who violates the Constitution or the rules of the Election.

### **Section 13**

The newly elected Executive shall assume the charge of the MSA on the first day of June following the election. The term of the Executive shall be for one year, as per Article 4.

## **Article 12 – Resignation or Removal from Office**

### **Section 1**

An Executive member may be removed from office for:  
Committing a serious violation of the Constitution;  
Failing to fulfill the duties of office;  
Failing to attend three meetings without being excused by the Executive.

### **Section 2**

If a member of the Executive commits a serious violation of the Constitution, or fails to fulfill the duties of his office, or fails to attend three meetings without being excused by the Executive, he/she shall be asked to give an explanation for his/her behavior to the Executive. If the committee does not find the explanation to be satisfactory, the Executive shall vote to dismiss the member. A vote to dismiss a member requires at least a 2/3 majority vote of the Executive. If a member of the Executive is dismissed he/she may appeal the decision to the general body members.

### **Section 3**

A member of the Executive wishing to resign from office shall present the reasons for resignation in writing to the Executive committee. Resignation of a member of the Executive is pending acceptance by the Executive.

#### **Section 4**

If a member of the Executive resigns or is dismissed from office, the Executive shall appoint, with the ratification of the general body, the second ranking candidate from the previous elections within two weeks of the resignation or removal of office.

#### **Section 5**

If the second ranking candidate is unavailable or refuses to accept the nomination, and there is no third ranking candidate, the MSA shall hold by-elections to contest this position within one month of the resignation or removal from office. By-elections shall occur pursuant to the election guidelines in Article 10 of the Constitution.

#### **Section 6**

The elections committee shall be dissolved as July 1<sup>st</sup> of the current Executive term. The MSA Executive may appoint a new elections committee to hold-by elections, as needed after July 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **Section 7**

If no candidate can be found to fill the vacant position pursuant to Sections 1 and 2, or if the resignation or removal of office occurs following the first semester of the academic year, the Executive on a 2/3 majority vote shall appoint with the ratification of the general body another member of the MSA to fill the vacated role within one month of the refusal or unavailability of the second ranking candidate.

#### **Section 8**

The general members shall be informed of any changes in office of the members of the Executive.

### **Article 13 – Appointment of Directors**

#### **Section 1**

Those eligible for Directorship positions may apply to the MSA Executive for a Directorship using a form approved by the last MSA Executive committee.

#### **Section 2**

Application to Directorship positions for the following term shall take place during the MSA Executive Elections for that term. The opening of the Application process shall be announced in conjunction with announcements for Executive Elections (i.e. two weeks prior to the date of the Executive Elections) and the application process shall be closed on Election Day.

#### **Section 3**

The Applications shall be submitted to and collected by the Elections' Committee appointed by the Executive. (As described in Article 11, Section 2).

## **Section 4**

The members of the Election Committee shall not campaign on behalf of or against any applicant to a Directorship or comment on, favorably or unfavorably, any of the applicants.

## **Section 5**

The period to apply for Directorships must remain open for at least ten (10) days, and must be announced to the members of the Association via regular mail or email.

## **Section 6**

A candidate may apply for as many Directorships as s/he wishes. All applicants, excepting applicants to the Advisor Directorship, must be current U. of T. students.

## **Section 7**

A member who is not registered as a General MSA Member (as per Article 3) within 1 (one) week prior to the date of the opening of the application process shall have no right to apply to a Directorship.

## **Section 8**

There shall no campaigning in favor of or against any applicant.

## **Section 12**

The Elections Committee may censure publicly or disqualify any applicant who violates the Constitution.

## **Section 13**

Once an in-coming Executive has been elected, it shall appoint applicants to Directorships for the upcoming MSA term. The decision on whom to appoint to each Directorship shall at first be attempted to reach through consultation, with the aim of attaining consensus. If the issue at hand appears to be irresolvable via consensus, the chair can end the discussion and seek permission to resort to a vote. At least two-thirds of the Executive must be in favour of terminating discussion and passing decision via a majority vote. If less than two-thirds of the Executive are in favour of moving to a vote, attempt to attain consensus resumes. If at least two-thirds of the Executive are in favour of moving to a vote, the issue at hand will be resolved via a simple majority vote and the decision will come to pass. If the vote results in a tie, attempt to attain consensus will resume.

If at least two-thirds of the Executive is in favour of holding interviews with applicants, interviews of all applicants to the Directorships shall take place. Each interview shall be conducted by a minimum of three Executives, including the Executive responsible for overseeing the Directorship being contested.

## **Section 14**

The out-going Executive shall review the list of applicants to the Directorship positions and submit recommendations to the in-coming Executive. Recommendations shall include a ranking of applicants

for each Directorship and an explanation of the reasons behind the rankings. Recommendations shall be submitted within two weeks of the closure of the application process.

## **Section 15**

The in-coming Executive committee shall attempt to appoint an applicant to every Directorship within two weeks of receiving recommendations from the out-going Executive committee. No person may be appointed to more than one Directorship at one time. This two-week period shall be known as the "Appointment Period."

## **Article 14 – Resignation or Removal from Directorship**

### **Section 1**

A Director may be removed from his/her position for:

Committing a serious violation of the Constitution;

Failing to fulfill the duties of his/her position;

Failing to attend three meetings without being excused by the Vice-President overseeing his/her committee.

### **Section 2**

If a Director commits a serious violation of the Constitution, or fails to fulfill the duties of his or her position, or fails to attend three meetings without being excused by his/her Executive Supervisor, he/she shall be asked to give an explanation for his/her behavior to the Executive committee. If the committee does not find the explanation to be satisfactory, the President shall recommend a vote of the Executive committee to dismiss the Director. A vote to dismiss a Director requires a 2/3 majority vote of the Executive committee.

### **Section 3**

A Director wishing to resign from his/her position shall present the reasons for resignation in writing to the Executive committee. Resignation of a Director is pending acceptance by the Executive committee.

### **Section 4**

If a Director resigns or is dismissed from office, the Executive committee shall appoint the second choice from the previous application process (described in Article 13) within two weeks of the resignation or removal of office.

### **Section 5**

If the second choice is unavailable or refuses to accept the nomination, and there is no third ranking choice, the elections committee shall re-open the application process to contest this position within two weeks of the resignation or removal from office.

## **Section 6**

The period to apply for Directorships must remain open for at least seven (7) days, and must be announced to the members of the Association via regular mail or email.

## **Section 7**

A candidate may apply for as many Directorships as s/he wishes. All applicants, excepting applicants to the Advisor Directorship, must be current U. of T. students.

## **Section 8**

A member who is not registered as a General Member (as per Article 3) within 1 (one) week prior to the date of the opening of the application process shall have no right to apply to a Directorship.

## **Section 9**

There shall no campaigning in favor of or against any applicant.

## **Section 10**

The Executive Committee shall appoint applicants to Directorships. The decision on whom to appoint to each Directorship shall at first be attempted to reach through consultation, with the aim of attaining consensus. If the issue at hand appears to be irresolvable via consensus, the chair can end the discussion and seek permission to resort to a vote. At least two-thirds of the Executive must be in favour of terminating discussion and passing decision via a majority vote. If less than two-thirds of the executive are in favour of moving to a vote, attempt to attain consensus resumes. If at least two-thirds of the executive are in favour of moving to a vote, the issue at hand will be resolved via a simple majority vote and the decision will come to pass. If the vote results in a tie, attempt to attain consensus will resume.

If at least two-thirds of the Executive is in favour of holding interviews with applicants, interviews of all applicants to the Directorships shall take place. Each interview shall be conducted by a minimum of three Executives, including the Executive responsible for overseeing the Directorship being contested.

## **Section 11**

The General Members shall be informed of any changes in position of the Directorships.